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Voters Evolt!

A Peaceful Political Evolution

September 23, 2010

Introduction To Voters Evolt!

The Problem

Irrespective of the party in power, the U.S. government primarily responds to the demands of large corporations and moneyed special interest groups, rather than respecting the hopes and aspirations of ordinary workers and small business owners.

Every four years the two main political parties construct "platforms" to serve as publicity gimmicks to get their candidate elected.

After the election, both parties generally ignore the policies they set forth in their platforms and begin to take care of themselves and their financial supporters, rather than to do what they said they were going to do for the rest of us.

Access by individuals to their elected officials is the foundation of a republican form of government. However, the election of our representatives is now more dependent upon massive expenditures of campaign contributions from their corporate sponsors, their wealthy friends, and well-funded, single-issue, special interest groups rather than upon a meaningful vote by an informed electorate.

No matter how deeply *we* ordinary citizens dig into our pockets, *we* cannot financially compete with the powerful special interests.

No matter how well *we* organize, *we* cannot match the influence of the financial and political insiders.

No matter how often *we* march and picket, they will always beat us through the side door into the corridors of power.

Revolt or Evolt?

Since *we* have been abandoned by our government and our political parties, *we* must collectively focus upon a peaceful method to modify our government to one which more attentively considers the needs and protection of all voters, whether Republican, Democrat,



Reform, Libertarian, Green, Independent, or other.

An intolerant, non-responsive and repressive government cannot endure. The choice is whether political change results from a violent revolution or a peaceful evolution, from a revolt or an evolt.

If *we simple voters* are smart enough to earn a living and to figure out how to pay our taxes – if we have courage enough to fight the wars started by our government, we are also competent to collectively establish basic policy to guide our government.

A Peaceful Political Evolution

We, the voters of every party, must evolt against politics as usual and join in a nonviolent evolution to transform our government.

We must demand a national paper ballot for president that presents the 12 most important national policy questions and which lists the presidential and vice presidential candidates nominated by the major political parties.

All paid political advertising should be prohibited during the week before the election, and everyone should enjoy a paid holiday to celebrate the most sacred sacrament of our national political religion -- voting.

Everyone should go to their polling place and thoughtfully answer the policy questions presented on the ballot.

Then, each of us should carefully write in the name of the person *we* select to implement our policy, whether or not that person's name is printed on the ballot.

It could take a week or two to slowly and carefully hand count (or recount) the ballots. So what!

The results will be felt far beyond the time it takes to tally our vote.

We will evolve a new system of government that will better serve to provide freedom, justice and prosperity to all who share this fragile planet.

We will decide who is in charge of our government and we will chart the direction of its future.

We are The Voters!

Posted by [WilliamCox](#) on Sunday, September 12 @ 08:26:12 MST

A Peaceful Political Evolution

"—That to secure these rights, Governments are instituted among Men, deriving their just powers from the consent of the governed, — That whenever any Form of Government becomes destructive of these ends, it is the Right of the People to alter or to abolish it, and to institute new Government, ... organizing its powers in such form, as to them shall seem most likely to effect their Safety and Happiness." ~ **The Declaration of Independence**

How many more lies must we listen to and how many more political scandals must we endure before we become sick enough to demand effective changes in our government? Have we suffered enough to force us through a political "evolution" to safeguard our freedoms in this country and to avoid committing war crimes against others?

In *Washington's Crossing*, an excellent history of the near failure of the American Revolution in the winter of 1776, David Hackett Fischer concluded that it was not Washington's leadership or the victories at Trenton and Princeton that saved the revolution following his resounding defeat in New York City. Rather, the victories resulted from the revival of spirit that arose among the ordinary people in the Delaware Valley as they began to read Thomas Paine's *American Crisis*.

According to Fischer, "This great revival grew from defeat, not from victory. The awakening was a response to a disaster. Doctor Benjamin Rush, who had a major role in the event, believed that this was the way a free public would always work, and the American republic in particular. He thought it was a national habit of the American people (maybe all free people) not to deal with a difficult problem until it was nearly impossible."

All of us, liberals *and* conservatives, are going to be increasingly harmed by the failures of our government and those we've allegedly elected to run it. We must anticipate there are more lies on their lips waiting to be told, even more ugly secrets waiting to be uncovered and even worse scandals yet to unfold.

The good news is that the American people are among the best, the bravest, and the brightest our human civilization has ever produced. America *is* the Promised Land — it is an amalgamation of all races and all cultures on Earth. Americans will survive and, ultimately, we will achieve a government that better cares for us and is less threatening to the rest of the world. The bad news is



that we will have to go through hell to get there. So, how do we brave the flames?

A National Policy Referendum

Perhaps the most basic problem with our government today is that, irrespective of the party in power, it primarily responds to the demands of large corporations and moneyed special interest groups, rather than respecting the hopes and aspirations of ordinary workers and small businesses.

Every four years the two main political parties construct "platforms" to serve as publicity gimmicks to get their candidate elected. After the election, both parties generally ignore the policies they set forth in their platforms and begin to take care of themselves and their financial supporters, rather than to do what they said they were going to do for the rest of us. The process is supposed to result in policies that reflect the interests of the voters, but it is a scandal at best. At worst, it is a continuing political disaster.

Access by individuals to their elected officials is the foundation of a republican form of government. However, the election of our representatives is now more dependent upon massive expenditures of campaign contributions from their corporate sponsors, their wealthy friends, and well-funded, single-issue, special interest groups rather than upon a meaningful vote by an informed electorate.

Special interest groups spent billions of dollars every year just to lobby the federal government. While there are allegedly some limits on campaign contributions, there are no restraints on institutional schmoozing. The Tom De Lay - Jack Abramoff lobbying scandal, arrest of Bush's procurement official, illegal contributions by Freddie Mac, and Congressman Cunningham's bribery conviction represent just the tip of the iceberg.

No matter how deeply we ordinary citizens dig into our pockets, we cannot financially compete with the powerful special interests. No matter how well we organize, we cannot match the influence of the financial and political insiders. No matter how often we march and picket, they will always beat us through the side door into the corridors of power.

Not only are we no longer represented; we have also been stripped of Constitutional protections we once enjoyed. Thoughtful people of every political persuasion are increasingly alarmed about the reductions in freedom we have passively accepted in response to 9/11. Many of us, irrespective of party or political beliefs, now question whether the Bill of Rights will survive another terrorist attack, which is sure to come.

Since we have been abandoned by our government, we must collectively focus upon a peaceful method to modify our government to one which more attentively considers the needs and protection of all voters, whether Republican, Democrat, Reform, Libertarian, Green or Independent. An intolerant, non-responsive and repressive government cannot endure. The choice is whether political change results from a violent revolution or a peaceful



evolution, from a revolt or an *evolt*.

One way we can regain control over our government is to require it to hold a National Policy Referendum every four years when we vote for our president. Such a referendum would not make law; rather the purpose would be to express the collective policy of the people through their answers to the major political questions that should most concern the new administration and Congress during their terms of office.

Individuals and organizations could nominate policy questions; Congress would have to debate the issues in formulating 12 current policy questions to be listed on a national ballot; and the president would have to either sign or veto the bill.

To ensure passage of the policy bill, perhaps the pay of all members of Congress and the president *and* all members of their senior staffs should be withheld commencing on the New Year's Day of each presidential election year until the issues are identified. Or, maybe all national political campaign contributions to parties and candidates should be prohibited until the bill is passed and signed.

Once the questions are promulgated, presidential candidates (and other elected representatives) would be forced to take positions on a wide variety of real issues. Politics has been defined as the art of not telling the truth, and politicians quickly learn to avoid telling the truth at all cost. Because there are special interests on every side of an issue, it is impossible to please everyone, yet the politicians strive onward, lying and denying, twisting and hiding, trying to grab every vote. The best theater can be seen during the presidential debates. Trying to get a straight answer from any of the candidates is like trying to nail spit to a wall.

Most importantly, we the voters would be more likely to study and question the issues and to arrive at our own opinions, rather than to have them spoon fed to us by AM talk radio, Fox News, and the corporate-controlled op-ed pages.

Not only must we increasingly talk about the issues over the back fence or in the break room, we must also insist that the Fairness Doctrine eliminated by the Reagan-appointed Federal Communication Commission be resurrected to allow fair comment and competing points of view by ordinary voters to be aired for all to hear.

Instead of responding emotionally to brief television and radio ads, most of which are designed to evoke a negative reaction, we would be far more likely to thoughtfully consider positive information and political analysis.

A number of countries, including Canada, Sweden and Switzerland refer policy matters to their voters for binding decisions, and the European Union resulted from a referendum in the participating countries. During its 2004 presidential election, Taiwan submitted two policy questions regarding its relations with China to voters. However, no nation presently holds a non-binding policy referendum as a matter of course.



There are those who might argue that our presidential election *is* a referendum on the candidates' platforms; however, the winner-take-all results do not, in any way, suggest our level of support for any of the competing issues. The outcome turns far too often on which of the candidates makes the fewest mistakes or which has devised the most effective smear campaign.

A National Policy Referendum will not be a national opinion poll. The very process of articulating the political questions, the more lively debate, and our thoughtful vote will validate the results far beyond that attainable by any random sampling, no matter how scientific. We will not be expressing a snap opinion. Nor, will we be making law. We will make policy!

Our right to vote in a National Policy Referendum can be found in the First Amendment to the Constitution, which expressly provides our right to petition our government for redress. Our right to peaceably assemble and to seek redress was intended as the bedrock of our free society and as a safety valve to avoid violent revolution.

In a free society, we have a duty to avoid the use of force, even if we believe our existence under ineffectual government is being seriously threatened. It is also our duty to peacefully petition our government, before we resort to violence.

If we are to effectively modify our government through a peaceful political *evolution*, we must be allowed to exercise our vote in a National Policy Referendum. Otherwise, what can we do?

A Peaceful Write-In Protest

As effective as a national referendum may be to establish government policy, little good will come of it unless those we elect are forced to pay attention to our interests and to actually carry out our policies. As it is, presidential candidates say one thing and do another to the extent they believe they can get away with it, and because of party politics, we keep getting stuck with having to decide upon the lesser of two evils.

Imagine if we combined a National Policy Referendum with a grass-roots rebellion in which a majority of us were to actually *write in* the name of the person we wanted to preside over our government. Wouldn't we seize the power that legitimately belongs to the citizens of this country and wouldn't we *evolve* a far more effective and representative government?

Can we trust the current method by which we elect our president? Are there good reasons why we

should rebel against the present system?

In 2000, more than a half million voters selected Al Gore, the Democratic candidate, over George Bush, the Republican candidate. However, Bush prevailed in the Electoral College because a fraudulent election in Florida gave him that state's 20 electoral votes, even though the candidates were only separated by a few hundred votes. Bush had an edge and the fix was in. His brother, Jeb, was governor and the Secretary of State chaired his reelection committee.

Not only were thousands of eligible (mostly Democratic) Florida voters disenfranchised before the election, but every effort to manually recount the ballots, including thousands of rejected votes, was blocked by the Secretary of State. A phony riot was staged by Republican Party operatives flown in from out of state to intimidate local election supervisors, and five Republican-appointed members of the U.S. Supreme Court contrived a politically-motivated decision that reversed a far more reasoned opinion by Florida's high court, which had ordered that every voter's intention be determined as accurately as possible.

Under the Digital Millennium Copyright Act, the purchasers of electronic voting systems (states and local governments) are not allowed access to any information on how voting results are recorded, nor is there any requirement that the machines provide a paper trail for recounts. All of which is a recipe for fraud.

The 2004 election differed from 2000 in that George Bush may have received a higher percentage of the popular vote; however, it is becoming increasingly clear that he should have lost in the Electoral College, except for another fraudulent election, this time in Ohio.



The Ohio Secretary of State, Kenneth Blackwell, served as the chairman of Bush's Ohio reelection campaign and publicly called Senator Kerry, the Democratic candidate, a "disaster" sure to reap "terrible" and "horrible" results if elected. Not only did Blackwell cause the registrations of Democratic voters to be rejected because they were on the wrong weight of paper, there were too few voting machines allocated to poor (and largely Democratic) precincts.

A "computer error" allegedly created thousands of non-existent Bush voters in Ohio, and one lawsuit claimed that official rolls in Ohio's most populous county omitted 170,000 registered voters. It is significant that Bush carried Ohio by less than 119,000 votes in an election where more than 90,000 ballots were discarded because they failed to indicate a valid choice for president and more than 23 percent of all provisional ballots were rejected.

Interestingly, the statewide hand count of "acceptable" provisional ballots and absentee ballots (after Blackwell had already declared victory) provided Kerry with 54.46 percent of the vote. In several heavily Republican precincts, Blackwell certified election results showing more votes than

registered voters, up to 124 percent more!

Our democratic republic is founded upon our ability to trust the results of our collective vote. Is there any doubt that the advent of black-box voting, systematic election fraud, and the widespread intimidation of voters dictate that *we* capture control of the election process before the chance is lost forever?

Each of us must find within ourselves the individual courage and initiative to perform one simple rebellious act – refuse to use the computerized voting machines or any other machine ballot.

Instead of responding like laboratory animals pushing a button in response to the stimulus of the latest ten-second television smear ad, we can each take a little longer to carefully consider the candidates presented on the ballot by the various political parties. Once we decide, we can demonstrate our literacy and our power by clearly writing in our personal choice for president of the United States, whether or not his or her name is on the ballot!

Presently, half of all voters don't bother to go to the polls and less than one quarter actually elect the president for all of us. Imagine the immense power that would flow to the people if voting truly became universal.

If the voter turnout was to dramatically increase, and if only 15 to 25 percent of us were to write in our vote, trust that the politicians will be scrambling to ensure that all write-in votes cast for them are legally counted. We would quickly find them registering their willingness to accept every write-in vote naming them for any office of public trust.

Conclusion

If we simple voters are smart enough to earn a living and to figure out how to pay our taxes, if we have courage enough to fight the wars started by our government, we are also entitled to collectively establish basic policy to guide our government, and to personally write in the name of whomever we consider most qualified to effectuate our policies.

We, the ordinary voters of every party, must *evolt* against politics as usual and join in a nonviolent *evolution* to transform our government. *We* must peacefully *evolve* our system of government to require a national ballot for president every four years which presents the 12 most important national policy questions and which lists the candidates nominated by the major political parties.



All paid political advertising should be prohibited during the week before the election, and we should all enjoy a paid voting holiday on Friday connected with Saturday voting to celebrate the most sacred sacrament of our national political religion. No voter should ever be turned away from the polls, and every vote

must be hand counted.

We should go to our polling place and thoughtfully answer the policy questions presented on the ballot. Then, we should carefully write in the name of the person *we* select to implement our policy.

It could take a week or two to patiently hand count (or recount) the ballots. So what! The results will be felt far beyond two weeks.

We will decide who is in charge of this country and *we* will chart the direction of its future.

We are The Voters!

The American genetic pool is the most robust and diverse of any society on earth, and the revolutionary spirit continues to run deep and true in the blood lines of all of us who yearn for freedom and the full fruits of our labor.

Let us unite together to show the world what *we* are really all about and what *we* can peacefully accomplish together. Let us again demonstrate a new system of government that will better serve to provide freedom, justice and prosperity to all who share this fragile planet.

Posted by [WilliamCox](#) on Monday, April 26 @ 14:11:44 MST

Restore the power to the people: Amend the Constitution!

[Online Journal](#) - January 29, 2010

¿Plata o plomo? Colombian and Mexican drug gangs ask government officials, judges and police officers which they prefer, “silver or lead,” when offering bribes and threatening violence.

The U.S. Supreme Court decision granting corporations the same free speech rights as natural persons allows them to spend unlimited amounts of money to influence elections and public affairs.

Corporations, foreign and domestic, can now force politicians to choose silver or lead when supporting or opposing corporate and foreign power interests.

Any politician who places the well-being of the public over corporate demands can count on well-financed negative publicity at the next election.

Moreover, corporations will be able to directly influence the election of state judges and the confirmation of federal judges.

With the Congress, White House and Supreme Court now up for sale to the highest bidder, we, the people of the United States of America, must exercise our fading power before it is lost forever.

The 11th and 12th Amendments clearly establish that the Constitution exists to protect the rights and powers of the people, not corporations.

It is *our* Constitution! We must amend it to ensure it protects us against corporations.

The Power to the People Amendment

Section 1

Only natural persons shall be protected by this Constitution and entitled to the rights and freedoms it guarantees.

Section 2

Nothing contained in this article shall be construed to abridge the freedom of the press for non-person entities engaged in the gathering and reporting of fact, analysis, and opinion. In all other respects, Congress and the States shall regulate and tax non-person entities as necessary for the public good.

Section 3



This article shall become operative once it has been ratified as an amendment to the Constitution by the legislatures of three-fourths of the several States, or by Conventions in three-fourths of the States thereof.

*The drawing of the NASCAR politician is by **Helen Werner Cox**, who was trained as a classical painter at Boston University. She is a retired nationally-certified library media teacher, who has made extensive use of art in her literacy programs.*

Posted by [administrator](#) on Saturday, January 30 @ 16:45:03 MST

The burden of taxation in the United States has been shifted from those who most benefit from our government to those who work the hardest and earn the least. This shrugging of responsibility is not only unfair, it fails to accomplish public policy goals required to move the economy out of recession and the environment out of crisis.

Uncorrected, the heavy burden of taxation borne by workers and small businesses today for the benefit of corporations and the wealthy elite will certainly lead to chaos and violence tomorrow.

It is time to discard our stupid and complex system of taxation and replace it with a smart and simple tax that balances the burden of taxation with the benefits of government.



How It Happened

Commencing in 1817,

Congress eliminated all internal taxes and funded the government by tariffs on imported goods. Tariffs increased the cost of goods imported from outside the country, and were primarily paid by the wealthy and larger businesses. Laborers, farmers, and small business owners paid little or no taxes because the goods they consumed were primarily manufactured in the U.S.

Enforced by a new Internal Revenue Service, Congress passed an income tax during the Civil War along with sales, excise and inheritance taxes. The income tax was progressive in that those who earned less than \$10,000 only paid 3%, while those who earned more were taxed at a higher rate.

Congress eliminated the income tax in 1868, and although it later flirted with taxing income, the government mainly relied on tariffs and an internal tax on tobacco and liquor for support. The U.S. Supreme Court ruled in 1896 that taxes on income violated the Constitution, since they were not apportioned among the states.

The Sixteenth Amendment in 1913 allowed Congress to tax the incomes of both individuals and corporations. Taxes continued to increase over the years, and with the introduction of payroll withholding in 1943, most Americans were forced to pay a tax on their incomes.

Initially, the wealthy and corporations were taxed more heavily than individuals. When Eisenhower was president, corporations paid approximately a quarter of all federal taxes, the maximum tax rate on top earners was 92%, excise taxes brought in 19% of tax revenue, and most workers paid minimum Social Security payroll taxes.

Today, corporations pay about 12% of income taxes, the maximum rate is only 35% for all those who earn more than \$372,950, even those who receive millions or billions each year, and excise taxes have dropped to 3% of revenue.

It gets even worse!

[Government Accountability Office](#) reported that two-thirds of all U.S. corporations *and 78% of foreign companies doing business in the United States* paid no federal income taxes between 1998 and 2005, even though they booked trillions of dollars in receipts.

The Gross Domestic Product (GDP) of the United States was almost \$14.2 trillion in 2008. The government took in \$1.2 trillion in estimated receipts and sustained an estimated deficit of \$390 billion. Approximately 45% of the revenues came from individual income taxes, 36% from Social Security and other payroll taxes, 12% from corporate income taxes, 3% from excise taxes, 1.2% from estate and gift taxes, 1.3% from customs duties, and 1.5% from other sources.

[The Tax Policy Center](#) calculates that individual income taxes and payroll taxes now account for four out of every five federal revenue dollars.

[Continued - Print](#)

Posted by [administrator](#) on Saturday, December 05 @ 13:15:35 MST

A Dream Ballot for 2008

[Global Research](#) - Oct. 23, 2008

“Let [the Constitution] be taught in schools, seminaries and in colleges; let it be written in primers, in spelling and in almanacs; let it be preached from the pulpit, proclaimed in legislative halls, enforced in courts of justice. let it become the political religion of the nation.” ~ Abraham Lincoln

Tossing and turning, American voters are having nightmares about the 2008 election. Will it be stolen again as in 2000 and 2004? What *will* a President Obama do about the Global War on Terrorism and militarization? What will President McCain do about the economy, jobs and health care? Oh my God, will we end up with a President Big Bird, Alaska Governor Palin, and what on Earth will he or she stumble into?

In spite of all their lofty promises, mealy-mouthed answers, and misleading advertisements, American voters still have no clue about what any of the candidates will really do if and when they get into office.

With \$3 billion wasted on the Help America Vote Act and the unreliable electronic machines it has purchased, voters are losing sleep worrying about whether they will even be allowed to vote in November, much less if their votes will be accurately counted.

Your voting power under the current system has been reduced to electoral slavery, and you are seriously deluded to think you have any real control over your government.

Can you even dream about a National Ballot that will establish your authority, one in which you, rather than politicians, create the policy guidelines for your government and you, rather than hacked computers, decide whom you want to implement your policy?

Imagine there is a two-day paid holiday set aside for the presidential election and that every citizen is encouraged to register and to reverently observe the most sacred sacrament of the nation's political religion.

Think about walking into your neighborhood polling place and being handed a sheet of heavy paper with 12 political questions for you to thoughtfully answer, yes or no, and a list of party candidates for you to consider before you *write in* the name of your personal choice for president and vice president.

Sleep well with sweet anticipation during the week or two it will take to patiently hand count the millions of paper ballots before the clear voice of American voters is heard to echo around the world with the message that democracy is alive and well in the land of the free.

Feel the power flowing into your hands and sense the clarity of your mind!

Close your eyes and picture the paper ballot you would like to see handed to every voter on November 4, 2008:

NATIONAL BALLOT

November 4, 2008

Policy Referendum Questions

1. Should the United States avoid war against the people of other nations by obtaining Congressional Arrest Warrants for personal service on foreign leaders who harm their own citizens and threaten ours? Yes No
2. Should the United States withdraw all military personnel from Iraq as quickly as possible and avoid leaving behind any permanent military installations? Yes No
3. Does the government of Iran pose a substantial risk of harm to the people of the United States? Yes No
4. Should the U.S. invade Pakistan without the consent of its government to kill or capture Osama bin Laden and other al Qaeda leaders? Yes No
5. Should the proposed Constitutional Amendment providing equal rights for women be resurrected, ratified and made effective through laws that protect reproductive rights? Yes No
6. Should the United States establish a National Education Service to fund and extend free public education through two years of academic or vocational college training, provide four years of free college education to students who provide one year of valuable public service at age 18, and six years of free college education to those who volunteer for two years? Yes No
7. Should the United States establish a National Health Service to provide universal health care to all of its citizens? Yes No
8. Should the United States replace its income tax with a comprehensive toll tax on all financial transactions occurring within its economy? Yes No
9. Should the United States ensure the solvency of the Social Security Trust Fund by permanently establishing the annual cap on contributions at the salary paid to the president? Yes No
10. Should the United States establish a supplemental personal retirement plan based on voluntary individual and employer contributions to a National Bond Fund for investment in the legal obligations of local and state governments? Yes No
11. As a temporary stimulus to the economy, should the United States impose a one-year moratorium on the collection of Social Security and Medicare contributions from individual receiving incomes of less than \$50,000 per year? Yes No
12. Should the United States nationalize the Federal Reserve System as a government-owned public banking utility to

Nominations

Independent

President - Ralph Nader

Vice President - Matt Gonzalez

Libertarian Party

President - Bob Barr

Vice President - Wayne Root

Green Party

President - Cynthia McKinney

Vice President - Rosa Clemente

Democratic Party

President - Barack Obama

Vice President - Joe Biden

Republican Party

President - John McCain

Vice President - Sarah Palin

(Fill in adjacent boxes above or write in

Write-In Candidates

President

(PLEASE PRINT NAME CAREFULLY)

Vice President

(PLEASE PRINT NAME CAREFULLY)

None of the Above

ATTENTION!

Completely fill in all selected boxes

Given the chance, how would you vote?

What questions would you like to see on the ballot?

What are you waiting for? Voting is a both a right and a duty – use it or lose it!

Posted by [administrator](#) on Thursday, October 23 @ 10:51:54 MST

Deliver Us From Chaos: Ten Political Commandments

Axis of Logic - Sept 14, 2008

The classical theory of chaos set forth in *Chaos: Making a New Science* by James Gleick in 1987 is that “a butterfly stirring the air today in Peking can transform storm systems next month in New York.” Basically, any attempt to accurately discern outcomes from discrete and random inputs is much like reading entrails or trying to guess which card will be dealt after God reshuffles the deck “under the table” after each hand.

Although the systems being studied, such as the weather, may appear at first to be disordered, chaos theory seeks to identify the underlying order in the apparently random data.

Meteorologist Edward Lorenz first experimented with the theory in 1960 as he worked with twelve computerized equations to model the weather. He observed that a tiny, statistically insignificant, difference in the starting value resulted in a wildly different weather pattern at the end. Thus, while the flapping of a single butterfly’s wings only produces a tiny change in the local atmosphere, over a period of time, the world’s climate may be dramatically different from what it might have otherwise been.



In addition to the weather, a variety of systems exhibit chaotic behavior, including fluid dynamics, lasers, electrical circuits, and population growth. However, these systems are not entirely disorderly and they lend themselves to a degree of mathematical order and determination.

From a political standpoint, chaos theory requires us to consider the effects of the flapping of politician's lips on starting World War III *or* Cold War II.

Unfortunately, there are no existing mathematical formulas to help predict the consequences of political words, decisions, and actions; however, it might be rewarding to at least have a basic set of standards to improve the reliability of political practice.

Ten Political Commandments

The Old Testament Ten Commandments have existed for more than 3,500 years as an ethical guide for human behavior and are recognized by all three of the major monotheistic religions, Judaism, Christianity, and Islam. Whether or not one is a believer, the Commandments provide a commonsense guide to avoid adverse consequences in most decision making and conduct.

In order to reduce political chaos, the following suggestions are offered as discussion points for

establishing a basic set of political standards.

Certainly, if these political standards were being commonly adhered to, the irrelevant and random noise of the current presidential campaign might be reduced and we would hear less about lipstick on pigs and more about the critical issues facing our country in the next four years.

I. Have no master before you except those who elect you. Never forget whose trust you hold. Only citizens of the United States can vote in its elections, and corporations, irrespective of wealth, their power, and their ability to buy candidates, are not citizens.

II. Look at the big picture. Just like playing chess, political statements, decisions and acts must be based not just upon the immediate situation or motivation, but on how they conform to everything known about the issues and the probable consequences. If not enough is known, then gather more data before speaking or acting.

III. Create thoughtful policies. Among other things, policy is based upon traditions, experience, practice, law and commonsense. It serves as a logical guide for decision making and the creation of programs. Modify policy when circumstances change or when more is learned.

IV. Don't be stupid. Accept proven facts, and reject unproven beliefs. Engage brain before putting mouth in motion.

V. Don't tell lies. Respect, honor and value the truth. Say what you mean and mean what you say.

VI. Follow the law. Or, change the law. Ignore the law at your peril.

VII. Don't be greedy. Don't steal or take what doesn't belong to you. You do not own the government.

VIII. Respect and care for others. The cultures and beliefs of others are special to them and must be respectfully considered in the decisions and actions that affect them. Have empathy for others and the pain and hardships they suffer.

IX. Don't hurt or kill others. There may be some legitimacy in unavoidable self defense, but an unprovoked attack is always the mark of a cowardly bully.

X. Follow the Golden Rule. The Rule, in one form or another, is a basic part of all religions and has a foundation in ancient Greek philosophies, including that of Epictetus, "What thou avoidest suffering thyself seek not to impose on others."

Posted by [administrator](#) on Saturday, September 13 @ 15:34:09 MST

The View From Outside the Box: A Report on the Human Condition

Media Monitors Network - July 5, 2005

The genius of Albert Einstein was demonstrated by his ability to step aside in his mind and view the universe and its physical laws from a place where the rest of us had never ventured. In proving that time is relative he had to, as we say today, think outside the box.

The world we live in is a troubling place. To better understand it, perhaps we can take a flight of fantasy and imagine that we are regularly visited by benevolent time travelers from another dimension whose sole mission is to identify the truth. What conclusions would these truth seekers draw about who we are, what we are doing to ourselves, and why?

Freed from political lies and religious distortions, what would their report say?



* * *

Humans are quite simply the most marvelous species that has ever evolved on Earth. Increasingly they have adapted Earth's environment to their needs and have multiplied to fill every habitable niche of its surface.

They have created a magnificent and cooperative world-wide culture based on their ability to work together in solving complicated problems. In doing so, they mostly communicate the truth and usually demonstrate respect and civility in their interactions.

Were you to travel to every country, every city, and every village and enter every home, every apartment and every hut where humans live, you will primarily find parents who love and educate their children and who wish for them a better and safer existence. Everywhere, you will find people who help others in need and who communicate their discoveries and inventions in making life easier for all.

The essence of humanity is that they mostly tell each other the truth, and the truth they mostly tell is that they care for one another.

Humans are, however, infected with a disease: the virus of deception, hatred and violence. Diseased individuals commit crimes against others and the public peace, and in some societies, they are severely punished for their illnesses and incarcerated without any attempt to cure them.

Worst of all, societies which come to be governed by diseased individuals can be led into committing mass acts of violence against their own people or to make war against other societies.

Several generations ago, such a war involved most of the societies on Earth.

The world war led to the slaughter of millions and ended with the use of atomic weapons. However, from the ashes of destruction arose a world-wide organization of all nations united in their pledge to avoid war in the future, to obey international laws, and to respect the human rights of all individuals.

Humans practice a variety of faith-based religions, all of which claim to represent the ultimate word, usually of God, to the exclusion of all other beliefs.

Governments vary in their responses to religion. The most enlightened allow individuals to practice their religion of choice and refuse to support or endorse any particular religion. Other, more repressive governments represent a particular religion, rather than individuals, and prohibit all other expressions of faith.

Although most religions provide a basis for ethical decisions by their adherents, they are also relied upon by their practitioners to validate and justify the most violent and uncharitable acts against those who disagree with them.

Just over 200 orbits ago, immigrants to a sparsely populated continent with abundant natural resources united their various states in a new form of government. They established constitutional law that preserved to all individuals the right to life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness, including the freedoms of expression, assembly and religion. Although the society was initially destructive of the indigenous people and tolerated human slavery, it learned from its mistakes and came to provide the greatest freedom and opportunity available on Earth.

The best, the bravest, and the brightest found their way from all over the world to this new society where they were accepted and protected. The genetic pool became robust, and the level of intellectual knowledge and accomplishment came to exceed all others.

Indeed, it was this society that provided the balance in the last world-wide conflict between freedom and totalitarianism and which led all other nations to unite against war. While it was the only society that used atomic weapons, it was also the only one whose members came to walk on the Moon.

Sad to say, all of this is at great risk. The government of this great nation was illegally seized by a cabal of diseased zealots who continue to hold it through their mastery of lies and deception, their control of information, and the force of arms.

Claiming to believe in the principles of a small, but powerful, minority of religious fundamentalists and to act in the name of God, these sick men and women secretly worship at the dark altar of corporate greed and world domination.

Since gaining office, these zealots have eliminated taxes on their wealthy and corporate supporters; sought to destroy public education; reduced health care for working people; eliminated constitutional protections; incarcerated criminals and dissenters at rates exceeding all other nations; curtailed the freedom of expression; attempted to impose their narrow religious beliefs on all others; and expanded the intrusion of government into the private lives and decisions of its citizens.

Although existence of the entire human civilization is threatened by global warming, air pollution, and shrinking supplies of fresh water, these zealots, who are suffering from an epidemic of

ignorance and avarice, have refused to ratify an international agreement to reduce industrial emissions, overturned and reversed years of beneficial environmental regulations, and authorized the destruction of forests and the pollution of fresh water sources, all to the benefit of their corporate cohorts.

In order to militarize space and to divert tax money into corporate accounts, the cabal withdrew their nation from an effective anti-ballistic missile treaty, and abrogated agreements against space-based weapons.

The nation refuses to sign an international agreement against the use of cluster bombs, which indiscriminately and disproportionately kill children, and the cabal continues to deploy weapons containing depleted uranium. To protect themselves from prosecution for war crimes, the zealots have withdraw their nation from the International Criminal Court Treaty.

Pretending to act against international terrorists and weapons of mass destruction, while secretly seeking control of a vast pool of petroleum for his corporate benefactors, the morally and intellectually deficient head of the illegal cabal ignored the wishes of the international peace organization and ordered the military invasion of a weak society which in truth posed no risk of harm.

As a result, thousands of innocent civilians have been killed and maimed, including hundreds of children and babies who were burned alive.

Although the illegal war is opposed by virtually all other societies on Earth and no evidence of justification has ever been found, its prisoners continue to be tortured and detained indefinitely without trial, and there is no end in sight.

The plague must be contained before it wipes out the efforts of all those who have labored to improve the lives of their children.

While the disease thrives on the powers of deception and acts to destroy the common means of communication, humans have again demonstrated their amazing resilience and ability to adapt to changing conditions.

Humans are seeking a cure through personal interaction using electronic computers and the cooperative media they refer to as the Internet. This then may be their salvation.

Someday a keyboard, such as the one used to prepare this report, may grace the altars of freedom around this Mother Earth and throughout the distant worlds that her children, the truth seekers of tomorrow, will survive to discover and over which they will patiently and lovingly watch.

Posted by [administrator](#) on Monday, July 04 @ 09:29:57 MST

Join the Evolution - Make the Pledge!

More than 8,000 voters have now joined in the *Peaceful Political Evolution*, demanding to vote in a National Policy Referendum and pledging to write in their personal candidate for president and vice president, whether or not the name appears on the ballot. Members are asserting their right to make political policy, to have a national paper ballot, and to enjoy and participate in a national paid voting holiday.

[Register Now](#) to join others who share your concerns.

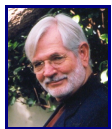
[Contact Us](#) to let us know which policy questions you would like to vote on?



Register To Vote!

Evolt! Developments

Interest in a peaceful political evolution continues to grow with the Voters Evolt! site now attracting hundreds of new visitors every day from all over the world.



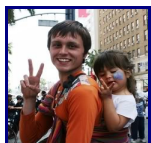
In an effort to maintain nonpartisanship, most articles by William John Cox formerly found on these pages have been migrated to his personal website (click photo).



Development of the Youth Evolt site has taken longer than originally expected; however, our goal continues to be the creation of the most interesting, dynamic and effective youth protest site on the Internet. Click photo for a sneak preview of the Youth Evolt "About Us" page.

For the future, Voters Evolt has also secured the domain names of WomenEvolt.com, WorkersEvolt.com, and SeniorEvolt.com. These sites will be brought online once YouthEvolt.com is launched.

Taking It To The Streets



The March 20, 2010 anti-war march in Hollywood with *War* by Edwin Starr.



The June 25, 2009 protest against Justice Jay Bybee at the Federal Court of Appeals in Pasadena with *The Torture Never Stops* by Frank Zappa.



The May Day 2009 Protest in Los Angeles with *Clandestino* by Manu Chao.



The March 21, 2009 anti-war march in Hollywood with *Your Flag Decal Won't Get You Into Heaven Anymore* by John Prine.



The August 2, 2008 anti-war protest in Los Angeles Pershing Square with *A New Revolution* by the Freedom People.



The May Day 2008 march in downtown Los Angeles with *Guerrra* by Fosforo.



Women protesting at the March 15, 2008 anti-war march in Hollywood with *I Am Woman* by Helen Reddy.



Young people at the March 15, 2008 anti-war march in Hollywood with *Impeach the President* by D.J. Green Lantern.



The October 27, 2007 anti-war march in LA with *The New National Anthem* by Strata.

All photographs by William John Cox

William John C

Citizen ~ Writer

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September 23, 2010

The Fraudulent Criminalization of Marijuana

The Peoples Voice - September 15, 2010

For almost 40 years, the United States has waged a war on its own citizens who have used marijuana as a part of a drug culture originally encouraged by the government. The war was commenced despite the government's own findings that marijuana posed less of a risk to American society than alcohol, and that the greatest harm that would result from criminalization would be the injury caused to those arrested for possession and use. The harm caused by the war extends beyond its 15 million prisoners; its cost has exceeded a trillion dollars, and it has benefitted only those who profit from the illegal cultivation and sale of marijuana.

Government Responsibility for the Drug Culture

Drug use became endemic among U.S. troops serving in Vietnam with [more than 80% getting stoned](#) on marijuana and lysergic acid diethylamide (LSD). Many of the secrets are still hidden; however, we now have some information about the extent of the government's responsibility for the development of the drug culture in the military and in communities across America. These are the highlights:

- Although the U.S. was a signatory to the Geneva Convention protocols banning the use of chemical weapons, [the U.S. Army engaged in extensive testing](#) of marijuana and its active ingredient, tetrahydrocannabinol (THC) as an incapacitating agent in warfare. A secret research program tested these substances, including highly-concentrated derivatives, on thousands of American GIs without their informed consent.
- The CIA engaged in a [ten-year secret program](#) to identify and test drugs for use as truth serums during interrogations and as incapacitating agents. Operation Midnight Climax secretly tested LSD



on the unwitting patrons of a CIA-financed whorehouse.

- The U.S. Army envisioned "driving people crazy for a few hours" by spiking a city's water supply and [developed a super hallucinogen](#) known as quinuclidinyl benzilate (BZ), which was tested on thousands of soldiers. Known as "agent buzz," [the Army produced more than 100,000 pounds of the chemical](#) in a facility specifically designed for its incorporation into conventional bombs. Allegations in foreign publications that BZ was deployed against North Vietnam troops have never been confirmed, and all files on the subject remain top secret. However, it is known that the government considered using it for the control of domestic riots.
- To facilitate its alliance with the intelligence agencies of Thailand and Nationalist China, the CIA supported the transportation and refining of opium into heroin in Southeast Asia, including the opening of a cluster of heroin laboratories in the Golden Triangle in 1968-1969. The CIA remained silent as its allies, including officers of the Hmong irregular army, [routinely supplied heroin to American troops](#) in Vietnam, resulting in the addiction rates as high as 34%. In a secret report in 1972, the CIA Inspector General said: "The past involvement of many of these officers in drugs is well-known."
- During classified testimony before a House committee in 1999, CIA Inspector General Britt Snider admitted that the [CIA allowed its Nicaraguan Contra allies to smuggle huge quantities of cocaine into the United States](#) during the 1980's, which was refined into "crack" for sale by street gangs. The House report found that "CIA employees did nothing to verify or disprove drug trafficking information, even when they had the opportunity to do so. In some of these, receipt of a drug allegation appeared to provoke no specific response, and business went on as usual."

The National Commission on Marijuana and Drug Abuse

In 1971, President Nixon appointed Governor Raymond P. Shafer of Pennsylvania to chair a national commission to "report on the effects of marijuana and other drugs and recommend appropriate drug policies." Governor Shafer was a former prosecutor, who was known as a "law and order" governor.

[The "Shafer" Commission conducted the most extensive and comprehensive examination of marijuana ever performed by the US government.](#) More than 50 projects were funded, "ranging from a study of the effects of marihuana on man to a field survey of enforcement of the marihuana laws in six metropolitan jurisdictions . . ."

Among the Commissions findings were:

- "No significant physical, biochemical, or mental abnormalities could be attributed solely to their marihuana smoking."
- "No verification is found of a causal relationship between marihuana use and subsequent heroin use."
- "In sum, the weight of the evidence is that marihuana does not cause violent or aggressive behavior; if anything marihuana serves to inhibit the expression of such behavior."
- "Neither the marihuana user nor the drug itself can be said to constitute a danger to public safety."
- "Marihuana's relative potential for harm to the vast majority of individual users and its actual

impact on society does not justify a social policy designed to seek out and firmly punish those who use it."

The Commission concluded that "society should seek to discourage use, while concentrating its attention on the prevention and treatment of heavy and very heavy use. The Commission feels that the criminalization of possession of marihuana for personal [use] is socially self-defeating as a means of achieving this objective . . . Considering the range of social concerns in contemporary America, marihuana does not, in our considered judgment, rank very high. We would deemphasize marihuana as a problem."

[President Nixon called Governor Shafer on the carpet](#) and pressured him to change the Commission's conclusion saying, "You see, the thing that is so terribly important here is that it not appear that the Commission's frankly just a bunch of do-gooders." Governor Shafer declined to change his conclusions, and Nixon declined to appoint him to a pending federal judgeship.

The War on Drugs

[White House tapes reveal](#) that Nixon's opinions about marijuana were based on his personal prejudices rather than the evidence. He can be heard to make statements such as: "That's a funny thing, every one of the bastards that are out for legalizing marijuana is Jewish. What the Christ is the matter with the Jews, Bob, what is the matter with them? I suppose it's because most of them are psychiatrists . . . By God, we are going to hit the marijuana thing, and I want to hit it right square in the puss . . ."

When Nixon was talking with Art Linkletter about "radical demonstrators," he said "They're all on drugs." On another occasion, Nixon compared marijuana to alcohol use saying that marijuana users smoke it to "get high," while "a person drinks to have fun."

Wanting to be strong, "like the Russians," and to "scare" marijuana users, Nixon ordered his administration to come down hard on users and to target them as enemies in his "war on drugs."

The war on marijuana and the false myths associated with its usage have been continued by every president since Nixon. Since 1973, 15 million people, mostly young people who were committing no other crime, have been arrested for marijuana. In just the last ten years, [6.5 million Americans have been arrested on marijuana charges](#). Of the 829,625 people who were arrested in 2006, 738,915 of them were in simple possession.

[Attorney General Eric H. Holder, Jr. announced](#) in March 2009 that the administration would discontinue raids on the distributors of medical marijuana, including California - which was the first state to legalize marijuana sales upon a doctor's recommendation.



Although President Obama backed off on arresting medical marijuana users, his [2010 National Drug Control Strategy](#) continues the hard line: "Keeping drugs illegal reduces their availability and lessens willingness to use them. That is why this Administration firmly opposes the legalization of marijuana or any other illicit drug."

Contrary to the findings of the Shafer Commission, the only existing comprehensive government study on the subject, Obama goes on to say, "Diagnostic, laboratory, clinical and epidemiological studies clearly indicate that marijuana use is associated with dependence, respiratory and mental illness, poor motor performance, and cognitive impairment, among other negative effects, and legalization would only exacerbate these problems."

[Fourteen states and the District of Columbia have now followed California](#) in passing laws permitting the use of marijuana for medical purposes; however, no state, thus far, has decriminalized personal possession for recreational use or personal enjoyment.

After spending a trillion dollars in the battle, the war on marijuana has been a complete failure. Although a marijuana user is arrested every 38 seconds, [one hundred million people, or about one third of all Americans acknowledge they have used marijuana](#), including President Obama. Fifteen million "criminals" used it in the last month.

The only victors in the war on drugs have been the criminals who have profited from illegal sales. There is an estimated \$15 billion in illegal cannabis transactions each year just in California. These transactions are not taxed or regulated.

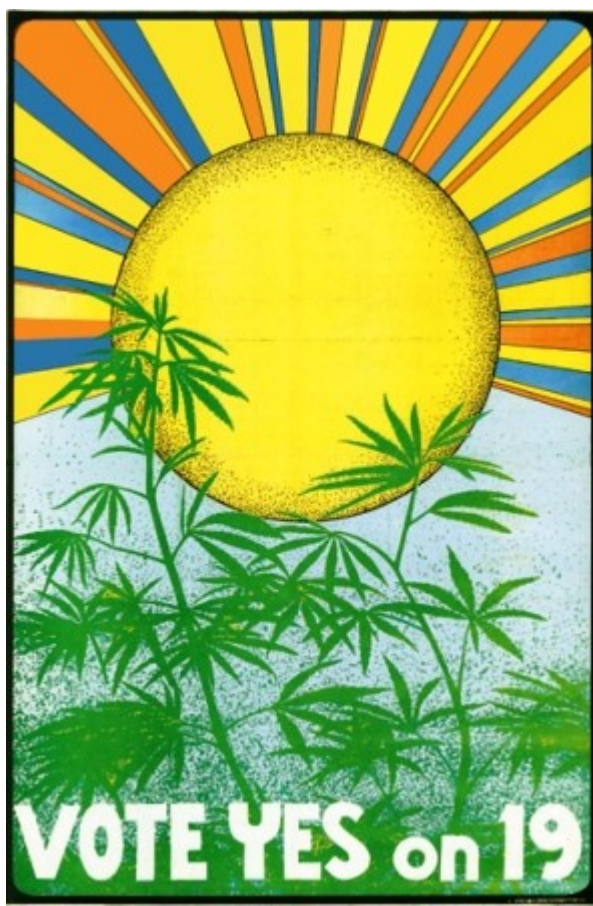
The [cultivation of marijuana in Mexico soared 35%](#) last year to production levels greater than any time in the last 20 years. According to the White House Office of National Drug Control Policy, in 2006 [more than 60% of the revenue generated by Mexican drug cartels came from cannabis sales in the U.S.](#)

Nixon's war has been expensive; it has been a failure; and it has caused great damage to the fabric of America society. The harm has been particularly felt by its young people who suffer up to 80% of the marijuana arrests and who are disproportionately African American and Latino.

California's Initiative to Decriminalize Marijuana Possession

The penalty upon conviction for possession and use of less than an ounce of marijuana in California is now restricted to a maximum of a \$100 fine. If California voters approve Proposition 19 on their November ballot, such possession by a person over the age of 21 will no longer be a crime under California law.

Just as California and New York ended criminal sanctions against the possession and sale of alcohol before prohibition was repealed, California voters again have the chance to remedy the evils caused by almost 40 years of a war without foundation or cause.



The initiative: "Changes California Law to Legalize Marijuana and Allow It to Be Regulated and Taxed." It includes the following provisions:

- Allows people 21 years or older to possess, cultivate, or transport marijuana for personal use.
- Permits local governments to regulate and tax commercial production and sale of marijuana to people 21 years or older.
- Prohibits people from possession marijuana on school grounds, using it in public, smoking it while minors are present, or providing it to anyone under 21 years old, and Maintains current prohibitions against driving while impaired.

The California Legislative Analyst and the Director of Finance estimate there will be savings of up to several tens of millions of dollars annually to state and local governments on the costs of incarcerating and supervising certain marijuana offenders. In addition, there are unknown, but potentially major tax, fee, and benefit assessment revenues to state and local government related to the production and sale of marijuana products.

Conclusion

In 1972, during the same year of the Shafer Commission, I was a sergeant of police in Los Angeles and had just completed a two-year assignment to write and obtain approval of the Department's Policy Manual, which defined the principles and philosophy of policing in the city. I was also attending law school and I was "loaned" to the staff of the Police Task Force of President Nixon's National Advisory Commission on Criminal Justice Standards and Goals, where I was privileged to draft the introductory chapters defining the role of the police in America.

Following graduation the next year and passing the state bar examination, I moved to Washington, D.C. to work for the Justice Department's Law Enforcement Assistance Administration to implement national criminal justice standards and goals. As a result of these initiatives, the quality of policing in America has been vastly improved over the years, and today, law enforcement is a profession which I am proud to have been a part of.

Several times I had to fight for my life while enforcing the law, and three of my law enforcement friends were murdered in the line of duty. I am not naive. I have walked through too much blood and have seen too much pain and suffering during my career. Everything I have learned during almost 50 years in the justice system compels a conclusion that the criminalization of marijuana was a fraud on the American people from the very inception of the war on drugs.

I am not alone in this conclusion, which has been joined by [a large number of active and retired law enforcement officials and judges](#) in the United States and other countries.

Every voter has a duty to honestly consider the issues presented by Proposition 19 and to vote as though one of his or her children, a niece or nephew, or a friend's child will be caught experimenting with marijuana in the future. How will you want the matter handled? By creating a criminal, or by using the occasion as an educational opportunity?

We hopefully remember the danger to society caused by the prohibition of alcohol and we have seen how education and reasonable regulation has substantially reduced the use of tobacco in our society.

Let us rely on the true facts, our experience, our best judgement, and our consciences, instead of our prejudices or the misleading myths that continue to be perpetuated by our government.

Let us now bring an end to the fraudulent and costly war on marijuana.

Posted by [WilliamCox](#) on Wednesday, September 15 @ 18:26:15 MST

Facebook Note - September 14, 2010

Forty years ago, during my first year of law school, I saw two old long, narrow law school desks in a dark back hallway of the old Southwestern building in Los Angeles. I stopped in the office and was told the desks were being thrown out and that I could have one if I wanted. I did.

I hauled it home, sanded out decades of scratches and carved initials, and refinished it.

In the years that followed, I sat at the desk through the duration of law school, studied for and passed the bar exam, hauled it to and from Washington, D.C., wrote a number of books on it, some of which have been published, practiced public interest law from behind it, including the



Holocaust Denial Case, negotiated the publication of the suppressed Dead Sea Scrolls, and finally moved it into the study when we purchased our home ten years ago.

Returning to Long Beach a couple weeks ago after almost two months on the road and in the air, flying across and driving up and down both coasts of America, my wife, Helen, decided it was time to clean out and repaint the study. And... while we were at it, perhaps I should also refinish some of the furniture, including my old desk which was showing her age – possibly approaching the century mark.

The desk is six-foot long, 16-inches wide, solid oak, with carved trestle legs. It cleaned up nicely, took the dark stain, received six coats of satin finish, and several coats of wax. She has never looked better.

My computer and printer are back in place, the keyboard and mouse tray slide in where the drawer used to be, small wood file cabinets are at each end, my comfortable chair is in front of it – I no longer have an excuse. It's time to get back to writing. I've got a completed manuscript to get published, another half done, and a stack of articles to write, but I thought I'd take a few minutes to share a story about an old dependable friend who's been with me for a very long time.

Posted by [WilliamCox](#) on Tuesday, September 14 @ 16:24:44 MST

Mexico: The Greatest Threat To U.S. National Security

Facebook Note - June 16, 2010

As early as 1978, William Colby, then head of the CIA, stated, "In the long run, Mexico is a bigger threat to the U.S. than the Soviet Union." Colby was concerned about population growth and illegal immigration; however, in 2008, CIA Director Michael Hayden ranked Mexico as the greatest threat to the security of the United States, after Al Qaeda. Immigration is no longer the reason, and causes of the crisis flow from the north to the south.

Porfirio Díaz, who ruled Mexico from 1876 to 1911, observed, *¡Pobre México! ¡Tan lejos de Dios y tan cerca de los Estados Unidos!* (Poor Mexico, so far from God and so close to the United States!)

Implementation of the North American Free Trade Agreement in 1994 did in fact result in an increase in trade to and from Mexico by the U.S.; however, the 150% increase in exports from the U.S. to Mexico included the massive importation of cheap USDA-subsidized corn, which virtually destroyed Mexico's corn production. Prior to NAFTA, Mexican farmers used half of Mexico's farm land to produce corn, a staple of life in Mexico, for domestic consumption.

By 1996, Mexico was importing more than \$1 billion in corn each year, and millions of indigenous rural workers were thrown out of work and reduced to wage slavery in the cities. Some migrated, illegally, to the U.S. looking for work, but many turned to the more lucrative illegal drug trade.

The former U.S. drug czar, General Barry McCaffrey, says the Mexican government "is fighting for its survival against narco-terrorism" and could lose effective control over the areas of Mexico near the U.S. border.



Fed by enormous profits of up to \$25 billion each year flowing from the U.S., along with a seemingly unlimited supply of military weaponry, the powerful drug cartels

are armed with sophisticated weapons, many of which are smuggled over the border from the United States. It is with this array of superior weapons that drug cartels are threatening the very stability of their own country.

Upon taking office in December 2006, Mexican President Felipe Calderón unleashed the military in his declaration of war on the drug cartels. Since then, more than 23,000 Mexicans have been

killed in drug-related violence, including hundreds in just the past five days.

[President Calderón](#) does not equivocate about the blame: “The origin of our violence problem begins with the fact that Mexico is located next to the country that has the highest levels of drug consumption in the world. It is as if our neighbor were the biggest drug addict in the world.”

Combined with an armed uprising of the indigenous people, who are being thrown off their constitutionally mandated *ejidos* by the neo-liberal policies of the Mexican government, the well-armed and powerful drug cartels pose a clear and present danger to the Mexican government *and* to the United States.

Mexican has a history of revolutions separated by a century: 1811 and 1911. With the 100th anniversary of the last one approaching next year, perhaps the United States should surrender in its own “War on Drugs,” legalize personal use and possession, and avoid the most dangerous threat to its own national security.

Photo Credit: <http://www.newcriminologist.com>

Posted by [WilliamCox](#) on Saturday, September 11 @ 12:54:15 MST

: The Age of Space-Solar Energy: Innovation in the Public Interest

Global Research - May 16, 2010

The industrial revolution has been driven for the past two centuries by the burning of hydrocarbons, first by coal in the Age of Steam, and then by oil and natural gas in the Age of Petroleum; however, as the flow of these fossil fuels slows down as demand goes up, ever-more-intrusive and massive extraction efforts increasingly threaten the progress of industrialization and the civilization it has produced.

The catastrophic Deepwater Horizon oil spill in the Gulf of Mexico is the latest and largest of hundreds of such ocean spills, and the recent methane gas explosion in Massey's Montcoal mine was just another of the many disasters, worldwide, which have snuffed out the lives of workers who labor in dangerous conditions to feed our fossil-fuel addiction.



All around the planet we live upon, the quest for hydrocarbons is threatening the ability of humans to survive in the degrading environment and to govern their own corporate-dominated societies.

It is not just the environmental destruction caused by the extraction of coal-bed methane in Wyoming and Montana, the "fracking" of deep shale-gas formations and the consequential contamination of fresh water aquifers and rivers in the northeastern United States, or the blasting away of mountain tops in Appalachia; it is the fact that these extreme efforts are facilitated by a concert of corporate and governmental corruption that erodes freedom and democracy in the United States and threatens human civilization around the world.

There is no hope for the recovery of earth's environment and the survival of human civilization as long as extraction decisions are governed by corporate greed.

Public energy policy must be based on what is good for the people who vote for representatives, not on what produces profits for the corporations who buy the votes of the people's representatives.

It may already be too late. The environmental destruction caused by the production and burning of fossil fuels may have already set in motion irreversible events which will ultimately spell the extinction of humanity. But, not to worry.

Our loving and forgiving Mother Earth will survive. It may take eons for her oceans, winds, and rains to wipe clean the crap we have produced, but someday, never fear, another of Gaia's children

will learn to fly and will study the artifacts of our existence and will wonder of we and why?

There may be, however, a more sensible and realistic alternative which will preserve the environment and human civilization, *and* which offers a more exciting and rewarding future for our children, as they learn to fly throughout the universe and to explore its adjacent dimensions.

So, let's expand our vision and imagine for a moment how life could be after just a decade or two of innovation in the public interest.

*The drawing of "Who Were They?" is by **Helen Werner Cox**, who was trained as a classical painter at Boston University. She is a retired nationally-certified library media teacher, who has made extensive use of art in her literacy programs.*

[Continued - Print](#)

Posted by [WilliamCox](#) on Saturday, September 11 @ 12:49:37 MST
([Read More...](#) | 11995 bytes more | [comments?](#))

: Elitism and Empathy in American Presidents: Who Cares for the Suffering Children?

[Online Journal](#) - May 1, 2010

Who cares that millions of children are suffering and dying around the world, in Iraq, Afghanistan, Pakistan, Palestine, Gaza, Sudan, the Congo, Colombia, and Mexico, *and* in the United States?

Why are American voters only given the choice of voting for members of the political, social and economic elite to be their president, rather than for leaders who care for and identify with the needs of ordinary people?



Do presidential candidates supplant their empathy with loyalty to the ruling elites, or do the elites only select pliable candidates with an absence of empathy?

Elitism and the Seizure of Political Power

Webster's defines elites as "a group of persons who by virtue of position or education exercise much power or influence."

Elitism was exemplified by the royals of Europe who sat on the thrones of England, France, Spain, Germany, Austria, Russia and other countries. They intermarried and for hundreds of years controlled the lives of their subjects, while occasionally sending them to die in family squabbles with their cousins.

The royal's concern for those they ruled was famously illustrated by Queen Marie Antoinette who, when told that the peasants had no bread, exclaimed, "Then, let them eat cake!" The *hoi polloi* returned the favor during the French Revolution by cutting off her head, along with that of her husband, King Louis XVI.

Earning millions of dollars a year from salaries, bonuses, investments and fraud, the individuals and their families who control major financial institutions, foundations and corporations are the new royalty and, like the kings and queens of old, they have little care or concern for anyone other than themselves, their own, and their profits.

With little allegiance to the United States or its people, these elites seek a "New World Order" within which to exercise their power. They meet secretly on Hilton Head Island and in the Bohemian Grove to network, and they conspire at the Council on Foreign Relations and the Bilderberg Group to complete their arrangements.

Since 1980, all U.S. presidents, including the current incumbent, have shared an allegiance to the

ruling elite, and they have governed with policies that favor the rich and powerful over the poor and disadvantaged.

[Continued - Print](#)

*The drawing of "Who Cares for the Suffering Children" is by **Helen Werner Cox**, who was trained as a classical painter at Boston University. She is a retired nationally-certified library media teacher, who has made extensive use of art in her literacy programs. Credit for photographs used for models include: French Association Friends of Afghans and Afghanistan; Gaza1.wordpress.com; Helen_01 on photobucket; Andy Graham, the hobo traveler; starving_child-sudan21 on wordpress.com; and Marrilee Boyack.*

Posted by [WilliamCox](#) on Saturday, September 11 @ 12:40:35 MST
([Read More...](#) | 22589 bytes more)

: The Mad Hatter's Tea Party Movement

[Consortium News](#) - April 22, 2010

America's right-wing Tea Party movement harkens back to the Boston Tea Party of 1773 when angry citizens protested a British tax by throwing crates of tea into Boston Harbor. But the irrationality and inconsistency of today's Tea Partiers invite a more literary comparison: the tea party of "Alice's Adventures in Wonderland."

Today's Tea Partiers - by rejecting democratic institutions in the name of "liberty," by complaining about their loss of gun rights while brandishing firearms at government parks, by shouting wild claims about socialism" and "fascism," and by making the crypto-racist demand to "get our country back" - show all the sense of the Mad Hatter without the amusing charm.

There may be good reasons why the Tea Partiers are mad; but their solutions are equally mad.

The movement has rallied a mixed group of Americans who have come to believe their government has failed them and that the political process is doing nothing to solve the nation's problems.

While there may be truth in this complaint, the larger truth is that *all of us* are being manipulated by the big corporations and the wealthy elites, who have used the corporate-owned media to mislead many Americans, including the Tea Partiers, into acting against their own interests.

For millions of Americans, lies have become truth, such as during the health-care debate when modest reforms were distorted into "death panels" and "socialized medicine," or when some protesters demanded that the federal government keep its hands off Medicare, apparently not knowing that the health-insurance program for seniors was government-run.

But the sophistry that has infused the Tea Party protests would not have troubled the Mad Hatter or other characters in Lewis Carroll's *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland*.

When the March Hare tells Alice during a tea party in Wonderland that she should "say what you mean," she replied: "I do, at least - at least I mean what I say - that's the same thing you know."

To which the Hatter replied: "Not the same thing a bit! Why, you might as well say that 'I see what I eat' is the same



thing as 'I eat what I see!'"

The March Hare added, "You might as well just say that 'I like what I get' is the same thing as 'I get what I like!'"

The Dormouse piped up, "You might just as well say, that 'I breathe when I sleep' is the same thing as 'I sleep when I breathe!'" The Hatter concluded, "it *is* the same thing with you."

And so it has been for many American workers, the middle class and small business owners who have been deceived by oft-repeated lies and clever propaganda.

Indeed, one could argue that the Republicans used distortions - and the U.S. news media's obsession with the relatively small Tea Party protests - to trick the Democrats into passing a Republican health-care law, one that primarily benefits the insurance industry and other parts of the medical-industrial complex. The insurers stand to get 31 million new customers who will have no option to buy into a public plan.

The losers, again, will be the American people who already suffer from the most expensive and most inequitable health-care system of any industrialized nation. Yet, because of political/media pressures, the proposals that might have reined in costs and guaranteed meaningful access to doctors - a single-payer system or at least a robust public option - were discarded.

The next targets of this anti-government crowd are Social Security and other social welfare programs, including unemployment insurance and public education. With the wealthiest Americans paying historically low marginal income-tax rates, the burden for these programs has already been shifted to workers, the middle class and small business owners.

Now, the American people are being told that they cannot afford the very programs that most benefit them.

While presenting themselves as a kind of vanguard for rank-and-file Americans, the Tea Partiers are instead advocating more tax cuts for the well-to-do and fewer government services (and protections) for everyone. That will only give the corporations and the elites greater dominance over American life.

The future of democracy - and the survival of the last few constraints on unbridled corporate power - hang in the balance.

*The drawing of the Mad Hatter's Tea Party is by **Helen Werner Cox**, who was trained as a classical painter at Boston University. She is a retired nationally-certified library media teacher, who has made extensive use of art in her literacy programs.*

Posted by [WilliamCox](#) on Saturday, September 11 @ 11:22:36 MST

: A Highway for Peace

[Media Monitors Network](#) - March 24, 2010

The latest flap over Israeli housing construction in East Jerusalem has caused me to reflect upon the very deep and complicated feelings I have about the city.

I first passed through Jerusalem in December 1979 in an attempt to sneak into Tehran shortly after the American embassy hostages were taken. I returned two years later following the favorable verdict in the Holocaust Denial case and shared morning tea with Prime Minister Begin. In 1992, I testified in a trial there about the publication of the suppressed Dead Sea Scrolls and refused to identify my secret client. My last visit was in 2000 when my wife and I were married at Christ Church in the Old City on Valentine's Day.

The most pressing political issue is not who has the greatest international property rights in the West Bank and East Jerusalem. Nor, is it that the Palestinian people are more genetically related to the ancient Israelites who occupied Jerusalem at the time of Jesus than the Ashkenazi Jews who now control the Israeli government and who exercise great influence over U.S. policy.

The critical question is: "what can be done to peacefully resolve the dispute in a way that protects the political rights and ensures the operational and economic security of the Israeli *and* Palestinian people and which removes the United States as a target for terrorists?"

Rather than answering with a complicated policy paper, let me share a simple vision I have experienced over the years.

First, accept that the nation of Israel is politically, economically, and militarily capable of defending its own interests on the world stage *and* that it has the right to be free of internal terrorists attacks.

Second, imagine that the United Nations imposes a 50-year protectorate over the land of Palestine, including Gaza, as it existed prior to the 1967 war and declared the area to be a duty-free economic zone, with security and freedom of access guaranteed by the UN.

This is the vision:

Instead of the existing concrete wall, I imagine a modern freeway extending from Gaza through Hebron, Bethlehem, East Jerusalem, Jericho and north along the 1967 West Bank border through the Golan Heights to the Syrian and Lebanese borders and terminating at the Mediterranean Sea.

Like all freeways, I imagine that the highway (border) is fenced and that it is patrolled and controlled by three-person motorized teams consisting of a non-Arab UN police supervisor, an Israeli police officer and a Palestinian police officer.



I imagine that the protectorate police force is only armed with non-military weapons, that all members are highly trained professionals, and that the protectorate provides economic and

physical security to all of its inhabitants, both Palestinians and Jews, from its administrative headquarters in East Jerusalem.

I imagine that after living in peace for 50 years, the right of Israel to exist will be accepted by all nations in the Middle East, that the United States and the United Nations are perceived to have acted even-handedly in the matter, and that the "War on Terrorism" will have become a footnote in history.

Posted by [WilliamCox](#) on Saturday, September 11 @ 11:12:06 MST

: Restore the power to the people: Amend the Constitution!

Online Journal - January 29, 2010

¿Plata o plomo? Colombian and Mexican drug gangs ask government officials, judges and police officers which they prefer, “silver or lead,” when offering bribes and threatening violence.

The U.S. Supreme Court decision granting corporations the same free speech rights as natural persons allows them to spend unlimited amounts of money to influence elections and public affairs.

Corporations, foreign and domestic, can now force politicians to choose silver or lead when supporting or opposing corporate and foreign power interests.

Any politician who places the well-being of the public over corporate demands can count on well-financed negative publicity at the next election.

Moreover, corporations will be able to directly influence the election of state judges and the confirmation of federal judges.

With the Congress, White House and Supreme Court now up for sale to the highest bidder, we, the people of the United States of America, must exercise our fading power before it is lost forever.

The 11th and 12th Amendments clearly establish that the Constitution exists to protect the rights and powers of the people, not corporations.

It is *our* Constitution! We must amend it to ensure it protects us against corporations.

The Power to the People Amendment

Section 1

Only natural persons shall be protected by this Constitution and entitled to the rights and freedoms it guarantees.

Section 2

Nothing contained in this article shall be construed to abridge the freedom of the press for non-person entities engaged in the gathering and reporting of fact, analysis, and opinion. In all other respects, Congress and the States shall regulate and tax non-person entities as necessary for the public good.



Section 3

This article shall become operative once it has been ratified as an amendment to the Constitution by the legislatures of three-fourths of the several States, or by Conventions in three-fourths of the States thereof.

*The drawing of the NASCAR politician is by **Helen Werner Cox**, who was trained as a classical painter at Boston University. She is a retired nationally-certified library media teacher, who has made extensive use of art in her literacy programs.*

Posted by [WilliamCox](#) on Saturday, September 11 @ 11:08:56 MST

: A Smart and Simple Tax

[The Public Record](#) - December 12, 2009

The burden of taxation in the United States has been shifted from those who most benefit from our government to those who work the hardest and earn the least. This shrugging of responsibility is not only unfair, it fails to accomplish public policy goals required to move the economy out of recession and the environment out of crisis.

Uncorrected, the heavy burden of taxation borne by workers and small businesses today for the benefit of corporations and the wealthy elite will certainly lead to chaos and violence tomorrow.

It is time to discard our stupid and complex system of taxation and replace it with a smart and simple tax that balances the burden of taxation with the benefits of government.



How It Happened

[Commencing in 1817,](#)

Congress eliminated all internal taxes and funded the government by tariffs on imported goods. Tariffs increased the cost of goods imported from outside the country, and were primarily paid by the wealthy and larger businesses. Laborers, farmers, and small business owners paid little or no taxes because the goods they consumed were primarily manufactured in the U.S.

Enforced by a new Internal Revenue Service, Congress passed an income tax during the Civil War along with sales, excise and inheritance taxes. The income tax was progressive in that those who earned less than \$10,000 only paid 3%, while those who earned more were taxed at a higher rate.

Congress eliminated the income tax in 1868, and although it later flirted with taxing income, the government mainly relied on tariffs and an internal tax on tobacco and liquor for support. The U.S. Supreme Court ruled in 1896 that taxes on income violated the Constitution, since they were not apportioned among the states.

The Sixteenth Amendment in 1913 allowed Congress to tax the incomes of both individuals and corporations. Taxes continued to increase over the years, and with the introduction of payroll withholding in 1943, most Americans were forced to pay a tax on their incomes.

Initially, the wealthy and corporations were taxed more heavily than individuals. When Eisenhower was president, corporations paid approximately a quarter of all federal taxes, the maximum tax rate on top earners was 92%, excise taxes brought in 19% of tax revenue, and most workers paid minimum Social Security payroll taxes.

Today, corporations pay about 12% of income taxes, the maximum rate is only 35% for all those

who earn more than \$372,950, even those who receive millions or billions each year, and excise taxes have dropped to 3% of revenue.

It gets even worse!

[Government Accountability Office](#) reported that two-thirds of all U.S. corporations *and 78% of foreign companies doing business in the United States* paid no federal income taxes between 1998 and 2005, even though they booked trillions of dollars in receipts.

The Gross Domestic Product (GDP) of the United States was almost \$14.2 trillion in 2008. The government took in \$1.2 trillion in estimated receipts and sustained an estimated deficit of \$390 billion. Approximately 45% of the revenues came from individual income taxes, 36% from Social Security and other payroll taxes, 12% from corporate income taxes, 3% from excise taxes, 1.2% from estate and gift taxes, 1.3% from customs duties, and 1.5% from other sources.

[The Tax Policy Center](#) calculates that individual income taxes and payroll taxes now account for four out of every five federal revenue dollars.

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Posted by [WilliamCox](#) on Saturday, September 11 @ 11:02:45 MST

What You Didn't Know About The War

November 13, 2009

A shocking and deeply disturbing YouTube video was posted by TheParadigmShift on October 22, 2009.

Portions of the video are narrated by Dahlia Wasfi, an Iraqi physician, whose website is located at <http://www.liberatethis.com>.

Warning: The video contains heart-wrenching scenes of infants and children who have been born horribly deformed or injured by the U.S. wars of aggression in Afghanistan and Iraq.



It is difficult to believe that any fair-minded person could continue to support the U.S. War on Terror and the occupations of Iraq and Afghanistan once they have viewed this video.

Please circulate the following link to all correspondents and ask them to take a few minutes to see the effects of the wars being fought in their name.

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IsrMzfhdmkU>

Posted by [WilliamCox](#) on Saturday, September 11 @ 11:00:25 MST

Extremism and Suffering Children

[Dandelion Salad](#) - June 15, 2009

What does a shootout at the Holocaust Museum in Washington, D.C., the confessions of a Khmer Rouge jailer and the murder of a Kansas medical doctor have in common? The answer is "children," and how they suffer from being targeted and used by extremists to advance their own hateful agendas.

In 1981, acting as a public interest lawyer, I represented a Holocaust survivor who had been a 17-year-old boy when his entire family was murdered in Nazi concentration camps. We sued a group of radical right-wing organizations that denied the Holocaust and, as a publicity ploy, had offered a reward for proof it had occurred.

During the hearing in the Los Angeles County Superior Court, I asked, "If the Holocaust is a hoax, then where are all the children?" The answer was that the death camps were primarily industrial operations that worked prisoners to death, and children were quickly murdered because they were too young to contribute either their labor or body fat to the enterprise.

The presiding judge wisely disposed of the primary issue by simply taking "judicial notice" of the "historical fact" that Jews were gassed to death at Auschwitz in the summer of 1944.

As I was reading in *Mother Jones* about the murder of a guard at the Holocaust Museum last week, I was not surprised to learn that James von Brunn, the shooter, had left a note saying "the Holocaust is a lie," and that he was associated with the very same organizations we had defeated almost 30 years ago.

In the past, von Brunn expressed his admiration of Willis Carto, founder of the Liberty Lobby as an umbrella organization for other extremist groups, including the National Alliance organized by William Pierce, whose hatred had focused on African Americans.

Carto also established the Institute for Historical Review to promulgate anti-Semitic propaganda on college campuses, including the reward offer. And, he used the Noontide Press to publish a wide range of hate materials, including at least one book by von Brunn in which he claimed there was a Jewish conspiracy to "destroy the white gene pool."

In our lawsuit, we established that these organizations were essentially moneymaking operations that profited by tailoring and peddling hate materials to the various prejudices and hatreds of their customers.

Ultimately, the defendants paid a \$90,000 judgment and issued an apology "to Mr. Mel Mermelstein, a survivor of Auschwitz-Birkenau and Buchenwald, and all other survivors of Auschwitz for the pain, anguish and suffering he and all other Auschwitz survivors have sustained relating to the \$50,000 reward offer for proof that 'Jews were gassed in gas chambers at Auschwitz.'"

Last week, after being painfully reminded about the murdered children of the Holocaust, both Jews and Gypsies, another horrible story about murdered children came across my desktop.

Reuters reported that the chief jailer of the Khmer Rouge confessed at his trial in Phnom Penh that Pol Pot had specifically ordered the murder of the children among the 1.7 million Cambodians who were slaughtered, because "we were afraid those children would take revenge."

The Cambodian children were not murdered in gas chambers. They were taken into the "Killing Fields" and clubbed to death.

Finally, as I later read about the murder of Doctor George Tiller by a "staunch opponent of abortion," yet another, more complex, image of suffering children came to mind.

Dr. Tiller's clinic had been bombed in 1985, and he was shot in both arms in 1993 by an anti-abortionist; however, his murder reveals another way how children suffer as a result of extremist hatred.

He was one of the few doctors who had the courage to help women cope with impossible late-term pregnancies that threatened either their own lives, or which would deliver a child incapable of leading anything other than a life of misery, one whose quality of "living" would be so poor as to not even qualify as "life."



Dr. Tiller did not "murder babies." He was a healer who helped women abort late-term pregnancies under conditions where the fetus would die shortly after birth from conditions, such as an exposed brain or Down Syndrome with severe congenital heart defects, or where one twin had died in the womb and toxins were killing the other twin and the mother.

Many of his patients desperately wanted children, and Dr. Tiller saved their lives and preserved their health so they had the chance to bear healthy babies and build strong families.

While many extremists are the first to say they act on behalf of children, they are often the last to lift a finger to help poor mothers raise, educate or provide health care for disabled children.

"Pro-life" extremists are quite willing to condemn these children, and their families, to a lifetime of suffering to promote their own intolerant religious beliefs. As was Scott Roeder, the murderer of Dr. Tiller, who subscribed to hate literature advocating that the killing of an abortionist should be legally justifiable homicide.

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Posted by [WilliamCox](#) on Saturday, September 11 @ 10:46:52 MST

Fear of Crime and Things to Come

Axis of Logic - May 15, 2009

Fear resides in all living creatures. It's what keeps us alive down at the watering hole or out on the street.

The fear of crime strikes all who live with its dread, as well as those who are personally victimized. Fear keeps us from doing what we want to do; it causes us to distrust friends and to view strangers with prejudice; and it can trick us into trading freedom for a false sense of security.

Hard Times

Many of us have grown up with an expectation that we have the right to a comfortable existence and that with education and hard work we can achieve a better than average life. Such naivetè has been mostly dispelled. Familiar patterns have been disrupted-perhaps forever.

Billions are owed on student loans by graduates who can't find a job. Millions of hard-working people are suddenly out of work and unable to sustain their dreams. They are saddled with massive credit card debts and unpayable mortgages, and they find little relief in new bankruptcy laws that deny them the chance to obtain a fresh start.



More than six million workers have lost their jobs in the last year and the "real" unemployment rate that includes "marginally attached" workers is 15.8 percent. The actual unemployment rate that includes those no longer looking for work is far higher, up to 25 percent. Unemployment benefits have been extended several times, most recently under the federal economic stimulus program, but the time will come when even this benefit will expire for millions of working families.

Tent cities are springing up around the country as the mass of homeless, hopeless and helpless people continues to swell. Evictions are skyrocketing, as even formerly middle-class people including professionals, small business owners and skilled workers can't pay their rents.

Food banks are overwhelmed, welfare safety nets are being shredded, and the tax revenues of municipal, county and state governments are plummeting, just when they are needed the most.

It is likely that the number of all children who live in poverty will exceed 27 percent next year, including 50 percent of all African American children.

As we worry about losing our jobs, paying our bills, feeding our children, and obtaining health care, must we also fear becoming a victim of crime?

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Posted by [WilliamCox](#) on Saturday, September 11 @ 10:25:51 MST

No Victors in the War on Dissent

Counterpunch - January 13, 2009

Among the wars currently being fought by the American government is one in which there can be no winners. Our prior law enforcement experiences warn us that the “war on terrorism” has spawned an internal “war on dissent” in which everyone loses.

Author **William John Cox**’s law enforcement career spanned 40 years, the early part of which was spent as a Los Angeles police officer and which included policing of both the riots and terrorist incidents in that city in the late 60’s to early 70’s. One of the first assignments given to author **Coleen Rowley** as a new FBI agent was to help in the processing and releasing of the numerous files improperly gathered by J. Edgar Hoover after the National Lawyer’s Guild won its FOIA lawsuits against the FBI in the early 1980’s.

The Church Committee unearthed evidence in 1976 that the Viet Nam War had provided cover for the domestic infiltration and wiretapping of civil rights and anti-war groups and resulted in legislation and regulations against the worst abuses. However, the history of government repression and spying on those who dissent against its policies and practices seems to be repeating itself.

Following 9-11, the Bush Administration erased or circumvented many of these hard-won legal restraints. Warrantless searches under the PATRIOT Act and illegal electronic surveillance swept up more than terrorist threats as the government increasingly confused dissent, which builds up a free and democratic society, with terrorism, which seeks to tear it down.

Irrespective of our political views, all of us must be concerned about the current prosecution of young people, who sincerely oppose an illegal war being fought by an unrepresentative government and who believe it’s better to have no government at all rather than one that commits international war crimes. They stand accused of being terrorists because they naively call themselves “anarchists.” In a free society, we all have the duty to stand up and fight against tyranny, and to speak out in defense of others who do.

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Posted by [WilliamCox](#) on Saturday, September 11 @ 09:48:24 MST



Making Smarter Cars Instead of Stupid Decisions

Global Research - December 1, 2008

When the Big Three CEOs recently descended on Washington in their fancy corporate jets with inflated egos and high hopes for a juicy piece of the government's \$8.6 trillion corporate welfare pie, they were sent home hungry to do their homework and to write an essay about how they plan to spend bailout funds.

Undoubtedly, the executives will travel business class when they come back this week; they will each have a business plan in hand, and Congress *will* give them \$25 billion of taxpayer funds to gamble with. Equally without doubt, the money will be wasted, they will not learn from their mistakes, and they will be back again, and again, and again.

The Big Three have a track record of making really stupid decisions.

Manufacturers have recklessly spent thousands of dollars per vehicle on advertising to convince drivers that they really want big gas-guzzling cars and trucks instead of the smaller fuel-efficient vehicles they really need.

The car companies have foolishly peddled financing and leasing deals far beyond the financial means



of their buyers, and they have vigorously opposed realistic fuel economy standards.

Overall, new car sales are down 32% this year and October was the worst sales month since World War II. Ford lost \$3.3 billion and General Motors lost \$4.2 billion in the third quarter, and they are quickly burning through their cash reserves. Chrysler has not reported its most recent losses, but its sales are down 31% and its estimated losses were \$1.28 billion in the first half of 2008.

With sales grinding to a halt and their credit ratings plummeting, the Big Three cannot borrow sufficient funds in the credit markets to survive. Like drunks on a freeway, they are racing down the fast lane without a seat belt, holding a whiskey bottle in one hand and flipping off the public with the other, daring everyone else to stop them before they crash.

The auto companies have corporate partners, manufacturing facilities and distributors in all other developed nations. Their business dealings are so entangled with foreign economies that their failure would have worldwide repercussions.

Bankruptcy would likely force a liquidation of assets rather than a judicially-supervised reorganization and would, at best, result in the destruction of the automobile unions and employees' retirement and healthcare benefit plans. However, every American worker and taxpayer would pay the price.

Elimination of the American automobile industry would send shock waves through the economy, causing the failure of thousands of automobile parts suppliers and car dealerships. Auto parts

supply companies are among the top industrial employers in 19 states, and one out of every ten jobs in America is supported, in one way or another, by the automobile industry. It is estimated that the failure of General Motors alone could result in the loss of more than 15 million jobs.

Failure of the Big Three would only benefit foreign corporations who would swoop in to buy up the surplus manufacturing capacity, such as computerized robots, at bargain basement prices, and the balance of payments deficit would soar beyond calculation in the absence of domestic competition.

President-elect Obama opposes a “blank check” for the industry and says that “we should help the auto industry, but what we should expect is that ... any help that we provide is designed to assure a long-term, sustainable auto industry and not just kicking the can down the road.”

The Democratic majority in Congress appears ready to provide a \$25 billion Emergency Bridge Loan to the auto makers by either tapping into the Wall Street Bailout funds or by redirecting money already approved for retooling old factories to produce more fuel-efficient vehicles.

Companies receiving loans would have to give an equity stake to the government and would be charged 5% interest for the first five years and 9% thereafter. Companies could not pay dividends to common stockholders and would have to agree to a \$250,000 annual pay cap for executives.

If the Emergency Bridge Loan is the best Congress can come up, the can *will* just be “kicked down the road” – but not very far. General Motors burned \$6.9 billion, Ford burned \$7.7 billion, and Chrysler burned \$3 billion in just the third quarter of 2008. Simple arithmetic tells us that \$25 billion will not even get them as far as July 2009 before the Big Three CEOs will return with their extortionary threats against the economy and still without a clue.

The American automobile industry can be saved; however salvation requires America’s elected representatives, including its new president, to get off their knees and to begin to think outside of the box. The industry has to be forced to make smarter cars instead of stupid decisions for its own good and for the benefit of everyone.

[Continued - Print](#)

Posted by [WilliamCox](#) on Saturday, September 11 @ 09:33:31 MST

From the Comet to the Spaceplane: The Future of Aviation

Global Research - June 12, 2009

As commercial aviation becomes increasingly dependent upon computerized digital technology and less reliant upon hands-on human control, we have to consider the crash of Air France Flight 447 into the Atlantic Ocean, with the loss of all aboard, and other similar disasters in the light of our collective experience and expectations.



The Comet

First flown in 1949 and introduced into passenger service in 1951, the Comet was the first pressurized, jet-propelled commercial aircraft. Powered by four “Ghost” turbojet engines, the Comet was found to be fuel efficient above 30,000 feet and flew at almost 500 miles per hour, far faster than the most advanced piston-powered airplanes in service at the time.

England’s de Havilland Company rapidly gained a significant advantage in the commercial aircraft market, carrying more than 30,000 passengers and receiving orders for 30 Comets in the first year; however, serious problems with the innovative design quickly developed. Two crashes in the first year in Italy and Pakistan were likely caused by a defective wing profile design that resulted in a loss of lift during steep takeoffs.

A series of catastrophic crashes followed. In 1953, structural failure of the airframe beginning with the stabilizer caused a Comet to crash shortly after takeoff in India. The Comet was equipped with fully powered flight controls that were criticized because they resulted in a loss of “feel” and may have caused excessive stress on the flight control surfaces. Later in 1953, another Comet exploded in midair during a storm over India with the loss of all passengers and crew. The following year, in 1954, two more Comets experienced midair explosive decompression and fell into the Mediterranean killing everyone aboard.

Prime Minister Winston Churchill grounded the fleet saying, “The cost of solving the Comet mystery must be reckoned neither in money nor in manpower.” The Comet airframes were subjected to extensive testing that ultimately identified the most likely cause to be metal fatigue caused by stress and strain on the aircraft skin caused by repeated cycles of pressurization.

The first series of Comets were scrapped and modifications were made to the second series; however, the fleet remained grounded until the fourth series was introduced in 1958.

Although the plane became the first jet used for transatlantic service, de Havilland had already lost its competitive advantage to Boeing, Douglas and other U.S. manufacturers, who profited from the Comet experience.

The last Comet was delivered in 1964, and even the government-owned British Overseas Airways Corporation began to fly American aircraft.

The Airbus

Commencing in the mid-1960, a consortium of European aircraft firms began to collaborate in an attempt to break the lock held by American manufacturers on the commercial aircraft market by agreeing to collectively manufacture a low-cost “airbus” to transport smaller numbers of passengers over shorter distances. Underwritten by the governments of England, France and

Germany, the Airbus was intended to be the first mass-produced “fly-by-wire” (FBW) airliner.

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Posted by [WilliamCox](#) on Saturday, September 11 @ 09:27:37 MST

Column Right

Street Images



The March 20, 2010 anti-war march in Hollywood with *War* by Edwin Starr.

The June 25, 2009 protest against Justice Jay Bybee at the Federal Court of Appeals in Pasadena with *The Torture Never Stops* by Frank Zappa.

The May Day 2009 Protest in Los Angeles with *Clandestino* by Manu Chao.

The March 21, 2009 anti-war march in Hollywood with *Your Flag Decal Won't Get You Into Heaven Anymore* by John Prine.

The August 2, 2008 anti-war protest in Los Angeles Pershing Square with *A New Revolution* by the Freedom People.

The May Day 2008 march in downtown Los Angeles with *Guerrra* by Fosforo.

Women protesting at the March 15, 2008 anti-war march in Hollywood with *I Am Woman* by Helen Reddy.

Young people at the March 15, 2008 anti-war march in Hollywood with *Impeach the President* by D.J. Green Lantern.

The October 27, 2007 anti-war march in LA with *The New National Anthem* by Strata.

All photographs by William John Cox

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The Last Generation of Mindkind On Earth

The following essay was written many years ago and, although a little lengthy for the Internet, it is posted here for those who like to mix a little philosophy with their politics.

Questions. Should the citizens of the United States engage in a peaceful political rebellion to avoid economic disaster and future wars founded, not upon wishful thinking and hopeful denial, but on a simple and specific agenda for effective collective action?

Is not the desire for freedom a universal trait of all sentient beings? Otherwise inequality of opportunity forever retards the intellectual evolution of their species.

Discussion. Once the melody of freedom's song is raised in democratic harmony, it echoes throughout the heavens for all to hear, as there is but peace in all of the universe, and it has been that way for all of eternity.

No being, truly thinking, makes war instead of exploring the stars, for without peace, no being can fly far from their birth planet. They can only foul their nest and peck their siblings to death, thinking conditions beyond their nest are the same as surround them, never knowing that there's no Star Wars, except in the blind fantasies of those who never learn to see.

Danger. If there is but peace in all the universe and it has been that way for all of eternity, what then must we do to have any voice in our fate?

Are we to continue living in fear of atomic-tipped missiles in the former USSR? Is there a more

real danger that one day some small dispute ignites a financial war and China dumps its dollars or OPEC begins to trade its oil in Euros?

Or, what if some other tiny economic turmoil twists the stock, bond, currency, and real estate markets into a chaotic contractual tailspin, and for whatever reason, in a single day, paper and electronic money simply cease to have economic relevance and virtually all legal wealth is eliminated?

Then, only gold and other metals will have any real value; not silicon, plastic, or credit ratings.

Quick. Then, when there's no gasoline for sale, nor cabs to call, my spare change will be worth more than your former millions, and my bicycle will get me farther than your BMW.

Without electricity and wave transmissions, your telephone, computers, televisions, DVDs and stereos are worth less than my knife.

If all houses are for sale and all apartments are for rent, all titles are worthless, and all property is available for the taking.

If everybody is looking for work, nobody will be hiring.

If everything worth stealing has been stolen, you will find nothing to eat, no matter the caliber of your gun, or the number of your last few bullets.

Much like the Earth being struck by a giant asteroid, perhaps one-third, half, or even three-quarters of us, billions all over the world, could all be dead in a matter of months.

No possessions, no livestock, no grain, no fruit, no game, nothing: Nothing to eat but the flesh of our own kind, starting with the babies, who will be the first to die.

Dirty. Will it be a blessing if the troubles are prolonged? Unless something is done, unless we, together, take positive action, things will steadily get worse instead of better.

Negatives will multiple negatives, violent crime will continue to increase, and the social ills which compel the forgotten to riot will remain uncured.

Fires, floods, earthquakes, and other disasters will not cease to occur, but our governments will cease to do anything to help anyone.>/p>

At first, as now, our governments will cut to the "basics," and finally will do nothing but collect taxes, sacrifice our youth fighting local warlords, and impose the death penalty for all crimes, either immediately or through forced labor.

Lost Knowledge. The downward spiral may be less steep but just as deadly, for we will soon lose the collective genius of the last two or three generations of accumulated race knowledge.

As we gather here together at the threshold of galactic awareness, we stand to lose all we've learned and conceived of in just the last century.

Once the last skulls that once contained our vast database of information and experience are laid in the ground – at that moment, the flame of our collective intellect will flicker and die.

When the daily quest for food leaves no time in the day to teach the little children to read, the last surviving texts will be of small value except to start a fire.

At that precise moment, when the last of us who can read these words and comprehend their meaning, sleep our last dream, we, who once shared these thoughts, will cease to be; our words will be silenced and our learning lost, and our tears and toil will have been for nought.

The Last Generation. Along with our concrete castings, twisted girders, ancient carvings in stone and other megalithic artifacts, eons from now, a few scraps of our language may be found to identify us as the last generation of one of Gaia's children, an aquatic primate, known as human, who once climbed out of the lakes, through the trees and along the rivers, sailed in boats and settled distant shores and waterways around the world, harnessed the atom and flew to the Moon.

There the story will end, and across the universal field of mind and along the eternal corridors of time it will be whispered of how the human infant's first few breaths in the breeze of wisdom were smothered by the wasting virus of deception, hatred, and war. Of how it lay struggling in its earthly crib, looking up with fevered eyes through the cosmic window, fighting with all the strength of its existence, fortified by the antibiotics of knowledge, and its healing properties of wisdom, yet still too weak to see.

Nothing more can be said, for we were stillborn.

Song of Mindkind. Or, celestial history may record that we, the last generation of the second millennia following the time of Jesus, fifteen centuries after the teachings of Muhammad, were the last generation to suffer war and who survived birth as Children of Mindkind on Earth.

Then, songs will be sung and stories told of our joining minds in a powerful signal of freedom, of the moment our souls sensed the secret and soared with the Spirit of Wisdom to vibrate the waves of eternity with the melody of our children's voices, so they may be forever heard to harmonize in the Universal Choir of Peace.

Reality of Now. As glorious as that image may be, now is now, and let's face it folks; things are bad and the future is looking worse. So, what can we do?

First. We must overcome our fear, and the anger and distrust it compels, and recognize the actual and potential power available in the relatively free, well-educated and communicating society we still enjoy in the United States.

We must concentrate our individual vote into its most powerful political focus ever, for if we don't use it with responsibility, we are certain to lose it with alacrity.

Next, we must see ourselves for who we really are. Much like the old advertisement for Ivory soap, we are 99.44% pure.

If we look at the totality of the billions of human decisions made every day, worldwide, including all the software, blueprints, CAD drawings, business plans, PERT charts, budgets, contracts, planting of crops, even deciding in the morning what to wear to work, or what to eat at lunch, we will find that we mostly tell each other the truth and closely cooperate to get most things done with the help of others we trust.

Otherwise, things simply wouldn't work; you couldn't drive down a highway without striking another car, and you couldn't put your children to bed in the evening without whimpers of hunger.

Travel anywhere in the world and visit any home, and you will only find families struggling each day to live and who love and cherish their babies. They all want a better life for their children, and they mostly teach them the best way to earn it is to tell the truth and to work hard.

From the moment we struck the first flint and created language to teach the making of fire and tools, our species has been defined by our ability to mentally synapse beyond the limitations of instinct, acquire and expand knowledge, and to teach the tool of learning and the value of exploration to each new generation.

Now, as we learn to step from the fertile fields of Earth into the mind field of time, and to surf the waves of information along the seashores of space and to cast our net upon the wisdom of eternity, we must continue to trust and increasingly respect the thoughts of others on various subjects, though opposed to our own.

The opinions of others may be based upon better information or different insights, and even if wrong, we will all profit more from civil, constructive discussion, than from dissension, deception and destruction.

Though some are so sly as to forever lie, and the ability to deceive and disassemble will forever be seen by some as a value in achieving group or individual goals, and though many will forever respond to fear with a violent hatred of others, and real fear once felt can never be erased.

Although everyone may forever try to cheat on their taxes, these emotional matters of conscience are but a weak pathology on our physiological soul, best cured by the light of truth and the balm of understanding.

Courage. Each of us must find within ourselves the individual courage to perform one simple rebellious act and elect to decline protection of the computerized secret ballot.

Instead of responding like lab animals pushing a touch screen in response to the latest ten-second television smear ad, we can each take a little longer to vote and to carefully consider the candidates presented on the ballot by the various parties and factions who vie for our vote.

Once we decide, we can demonstrate our literacy by carefully writing in our personal choice for president of the United States, whether or not his or her name is or is not on the ballot.

Presently, half of all voters don't bother to go to the polls. But, if only 15 to 25% of us were to write in our vote, trust that the politicians will be scrambling to ensure that all votes cast for them are legally counted, as they should be for anyone registering a willingness to accept votes cast in their name for any office of public trust.

Uncomplicated statutes should ensure that existing parties would continue to provide consensus for people with similar political views and the organization and resources to promote those views, and all Constitutional institutions, including the Electoral College would continue to function as intended. There would only be a simple adjustment in who does what.

Instead of being offered phony political platforms, devoid of substance or clearly defined policy, *we the people* would debate and express our desired policy and elect those candidates most committed to enact it.

National elections could become festive and joyous events, with real political parties to celebrate the end of electioneering and relief from hired advertising.

There should be a paid holiday and voting could extend over a three-day weekend.

It might even take a week to count all of the ballots, and there might have to be a run-off and debates between the top two candidates.

Who can know for sure what may happen? But, surely, the election process which evolves will have to be better than the one we have now, when media exit polls decide elections by the morning coffee break in Iowa, and the loser concedes by lunch time in California.

In any case, by more effectively achieving a better personal understanding with our government and those we elect to represent us, we citizens would gain greater control, our lives would be less restricted, and our vote could become a sacrament of social and civic freedom.

Confidence. Next, we must insist that the ballot include for our vote the twelve most relevant and critical issues facing our government during the upcoming four-year term.

Our yes or no vote would be an expression of our collective judgment in the making of our own national policy.

We would not make law: That is what our elected assemblies are for. However, the voice of a 51/49 percent split would be far different than the roar of an 89/11 vote in curbing the influence of powerful and wealthy special interest groups.

If we simple voters are smart enough to earn money and to figure out how to pay our taxes, we are also smart enough to collectively express basic policy to guide our government, and to personally vote for whomever we consider most qualified to act in accordance with our desired policies.

Duty. Everywhere in the universe, on every planet with sentient life, in every nation on Earth, and in every society, every person has a universal right and duty to act, individually and collectively, to secure essential freedom for the nurturing and education of their children.

Otherwise, if we, individually, sit around doing nothing except wait for the leadership of our politicians, whose only idea of making policy is to increasingly proscribe otherwise legal behavior, increase penalties, and take away rights (except when they are caught), we will find ourselves alone when our individual worlds collapse around us.

Choices. Should we imagine, however, that all policy questions were thoroughly debated, and such a large margin of voters answered as to be an undeniable expression of desirable public policy, and that sympathetic representatives were elected to work out the best ways to implement those policies, we can for a few moments reflect upon the kind of life we might enjoy here in America, or in any other nation, country, state, or society whose free electors so elect.

Family. The society which evolved from such a free election could not be a utopia, for the daily problems of life never go away until solved, and parents will always have to work hard to raise their children and to teach them to survive. But, the society could be one in which our government becomes more compassionate and caring about our family needs and less concerned about itself.

Every citizen, irrespective of wealth or status, requires certain necessities every day of their life, and for those with responsibilities of family, matters of health, education and freedom of travel are essential to social survival.

To meet these core needs, all citizens could be equally helped by the resources of national Health,

Education and Energy Corps.

Each Corps would have its own national service academy, with admission by congressional appointment, and would commission officers dedicated to serving the citizens of a free society and their families.

Then, every parent and every child's burden of caring for the illnesses and injuries of family members would be lightened by the compassion and basic care provided by their Health Corps.

Each child would receive a minimum community college education, to absorb the vast knowledge that challenges their comprehension and receive better training for employment, and each would be personally encouraged and tutored by the data and resources of their Education Corps.

You could treat your family to a inexpensive annual vacation, visit distant relatives, and explore National Parks across America, using free electro-magnetic energy along the interstate highway system fueled by the pool resources organized by your Energy Corps.

The highway system could be powered by massive micro-wave energy from space collectors and supplies excess capacity to local power companies.

Except for staple food stamp and school lunch programs to help preserve our national agricultural capacity and reserves and the health of our children, the role of the federal government in public welfare would be sharply limited.

The primary responsibility for individual and family assistance would be borne by state and local governments, and sustained by the sharing society of the American people and their friends and families.

The work ethic and the essential value of individual labor would be instilled in all students, and those who elect to be sponsored and trained by the Education Corps to contribute, without compensation, at least one year of valuable public service upon adulthood, would earn a free four-year college education.

The tremendous intellectual energy released by providing equality of opportunity to all children would manifest itself in solutions to our problems which will otherwise never be found.

The most imaginative cures for diseases and creative scientific discoveries will be invented, not by the children of the wealthy and intellectual elite, but by those who would otherwise never have had a chance to learn./p>

Only unimaginable power has the energy to propel us to the meaningful places within our universe and into its related dimensions – not the puny machines of war we are presently wasting our money on.

A Just And Civil Society. As the virus of deceit and hatred can never be completely eliminated from all who have become infected, personal violence and other serious crimes will continue to be inflicted upon innocent victims.

Justice should be more finely focused on the most serious crimes, with alternative family courts having the primary responsibility for resolving most cases resulting from alcoholism, drug

addiction and other situational offenses.

To eliminate the gigantic profits which feed organized crime and public corruption, and to end the "War on Drugs" against our own society, medical doctors could be authorized to prescribe low-cost drugs for those who become addicted and who elect to participate in an educational recovery and treatment program.

Concurrently, local communities could be authorized to collect fees and issue permits for the growing of a few marijuana plants for personal or medical use and for controlling the agricultural cultivation of hemp for the commercial manufacture of clothing and other lawful purposes.

Confinement for serious offenses could be both swift and consistent with the preservation and enhancement of all existing Constitutional guarantees.

The judicial exclusion of relevant evidence as a Constitutional remedy for Fourth Amendment search and seizure violations by law enforcement officers could be replaced in those states which enact an alternative civil remedy which provides minimum damages for violations, irrespective of the crime or its punishment and, concurrently, within those communities which establish Peer Review Councils, consisting of public and police members to peacefully act together as peers to resolve complaints of police misconduct and to formulate the policies which guide the actions of their local officers.

The primary responsibility for law enforcement would continue to be borne by the people in local communities working as peers with the officers they appoint to exercise the restraint of police authority and empower to legitimately lay hands on those of us who violate the freedoms and rights of others.

The motivation and manner in which we apply physical restraint to ourselves defines, perhaps more than any other single factor, the very nature of justice in any society and the probabilities of its survival.

Personal ownership of firearms can never be entirely prohibited, but legal and civic responsibility for licensing, registration and reasonable use would be established by state and local statutes which balance individual protection with community concerns.

Ultimately, in every society placing a supreme value on life, the final responsibility forever rests, at law and in conscience, upon each who elects to possess or use a firearm in detriment of the rights of others and who, without justification, either pulls the trigger, or doesn't.

The role of the federal government in criminal law enforcement should return to its historic place of being restricted to those offenses clearly having a national effect.

Nonetheless, the federal government must continue in its responsibility to provide leadership in matters of justice by assisting local and state authorities, as requested, and by establishing a national Justice Academy, along with those of Health, Education, and Energy.

Corps cadets in all academies would first be schooled together in the values of a free society, before being specially educated to serve as professional health, education, energy, police, probation, court, and correctional administrators.

With equal access to a fair and impartial justice system, a more civil society would emerge -- one in which people are more likely to respect the rights of others and to treat them with dignity, and in

which individuals are less likely to respond with violence and anger when their own sensibilities are offended.

War. As a matter of principle, we must renounce the use of military and economic warfare against the peoples of other nations as an instrument of foreign policy, except in response to an armed invasion or nuclear attack.

For other provocations, the president should present the evidence to Congress and identify the individual offender who presents the gravest danger and who controls the threatening instruments of power.

Rather than asking for a Declaration of War, the president could request a simple resolution of Congress naming the accused in a Warrant of Apprehension, demanding he present himself at the World Court of Justice at The Hague to personally answer charges brought there under International Law by the United States against the nation whose government he purports to represent.

Should the accused fail to appear, he would be declared an "outlaw," a sizeable reward offered for his apprehension, and we could begin using the most effective media available to inform the people of the outlaw's nation of our grounds for concern and to reassure them that we mean them no harm.

We would ask only that the dictator's victims distance themselves from the target of our apprehension and the anticipation of authorized means to secure his personal submission, including the use of deadly force, in whatever form or fashion.

Every member of the United States military service would first receive basic training as emergency medical and rescue technicians by the Health and Justice Corps to become skilled in the performance of their first duty to care for themselves, their compatriots, and the lives of we citizens they are sworn to protect.

Intermediate military training would field a coherent, mobile, well-equipped, and tactically facile force of fighters capable of kicking a** in multiple languages, each individually committed to the home return of all who share the risk of death.

Advanced justice training would enable those most capable of more refined individual discretion to work more independently in exercising the authority of force outside the United States in actions not requiring group weapons and tactics.

Allied with the Health Corps and the airlift capacity of its large fleet of hospital aircraft used to shuttle patients and relatives to advanced treatment centers, and equipped with the technological spin-off generated by a free and exploring society, the actual use of military force would likely become increasingly rare, but would forever remain rapid in its deployment tactics, and decisive in its strategic effects.

Rather than waiting in the barracks, every position should be staffed by two fighters, with one near home and in training on a yearly rotation, each poised to respond worldwide to any disaster, natural or military, that excites our common concern.

Our military and national intelligence assets exists only to protect and inform us, and have no legitimacy when used within our borders against we citizens of the United States, not for law enforcement or any other aggressive purpose, for no such authority was ever granted by the states

to their union, a reservation enshrined by the Tenth Amendment.

Free Enterprise. With the provision of national health care, no organization or business would ever again have to worry about health costs or worker's compensation claims. They would only have to join hands with their workers in a truly free enterprise system where the interests of labor and capital are balanced in the workplace through negotiation for the greatest service or production at the least cost.

Social Security would continue to provide all workers with the mobility to shop their services throughout the national job market and to retain existing minimum retirement and disability rights. And, states would continue to ensure that their businesses and workers insure for temporary disability and unemployment compensation.

Workers should have an election to also voluntarily participate in a supplemental independent retirement pool funded by untaxed individual savings and union pension plans to primarily invest in the small businesses of America and the municipalities of its citizens, and with insured minimum investment limits.

The role of government in litigation and regulation would largely become one of passively establishing fair and objective standards for use as rebuttable presumptions by injured or aggrieved plaintiffs, rather than having government intervene as an opponent against individuals and their organizations.

For the long haul, American businesses could obtain supplies and ship products throughout the continental marketplace and to the best ports for export over the interstate highways, paying only a fair commercial toll to draw upon the low-cost reserves of the Energy Corp's space power pool.

A Smart and Simple Tax. In our seven-trillion-dollar annual economy, all this imagined here could be easily paid for by a fair tax of less than ten percent on all spending, that is, a simple toll on each use of the economic system.

Since the poor, working, middle and small business classes have fewer and smaller financial transactions, the wealthy and their multinational corporations, who've always had to spend a lot of money to avoid having any taxable income, would share proportionally in paying the toll for their traffic on our economic highway and their use of our courts to enforce their contracts.

A fair exemption from taxation on spending for those who elect to provide their family with health and education services, and on the cost of basic food and housing, for those not on welfare, would allow the free market to largely provide these necessities.

Money placed into federally-guaranteed savings accounts and its earned interest would not be taxed until it is withdrawn and spent.

Gifts and bequests of money would not be spending by the donor, but the transaction tax would be paid by the beneficiary when the gift is spent, if not saved.

Foreign Trade To the extent they are owned by American citizens, businesses, corporations and other organizations would not pay a toll tax on their payroll, as salaries would be directly passed through to their employees to spend (and to be taxed).

The additional tax paid by foreign owners would be the price of access to the services of our

healthy and well-educated workers and our system of justice.

Inasmuch as imports are first sold at the border, tariffs could be replaced by the up front collection of the toll-tax when foreign corporations first sell their products to their American corporations to sell to us.

Foreign registration and ownership of U.S. patents, copyrights, and other legal protections would also carry a toll on all protected transactions, allowing non-citizens to share the cost of our courts to enforce their rights.

The Search. Lastly, as we cast about in space for sources of safe energy and the knowledge and wisdom to use it, we will become privileged to participate in the peaceful exploration of our universe and its related dimensions.

Our children will be able to play the eternal game of mindfully searching for the rarest find of all: A small blue, white, and green planet, with a slight tilt and a large stable moon in warm orbit around a long-lived, medium yellow star, a tiny speck of light, gently sheltered midway to its gaseous giant Jovian siblings, waltzing in the stardust along the whispering wisps of lonely virginal spiral galaxies, shyly waiting to be noticed.

Once found, these cradles of life are so precious as to never be lost sight of, or allowed to be fatally infected by the virus of deception, hatred and war.

The Discovery. We will never be invaded from space, and our natural disasters cannot be prevented.

We will be lovingly watched until we learn the truth about the cause of the disease which infects our minds and troubles our souls.

Then, when enough of us learn the use of love to soothe the reptilian instinctual fears existent in all of us, we will be able to seize the courage to peck through the shell of our ignorance and to soar on the winds of time.

If we have been birthed prematurely and lack strength to evolve, then here someday, the dolphins or another of Gaia's children will learn to fly, and may wonder of we and why?

The Skinny House



In the late 1970s, I practiced public interest law in a historical landmark building in Long Beach, California known as "Skinny House." It was constructed in the 1930s on a 10x40 foot lot by a young architect. It has been featured in both Ripley's Believe It Or Not and the Guinness Book of World Records. It truly is a magical place, which you have to see to believe. Click the photo for a slideshow on how it looked when it was my office.

September 23, 2010

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Vison for the Future: The Age of Space-Solar Energy

by William John Cox



The industrial revolution has been driven for the past two centuries by the burning of hydrocarbons, first by coal in the Age of Steam, and then by oil and natural gas in the Age of Petroleum; however, as the flow of these fossil fuels slows down as demand goes up, ever-more-intrusive and massive extraction efforts increasingly threaten the progress of industrialization and the civilization it has produced.

The catastrophic Deepwater Horizon oil spill in the Gulf of Mexico is the latest and largest of hundreds of such ocean spills, and the recent methane gas explosion in Massey's Montcoal mine was just another of the many disasters, worldwide, which have snuffed out the lives of workers who labor in dangerous conditions to feed our fossil-fuel addiction.

All around the planet we live upon, the quest for hydrocarbons is threatening the ability of humans to survive in the degrading environment and to govern their own corporate-dominated societies.

It is not just the environmental destruction caused by the extraction of coal-bed methane in Wyoming and Montana, the "fracking" of deep shale-gas formations and the consequential contamination of fresh water aquifers and rivers in the northeastern United States, or the blasting away of mountain tops in Appalachia; it is the fact that these extreme efforts are facilitated by a concert of corporate and governmental corruption that erodes freedom and democracy in the United States and threatens human civilization around the world.

There is no hope for the recovery of earth's environment and the survival of human civilization as long as extraction decisions are governed by corporate greed. Public energy policy must be based on what is good for the people who vote for representatives, not on what produces profits for the corporations who buy the votes of the people's representatives.

It may already be too late. The environmental destruction caused by the production and burning of fossil fuels may have already set in motion irreversible events which will ultimately spell the extinction of humanity. But, not to worry.

Our loving and forgiving Mother Earth will survive. It may take eons for her oceans, winds, and

rains to wipe clean the crap we have produced, but someday, never fear, another of Gaia's children will learn to fly and will study the artifacts of our existence and will wonder of we and why?

There may be, however, a more sensible and realistic alternative which will preserve the environment and human civilization, and which offers a more exciting and rewarding future for our children, as they learn to fly throughout the universe and to explore its adjacent dimensions.

So, let's expand our vision and imagine for a moment how life could be after just a decade or two of innovation in the public interest.

A Vision for the Future

Imagine that the Interstate Highway System and most major streets and freeways in America were improved to provide a constant source of electromagnetic energy sufficient to power a standard automobile, with comfortable seating for five adults, anywhere in the United States at no cost to the owner-operator.

Imagine the introduction of triple-hybrid cars designed to operate primarily on electromagnetic energy supplied by induction through the surface of most highways and freeways, and which are equipped with small fuel-efficient internal combustion engines to supplement rechargeable batteries for trips on local streets and byways.

Imagine people could travel for free throughout the United States as a matter of national privilege. Workers could get to their jobs without having to labor for the first hour each day just to pay for getting there. People would have more money to spend on vacations, and they would be able to tour the nation, see the grand sights, and visit with friends and relatives along the way.

Imagine the positive economic consequences that would flow from the reconstruction of America's transportation infrastructure and the creation of a domestic manufacturing capacity to build for the future.

Is this a realistic dream? If the United States decided to provide free power on its national highways as a matter of innovative public policy, where would it obtain the energy?

A Miraculous Source of Abundant Energy

First proposed by [Dr. Peter Glaser](#) in 1968, space-based solar technology can provide an inexhaustible, safe, pollution-free supply of energy and may offer a far more logical solution to current energy problems than petroleum or ethanol-based or even nuclear-fueled hydrogen systems.

The technology currently exists to launch solar-collector satellites into geostationary orbits around the Earth to convert the Sun's radiant energy into electricity 24 hours a day and to safely transmit the electricity by microwave beams to rectifying antennas (rectennas) on Earth.

[Space-solar energy](#) is the greatest source of untapped energy which could, potentially, completely solve the world's energy and greenhouse gas emission problems.

Following its proposal, the concept of solar power satellites was [extensively studied](#) by both the Department of Energy and the National Aeronautics and Space Administration. By 1981, it was determined that the concept was a high-risk venture; however, further study was recommended.

With increases in electricity demand and costs, NASA took a [“fresh look”](#) at the concept between 1995 and 1997. The NASA study envisioned a trillion-dollar project to place several dozen solar-power satellites in geostationary orbits by 2050, sending between two gigawatts and five gigawatts of power to Earth. However, the study’s leader, John Mankins, [now says](#) the program “has fallen through the cracks because no organization is responsible for both space programs and energy security.”

The project may have remained shelved except for the military’s need for sources of energy in its campaigns in Iraq and Afghanistan, where petroleum [costs](#) \$400 a gallon. A report by the Department of Defense’s National Security Space Office in 2007 [recommended](#) that the U.S. “begin a coordinated national program to develop [space-based solar power].”

There are three basic engineering problems presented in the deployment of a space-based solar power system: The size, weight and capacity of solar collectors to absorb energy; the ability of robots to assemble solar collectors in outer space; and the cost and reliability of lifting collectors and robots into space.

Two of these problems have been substantially [solved](#) since space-solar power was originally proposed. New thin-film advances in the design of solar collectors have steadily improved, allowing for increases in the efficiency of energy conversion and decreases in size and weight. At the same time, [industrial robots](#) have been greatly improved and are now used extensively in heavy manufacturing to perform complex tasks.

The remaining problem is the expense of lifting equipment and materials into space. At a cost of \$20,000 per kilogram of payload, the U.S. is currently relying on the last few remaining flights of the space shuttle to move satellites into orbit and to resupply the space station. It has been [estimated](#) that economic viability of space solar energy would require a reduction in the payload cost to less than \$200 per kilogram and the total expense, including delivery and assembly in orbit, to less than \$3,500 per kilogram.

An American president once said, “We choose to go to the moon in this decade, not because it is easy, but because it is hard.” The United States readily achieved that objective and, effectively, won the Cold War. A similar challenge is now presented in the “Energy War.” What, if anything, will the current president say or do?

Although there are substantial costs associated with the development of space-solar power, it makes far more sense to invest the precious space exploration budget in the development of an efficient and reliable power supply for the future, rather than to waste tax dollars on a stupid and ineffective missile defense system or on an ego trip to Mars.

With funding for the space shuttle ending in 2012 and for the space station in 2017, America must decide upon a realistic policy for space exploration, or else it will be left in the dust by other nations, which are rapidly developing futuristic space projects.

China has aggressively moved into space by orbiting astronauts and by demonstrating a capability to destroy satellites, and it is [investing](#) \$35 billion of its hard-currency reserves in the development of energy-efficient green technology, and has become the world’s leading producer of solar panels.

Over the past two years, Japan has committed \$21 billion to secure space-solar energy. By 2030, the Japan Aerospace Exploration Agency [plans](#) to “put into geostationary orbit a solar-power generator that will transmit one gigawatt of energy to Earth, equivalent to the output of a large nuclear power plant.” Japanese officials estimate that, ultimately, they will be able

to [deliver](#) electricity at a cost of \$0.09 per kilowatt-hour, which will be competitive with all other sources.

The first nation that captures and effectively makes use of space-solar energy will dominate the world energy market for generations to come and will provide its citizens with a much healthier and a far more secure society.

[William John Cox](#) is a retired prosecutor and public interest lawyer, author and political activist who is currently writing a fact-based fictional political philosophy. His promotion of a peaceful political evolution is based at [VotersEvolt.com](#), and he can be contacted at u2cox@msn.com.

*The drawing of "Who Were They?" is by **Helen Werner Cox**, who was trained as a classical painter at Boston University. She is nearing retirement as a nationally-certified library media teacher, who has made extensive use of art in her literacy programs.*

[Global Research Articles by William John Cox](#)

Ground the Airbus?

by William John Cox

[Global Research](#), June 19, 2009

Since entering service in 1974 with many technological innovations,

such as computerized fly-by-wire control systems, user-friendly cockpits, and extended use of composite materials, 5,717 aircraft have been manufactured by Airbus, an European aerospace company. More than 5,100 Airbuses remain in service.

Not including losses attributable to terrorism, rebellion or military action, Airbuses have been involved in 23 fatal crashes causing the deaths of 2,584 passengers, crew members and people on the ground. In addition, there have been five nonfatal accidents causing 21 serious injuries.

While the overall number of accidents and fatalities are not disproportionate to the crash experience of Boeing aircraft, three of the Airbus crashes involved a separation of the composite vertical stabilizer (tail fin) from the fuselage. Five hundred, or one in five of the Airbus deaths, including 228 from Air France Flight 447, resulted from these three crashes.

In addition, Airbus composite stabilizers, rudders and couplers have also been involved in a number of other emergency in-flight incidents that did not lead to crashes, injuries or deaths.

There is now a question whether all Airbus aircraft equipped with composite stabilizers and rudders should be grounded until the cause of the crash of Flight 447 can be identified *and* it can be determined if the aircraft can be inspected, safely repaired, and returned to service.

Used in law, science and philosophy, a rule known as Occam's Razor requires that the simplest of competing theories be preferred to the more complex, and/or that explanations of unknown phenomena be sought first in terms of known quantities.

We do not know if Air France Flight 447 was brought down by a lightning storm, a failure of speed sensors, rudder problems or pilot error. *What we do know* is that its plastic tail fin fell off and the plane fell almost seven miles into the ocean killing everyone aboard.

What are Composites?

The essential definition of a plastic is the capability of being molded or modeled. Thus, the word can be accurately used to describe the various processes by which "composite" materials are coated, laminated and shaped into the various structures used in the construction of an aircraft.

Basically, a composite "indicates the use of different materials that provide strengths, light weight, or other functional benefits when used in combination that they cannot provide when used separately. They usually consist of a fibre-reinforced resin matrix. The resin can be a vinyl ester, epoxy, or polyester, while the reinforcement might be any of a variety of fibres, ranging from glass through carbon, boron, and a number of proprietary types." [1]

There are both advantages and disadvantages to using plastic composites instead of metal. They "have lower density and greater strength and stiffness

than aluminum, therefore a smaller lighter structure can carry the same load." [2]

Composite materials can be shaped and molded far easier than aluminum into compound curves for maximum drag reduction and it is easier to get smooth surfaces for laminar flow designs which allows for increased speeds. [3]

Among the risks of using plastic composites are: (a.) Strengths varies from batch to batch and it's difficult to detect voids; (b.) lightning protection is very poor since the material does not conduct electricity; c.) materials degrade in the sun due to ultraviolet rays; (d.) delamination problems are caused by moisture; and (e.) *composites tend to break without warning at failure loads, unlike aluminum which can bend and still survive and usually provide some warning prior to failure.* [4]

If plastic composites "are bumped, beaten or excessively shaken, they can develop microscopic cracks that, if allowed to fester, can widen and critically weaken" the material. Delamination is another concern "in which heat, cold, humidity or manufacturing errors cause layers of the composite to separate." [5]

Use of Composites by Airbus

The first "composite" materials used in aircraft construction consisted of plastic-impregnated wood, such as that used by Howard Hughes in his famous "flying boat" in World War II. [6]

As experience was gained through the use of fiberglass, the aircraft industry began to occasionally use composites for nonstructural applications, such as baggage doors. By the Sixties, at about the time Airbus was being created, the aircraft industry was prepared to consider using plastic materials in more critical structures.

The essence of designing and constructing a heavier-than-air flying machine is to make it as light and strong as possible. Although the initial cost of using plastic is higher than metal, the expense is offset over the long haul by lower fuel costs. Allan McArtor, Chairman of Airbus North America, said "Composites save weight, saving weight saves fuel, and saving fuel is better for the environment and for our customer's bottom lines." [7]

Starting in 1974, Airbus used plastic materials in its new A300 series aircraft, but only in secondary areas such as the leading edges of the tail fin. The A310 series introduced in 1978 featured a composite tail fin box, along with a number of additional applications. [8]

Ten years later, in 1988, Airbus began delivery of the A320 with an all composite tail fin, and construction of vertical stabilizers from plastic composites became the standard for all its aircraft. [9]

The vast majority of all commercial aircraft ever manufactured by Airbus remain in service, most of which are equipped with plastic tail fins, rudders

and couplers.

Almost 25 percent of the new Airbus A380, which can seat more than 800 passengers on two decks, is constructed of composite materials. For the first time, the wings of the aircraft are stabilized and attached to the fuselage using a composite center wing-box, and the plane is equipped with a plastic vertical stabilizer that is almost 79 feet in length, nearly the height of an eight-story building. [10]

The A380 is already being flown in commercial service by several airlines, including Singapore and Qantas on trans-Pacific trips.

Missed Opportunities to Avoid Air France Flight 447 Disaster

A series of in-flight emergency incidents and fatal crashes extending back 12 years provide a clear record of missed opportunities to correct what increasingly appears to be a basic design error in Airbus commercial aircraft that may have caused the crash of Air France Flight 447.

May 12, 1997 - Aboard American Airlines Flight 903 Over Miami, Florida. Following an uneventful flight from Boston, the pilots of an Airbus A300-600 carrying 156 people were preparing to land at the Miami airport, when they were advised to go into a holding pattern due to an approaching thunderstorm. [11]

At an altitude of 16,000 feet, the plane suddenly stalled and the “plane rolled to extreme bank angles left and right, and the rudder was moved rapidly back and forth to its in-flight limits. During the event, the airplane was stalled several times and rapidly descended more than 3,000 feet.” [12]

Melanie Joison was sitting with her two children holding her 18-month old daughter in her lap. The child flew from her lap back over three rows of seats where she was caught by another passenger. Ms. Joison suffered five broken ribs. [13]

The pilots declared an emergency, regained control of the aircraft and safely landed. Following a visual inspection in Miami, the plane was flown to New York where a further inspection cleared the plane to be returned to service. [14]

The incident was investigated by the National Transportation Safety Board (NTSB) because a passenger was injured. Although Airbus did not have access to the flight data recorder, it expressed a concern that an urgent inspection was needed because the plane could have reached “ultimate load” the point where force is near the breaking point. [15]

The plane received a more thorough inspection on June 26, 1997 by maintenance crews, who removed the covering over the base of the tail fin and inspected the six lugs that attach the tail to the fuselage. They did not remove the tail and examine the area covered by the fitting attached to the fuselage, and the plane was returned to service. [16]

The NTSB determined that the incident was caused by the flight crew failing

to maintain adequate speed to prevent a stall. It did "not mention the rudder reversals or the fact that the tail nearly separated from the plane." [17]

The plane continued in service for almost five years until after the crash of American Airlines Flight 587 (see below), when an examination of the flight data recorder revealed that the rudder had exceeded its design limit four times in the 1997 incident "during a rapid airspeed change accompanied by rudder inputs." [18]

Although the Flight 903 pilot made nine rudder reversals during a high rate of speed, which subjected the plane to substantial aerodynamic forces, neither the engines nor tail fin fell off. A subsequent inspection revealed that survival of the craft may have been an engineering miracle. [19]

Between March 4 -11, 2002, the tail was physically removed from the plane and "two marks were found to be visible on the right rear attachment lug, one of six that attaches the fin to the fuselage. During ultrasound inspections, technicians [found] spots where the layers of composite material [had] separated, a condition called delamination." The right rear lug is in the same area where the tail from Flight 587 first broke away. [20]

Replacement of the tail by American Airlines cost more than \$1 million. [21]

November 12, 2001 - Aboard American Airlines Flight 587 Over Queens, New York. Taking off a few minutes behind a Japan Airlines Boeing 747, the pilots of an Airbus A300-650R carrying 251 passengers on a flight from New York City to Santo Domingo quickly experienced air turbulence resulting from a wake vortex caused by the earlier flight.

What the pilots did not know was that, when their plane had been originally delivered in 1988, layers of its plastic tail fin had separated, or delaminated, in the area where it was attached to the fuselage. The defect had been repaired by adding additional layers of plastic and rivets. American Airlines was informed by Airbus that no further inspections of the tail were required. [22]

The pilots did not know that their plane had experienced such severe high altitude air turbulence seven years earlier that 47 people were injured. Nor did they know the extent of any resulting damage was concealed within the plastic tail fin. [23]

Finally, the pilots did not know that their plane was designed with extraordinarily sensitive rudder controls that allowed the rudder to be moved beyond its design limits at low speeds by a movement of approximately one-and-one-half inches on the rudder pedal.

What we do know is that during the next few seconds, a series of right, left, right rudder commands moved the rudder beyond its design limits causing the entire plastic stabilizer to be torn from the fuselage by the force of flowing air.

What we still do not know is why. The pilots were killed along with everyone else aboard the plane and five people on the ground.

With the tail fin and both engines torn from the aircraft, the terror for those aboard, including five infants, was short-lived. The entire flight, from takeoff to impact, only lasted 103 seconds.

Following its investigation, the NTSB "determined that the probable cause of this accident was the in-flight separation of the vertical stabilizer as a result of the loads beyond ultimate design that were created by the first officer's unnecessary and excessive rudder pedal inputs." [24]

Inasmuch as the plane was climbing from takeoff through a steady-state left turn when the turbulence was encountered, there is also the possibility that the first officer either was unintentionally thrown against the rudder pedal, he was unable to exercise such delicate movement of the rudder as to avoid exceeding the limitations of its overly sensitive design, or the rudder's movements were independent of the pilot's actions.

Captain Glenn Schafer, an A300 pilot who had flown with both the pilot and first officer of AA587, stated, "Both were excellent, well-seasoned pilots. Nothing I observed while flying with either of them could possibly lead me to conclude they would even attempt to move the rudder around in the fashion the FDR [flight data recorder] says it was moved." [25]

Schafer argues that, "in a wake turbulence encounter, such as occurred in the accident scenario, a pilot would not normally make a large rudder input and then snap-reverse it at 255 knots, the speed at which the accident airplane was climbing when the tail separated." He suggested, "a simple exercise with a stopwatch to illustrate that the pilots of Flight 587 could not have moved their feet that quickly." [26]

An aircraft control engineer supports Captain Schafer by maintaining "that if the pilots caused the rudder motion, it is doubtful, in a wake turbulence encounter, that they would have achieved virtually the same rudder deflection on each swing. The rudder always stopped at 10 degrees, a pattern that could be 'explained' by the yaw damper oscillating at its mechanical limit." [27]

The only information learned from cockpit voice recorder is a series of "rattling" noises as the plane encountered wake vortices generating a lateral force equal to 0.1 the force of gravity. Then, lateral forces equal to 0.3, 0.4 and 0.3 Gs were experienced coexistent with rudder movements. [28]

Early in the investigation, then NTSB Chairperson Marion Blakey said, "We do not know [if those rudder movements] were caused by the pilots." [29]

In its submission to the NTSB, the Allied Pilots Association pointed out ten previous incidents in which A300 tail fins had been stressed beyond their design limits and stated:

"Airbus designed and produced the A300B2-1a in 1971. Eleven

years later, Airbus designed the rudder control unit in a new model called the A300B4-600. This unique design dramatically changed the handling characteristics of the airplane....

“The pilots operating the accident airplane were highly-skilled, fully-qualified, proficient aviators who were never informed of the unusual limitations of their airplane.” [30]

The relatively intact 27-foot-tall stabilizer was found floating in the Jamaica Bay. It was originally connected to the fuselage at six attaching points, each of which had two sets of attachment lugs, one made from plastic, the other of aluminum. They were held together by a titanium bolt. An examination revealed the metal components to be intact and the plastic lugs to be broken. [31]

The NTSB did not find any fault with the composite plastic design of the tail fin; however, it did immediately order a one-time *visual inspection* of all A300-600 and A310 tail fins within 15 days to look for “edge delaminations, cracked paint, surface distortions, other surface damage, and failure of the transverse (side) load fittings. Similarly, indications of failure of the rudder assembly, which could lead to failure of the vertical stabilizer, may be detectable with such an inspection.” [32]

Ellen Connors, the former chairperson of the NTSB has stated that the report was delayed because of “inappropriate and intense lobbying by Airbus over its contents” and that “the potential for contaminating the investigation exists.” [33]

Following the crash of AA587, United Airlines decided to go beyond the required visual inspection to conduct ultrasound tests on three of its A320 jets, whose plastic tail fins had also been repaired at the factory before delivery. The test found a flaw in a six-year-old A320 on the opposite side of the stabilizer from where the factory defect had been repaired. In spite of the defect, Airbus spokesman David Venz said the defect is in an area that doesn’t support the weight of the tail. He said, “We are confident this airplane is fit to fly.” [34]

Airbus claimed that damage that couldn’t be seen cannot weaken the plastic tail fins and that visual examinations were sufficient. One official said, “Invisible damage cannot produce a significant sub-surface flaw.” [35]

Unconvinced, some American Airlines pilots called for more detailed inspections, such as ultrasound to locate hidden flaws. [36]

More than 20 American Airlines pilots asked to be transferred to Boeing aircraft, “although this meant months of retraining and loss of earnings.” One pilot wrote that “he had refused to let any of his family take an A300 or A310 and had paid extra to take a circuitous route on holiday purely to avoid them.” [37]

Saying there was no way to adequately inspect the plastic tail fins, dozens of American Airlines pilots demanded that the company ground its fleet of Airbus A300 jets until the cause of the crash of AA587 could be determined.

More than 70 pilots signed a statement stating, "Until a definitive cause for the crash of Flight 587 can be determined, along with ways to prevent a similar occurrence, and/or a definitive test can be developed to truly check the structural integrity of the vertical stabilizers of our remaining 34 A300s, I recommend that American Airlines's fleet of A300s be grounded." [38]

Weighing in on the side of the pilots, Professor James H. Williams, Jr., of the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, School of Engineering, stated that the Airbus position regarding the adequacy of visual inspections was "lamentably naive policy. It is analogous to assessing whether a woman has breast cancer by simply looking at her family portrait." [39]

Regarding the repairs performed by Airbus on composite tails with discovered defects prior to deliver, Dr. Williams states, "Such repairs of structural damage in composites are frequently unreliable, especially for joints and attachments involving primary (load-bearing) structures. The rupture of the vertical stabilizer on Flight 587 occurred in the vicinity of repairs, adjacent to an attachment point. Therefore, the FAA must carefully establish and articulate a policy for the repair of primary composite structures." [40]

"Finally," Dr. Williams concludes, "Airbus's extensive design and testing programs for the A300-600 composite vertical stabilizer may be currently deficient if they were based on outmoded or flawed engineering assumptions or an inadequate certification process. No amount of analysis can overcome faulty assumptions or insufficient requirements." [41]

Even in the absence of an overloading or catastrophic event, Dr. Williams believes that, "When subjected to the loading histories of some aircraft, composites will lose both strength and stiffness. Furthermore, studies of the long-term effects of exposure to aircraft environments of moisture, pressure and temperature, as well as fuels, hydraulic fluids, lubricants and deicers remain to be conducted for many composite materials." [42]

His research has shown that, "repeated journeys to and from the sub-zero temperatures found at cruising altitude causes a build-up of condensation inside composites, and separation of the carbon fibre layers as this moisture freezes and thaws." Dr. Williams says it is "like a pothole in a roadway in winter, over time these gaps may grow." [43]

January 2002 - Federal Express Flight. A pilot flying an Airbus A-300 freighter "complained about strange 'uncommanded inputs' – rudder movements which the plane was making without his moving his control pedals. In FedEx's own test on the rudder on the ground, engineers claimed its 'actuators' – the hydraulic system which causes the rudder to move – tore a large hole around its hinges..." [44]

The mechanics "found that hydraulic fluid had caused some of the composite material in the plane's rudder to 'disbond,' or come apart." [45]

The mechanics also “found bent and broken rudder control system components, as well as associated disbonding of the composite tailfin.” The mechanics “unearthed a synchronization issue, wherein hydraulic pressure pulses from different sources can get out of phase.” The resulting “oscillation was felt as a sustained vibration, and then a loud bang was heard.” [46]

The rudder assembly “may represent a telltale of “yaw oscillation.” NTSB investigators immediately focused on the implications of the damaged/broken rudder control components found on the FedEx airplane and their possible relevance to the AA587 crash. “It appears that the system damaged the rudder. ‘That is not supposed to happen; the system should break out first,’ states an NTSB official.” [47]

March 2005 - Aboard Air Transat Flight 961 Over the Caribbean Sea. On March 6, 2005, an Airbus A310-300 with 262 passengers was cruising at 35,000 feet when the “flight crew heard a loud bang followed by vibrations that lasted a few seconds. The aircraft entered a repetitive rolling motion, known as a Dutch roll, which decreased as the aircraft descended to a lower altitude.” [48]

The crew was able to turn the plane around and return to Varadero, Cuba, where they carried out an uneventful landing. Upon arrival, it was discovered that the aircraft rudder had been torn off the plane, except for its “bottom closing rib and the length of spar between the rib and the hydraulic actuators.” [49]

“An examination of the vertical tail fin of the aircraft, to which the rudder is attached, determined that the two rearmost fin attachment lugs were delaminated, likely the result of stresses that existed during the rudder separation.” [50]

In its report about the occurrence, The Transportation Safety Board of Canada (TSB) observed, “At the time of this occurrence, composite materials in general were from a maintenance perspective, believed to have a no damage growth design philosophy. It was also believed that from a fatigue point of view, more frequent inspections of composite materials would not prove to be more effective.” [51]

The TSB report recommended:

“The separation of the rudder from Air Transat Flight 961 and the damage found during the post-occurrence fleet inspections suggest that the current inspection program for Airbus composite rudders may not be adequate to provide for the timely detection of defects. In addition, the recent discovery that disbonds could grow undetected and the increasing age of the composite rudders suggest that increased attention is warranted to mitigate the risk of additional rudder structural failures. The consequences of a rudder separation include reduced directional control and possible separation of the vertical tail plane.” [52]

TSB further recommended that “a detailed inspection of the drainage path of

the rudder for blockage be added to the current inspection program to insure that there is adequate drainage.” [53]

On March 27, 2006, TSB reported that the required inspections “found examples of disbonds, damage around hoisting points and trailing edge fasteners of the rudder, corrosion and abrasion at hinges, seized hinges, hinges with excessive free play, water ingress, and hydraulic fluid ingress.” [54]

TSB commenced “work with the National Research of Canada to identify suitable inspection techniques that will detect failures in composite materials.” [55]

November 27, 2005 - Aboard Federal Express Flight. During routine maintenance, the rudder on an Airbus A300-600 was accidentally damaged. To access the extent of damage, “the rudder was shipped to the manufacturer’s facility and examined. In addition to the damage that occurred during maintenance, the examination found a substantial area of disbonding between the inner skin of the composite rudder surface and the honeycomb core, which is located between two composite skins. [56]

Further examination “of the disbonded area revealed traces of hydraulic fluid. Hydraulic fluid contamination between the honeycomb skin and the fiberglass composite skin can lead to progressive disbonding, which compromises the strength of the rudder. Tests on the damaged rudder also revealed that disbonding damage could spread during the flight.” [57]

The NTSB determined that existing “tap tests” on the external surfaces of the rudder were unlikely to disclose “the disbonding of an internal surface.” The NTSB recommended a more stringent compliance time for inspections and requested that the FAA make the inspections mandatory. [58]

In December 2007, the European Aviation Safety Agency ordered frequent and extensive testing on the composite rudders of the Airbus A300/310 series due to safety concerns. Only about 20 wide-body A330 and A340 planes were included in the order, which did not include any of the A320 series. The tests had to be completed within six months, and certain airplanes had to be retested every 1,400 flights. [59]

The rudders of approximately 420 older Airbuses “are being subjected to repetitive ultrasonic and other enhanced inspections, the first time airlines and safety regulators have resorted to such recurring, high-tech procedures to determine the integrity of composite parts on airliners already in service” [60]

It is not known whether the inspection order applied to the A330 operated by Air France Flight 447 (see below), or if the aircraft was ever tested.

The order represents a vindication of the American Airlines pilots, who had called for such inspections five years earlier and for Dr. Williams, who had supported their efforts.

The order also represented a repudiation of Airbus’ maintenance standards

that "simple visual inspections, combined with a mechanic's manually tapping on the surface of the composite rudders, were adequate to detect any potentially hazardous internal flaws or structural weaknesses." [61]

November 18, 2008 - Aboard XL Airways (Air New Zealand) Flight 888T Over Mediterranean Sea Off the French Coast. Two German XL Airways pilots, accompanied by five representatives of Air New Zealand and a member of the Civil Aviation Authority of New Zealand, were operating an A320 in a test flight.

The aircraft had been leased by Air New Zealand to XL Airways and had been serviced and repainted in preparation for a return to Air New Zealand service.

The aircraft disintegrated when it crashed into the water and its tail fin was found floating at the crash site. The flight recorders were recovered, along with several of the bodies.

The cause of the crash is still under investigation by French, German, New Zealand and U.S. regulators; however, the interim findings are that the "crew lost control of the aircraft. While conducting an incompletely-planned test of low-speed flight at low altitude, the aircraft was descending through 3,000 feet on full autopilot for a go-around. Landing gear was just extended when ... the speed dropped from 136 to 99 knots in 35 seconds." [62]

"The stall warning sounded four times during *violent maneuvering to regain control*.... the warning had silenced as the aircraft regained speed in a rapid descent, but six seconds later, at 263 knots, the aircraft had only 340 feet elevation and was 14 degrees nose down. A second later it was in the water." [63]

For now, it is not known if the floating plastic tail fin or its rudder may have been complicit in the crash.

Airbus has now delivered 3,893 A320s, which have now been involved in 10 fatal accidents, killing 565 people, and at least one famous nonfatal crash – that of US Airways Flight 1549 in the Hudson River on January 15, 2009.

May 31, 2009 - Aboard Air France Flight 447 Over the Atlantic Ocean 400 Miles Off the Coast of Brazil

Two of three pilots aboard an Airbus A330 were monitoring the autopilot controls on a flight carrying 216 passengers from Rio de Janeiro as it cruised at 550 mph at an altitude of 35,000 feet. It was just before midnight and the captain may have been asleep in preparation to landing the plane in Paris the next morning.

The pilot reported that the plane was flying through a towering thunderstorm containing black, electrically charged clouds confirmed by satellite data to be charging upwards to 41,000 feet at 100 mph.

Due to the frequency of equatorial storms in the area, it is likely that the flight crew *and* Air France management were aware of the impending storm

before it was encountered, and a decision was made to fly through the storm, rather than to turn back or to navigate around it.

Ten minutes later, the autopilot switched off and a four-minute series of automatic failure and warning messages from the plane's Aircraft Communication Addressing and Reporting System were relayed by satellite to Air France headquarters.

It is difficult to imagine the scene within the cockpit of the plane being thrown about by a raging hail storm in the middle of the night, but the automatic messages provide some clues.

With the autopilot disengaged, the pilots had to manually contend with an ever-escalating series of failures in the flight control systems. All of this had to be done with alarms sounding, in absolute darkness, with no natural horizon to observe and with aerodynamic forces erasing all sense of up or down. The pilots were entirely dependent upon the plane's instruments and the sensors that provided electronic data.

Then, there was a cascading series of failures within the flight control computer and systems to monitor air speed, altitude and direction.

The pilots were flying blind.

The wing spoilers failed, the rudder limiter became inoperative and the rudder may have locked into place. At this point, it is likely that the plastic stabilizer was ripped from the plane. [64]

There is little or no likelihood that we will ever know whether the tail fin was blown off by the storm, as a result of the pilot's attempt to control the plane, or by uncontrolled movements of the rudder.

What then happened, aerodynamically, is that without the vertical stabilizer and engine control, the airplane was like a giant Frisbee spinning through the storm until it fell apart.

The last automatic message confirmed a complete electrical failure and a loss of cabin pressure, as the plane plunged down almost seven miles in less than a minute to the ocean surface.

We can try to imagine the scene on the flight deck and in the passenger compartment; however, we cannot possibly feel the terror experienced by everyone aboard, including seven children and one baby.

During the long 14 minutes, as the pilots fought to control the aircraft, everything trusted by those who boarded the aircraft failed – catastrophically. In addition to their terror, they must have felt terribly betrayed.

To date, several large pieces of the aircraft fuselage, and the virtually intact vertical stabilizer, have been recovered from the ocean. All indications are that the plane broke up in midair. There is no evidence of fire.

50 bodies have been recovered, and almost all had multiple fractures, but no burns. Water was not found in the lungs of any victims. They were spread up to 53 miles apart, further confirming that the plane undoubtedly broke apart at high altitude.

A concentrated, multi-national effort, including nuclear submarines, is being made to locate the flight data and voice recorders from ocean depths of more than 15,000 feet and very rugged underwater terrain, before the attached "pingers" become silent after approximately 30 days.

There are early indications that speed sensors may have iced up in the storm and provided inconsistent speed readings, which may have initially caused the cascading failures of flight control systems aboard the plane. We may never know for sure exactly what initiated the collapse of systems unless the "black boxes" are found, which is increasingly unlikely with each passing day.

All we know for sure is that the plastic tail fin separated from the fuselage under conditions that should have been expected to occur at some time during the life of the airplane.

Would metal stabilizers, rudders and couplers have failed under the same or similar circumstances? They never have.

What Are the Lessons Learned and What Questions Do They Give Rise To?

At the cost of 500 lives and millions of dollars in lost aircraft, what can be learned from the crash of Air France Flight 447 and the series of emergency incidents and other similar airplane crashes that led up to it?

Is Composite Structural Design and Manufacturing Technology Sufficiently Mature To Be Used in Critical Structures on Passenger Aircraft? In cooperation with NASA's Aircraft Energy Efficiency (ACEE) Program to improve the fuel economy of commercial aircraft, Boeing commenced an experimental carbon/epoxy flight service program in the early 1970s and included a limited number of experimental elevators on 727s and horizontal stabilizers and spoilers on 737s. [65]

"The experience gained from the ACEE programs provided the confidence needed by Boeing to select CFRP [carbon fiber reinforced polymer] for the Boeing 757, 767 and 737-300 control surfaces in the late 1970's" [66]

Although some Boeing 737s have experienced rudder problems, including two fatal crashes; none involved aircraft with plastic stabilizers. Rather, the problem with unexpected rudder movements was traced to a faulty hydraulic servo valve, and the metal tail fins did not separate from the fuselage during flight. [67]

While Boeing was still experimenting with the use of composite materials in commercial aircraft, Airbus began to extensively install plastic materials in the construction of its first A300 series as early as 1974, introduced a composite tail fin box in its A310 series in 1978, and began delivery of the A320 series with an all composite tail fin in 1988. [68]

NASA's efforts to explore the effective use of composites in aircraft design and manufacture in the U.S. was transparent, papers were presented, and information and experience was openly shared. European research and experience in the design and use of composites was more closely held, and it is less clear what kind of foundation work Airbus did in developing its use of composites. [69]

In 2001, NASA assessed the state-of-the-art in the design and manufacturing of large composite structures in a paper by Charles E. Harris and Mark J. Shuart, which concluded that:

“Composite structural design and manufacturing technology is not yet fully mature for all applications. There are 3 key factors that contribute to the lack of maturity of the design and manufacturing technology. These factors are the *lack of a full understanding of damage mechanisms and structural failure modes*, the inability to reliably predict the cost of developing composite structures, and the high costs of fabricating composite structure relative to convention aluminum structure. While the technology required to overcome these uncertainties is under development, *these factors are barriers to expanding the application of composites to heavy loaded, primary structure.*” (emphasis added) [70]

Mr. Shuart states that “all of us (at NASA) are proponents of the *effective* use of composites in aerospace,” and that the Boeing research and testing experience “makes us feel good.” He believes “in the right material for the right application,” and the main “question is how do you design and meet loads?” [71]

According to Mr. Shuart, there are places where it may be inappropriate to use composite materials instead of metal such as where there is a “banging around” or “excessive wear,” as in joints, hinges, or bearings. [72]

Mr. Shuart believes it may be useful and prudent to do a “hard scrub,” or thorough review, of the design loads used by Airbus in the design of critical structures in its aircraft. He is of the opinion that “failures are more likely a design, rather than a composite problem.” [73]

Regarding Airbus' use of composites in rudders, couplers and vertical stabilizers, Mr. Shuart said, “What you're asking is a good question.” [74]

In the Use of Composite Materials, Should Aircraft Designers Anticipate the Unexpected in Recognizing That Composite Materials Used in All Critical Structures Will Experience Extreme Stress At Some Point? As we have seen, a variety of causes have been found in the various emergency in-flight incidents and crashes involving the damage or loss of composite rudders and tail fins on Airbus aircraft.

In the case of American Airlines Flight 587, the primary cause was attributed to pilot error in the “unnecessary and excessive rudder pedal inputs” that caused the rudder to move beyond “design limitations” and cause the plastic

tail fin to be broken off the airplane. However, it must be expected that, at some time during the lifetime of an aircraft that a pilot may accidentally push a little too hard on the rudder or that the rudder actuator mechanisms may fail.

If the expectation is that the composite tail fin may be torn off when that happens, then perhaps composites should not be used in that structure. Although aluminum vertical stabilizers may be heavier and accordingly provide less fuel economy, the fact is that there is no history of metal tail fins being torn from fuselages in commercial passenger aircraft in the past half century. This is true even though there has been a history of rudder problems, which necessarily caused the same stress on metal stabilizers as was caused to the composite tail of AA587.

While the crash of Air France Flight 447 is still under investigation, a variety of likely suspects, including lightning, severe thunderstorm, and clogged speed sensors are being advanced as possible causes. However, passenger airplanes have been flying through storms for the past 50 years and there is no history of metal vertical stabilizers being torn off.

In fact, the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration makes a practice of flying through the most severe hurricanes to collect forecast data using ordinary Gulfstream and Orion turboprop aircraft. There is no history of any of them being blown apart.

Critical structures on aircraft, particularly those intended to carry passengers, cannot be constructed of materials that fail to anticipate that they will be exposed to extreme stress at some point during their lifetime. It is true that, ultimately, all materials can be made to fail, why should passenger's lives be included in the equation or the experiment to determine the breaking point?

Should the Use of Composite Materials Be Prohibited in Critical Structures in Commercial Passenger Aircraft? The use of composite materials in commercial aircraft is for one reason only – to save operating costs. The bottom line in this discussion is not how much money can be saved by composites. The true bottom line is the physical fact that composites fracture when they reach their limit, while metal usually bends before breaking.

Boeing and Airbus are the only two viable commercial manufacturing companies designing and delivering passenger aircraft, and they are competing in every market and with every product line. They are in a race to develop the least heavy aircraft to carry the greatest weight the greatest distance for the least amount of fuel possible.

If the Federal Aviation Administration and the National Transportation Safety Board should decide that, until such time as the composite structural design and manufacturing technology becomes sufficiently mature for all applications, composite materials could be prohibited for a common set of structures, including those most critical to flight operations.

That way, the playing field will be equal, and competition will still favor innovation in all other areas.

Should Commercial Passenger Aircraft Using Composite Materials in Critical Structures Be

Regularly Inspected by Technology That Reaches Below the Surface to Identify Hidden Defects?

The experience of the Federal Express rudder (see above) illustrates completely why ultrasound and other technologically advanced devices that can look below the surface are essential to the prevention of catastrophic crashes.

The rudder was taken out of service because of visible damage, and upon ultrasound inspection was found to have internal disbonding damage that could spread further during flight. Fortunately, we will never know if or when the rudder would have failed, or if its failure would have brought down the aircraft.

The current European Aviation Safety Agency ordered testing on Airbus composite rudders only applies to the A300/310 series, with only about 20 wide-body A330 and A340 planes included in the order.

The order does not include any of the almost 4,000 A320 series aircraft or the remaining A330, A340 or the new A380 aircraft. Nor does it include the composite vertical stabilizers, or any composite couplers used to connect these structures.

Consideration should also be given to including Boeing aircraft, such as the 777 that operates with a composite tail fin, in the inspection order.

Other than for the time and expense of conducting the test, it is far more likely that opposition from manufacturers and operators *will* be based on the fear that internal defects will be found and that replacement could cost up to a million dollars per plane. What value can be placed upon a baby's life, or the life of any passenger?

Should All Aircraft Manufactured with Composite Materials in Critical Structures Be Grounded Until They Can Be Inspected For Hidden Defects?

The most deadly crash in U.S. aviation history occurred on May 25, 1979 when an American Airlines DC10 crashed on takeoff from Chicago's O'Hare Airport, as a wing pylon failed and an engine fell off. All 273 people aboard were killed.

The entire DC10 fleet was immediately grounded until it could be determined that the pylon bolts were at fault. [75]

Following the fatal crashes of several Comet airliners in the 1950s, with a total loss of less than 200 lives, the entire fleet was grounded by English Prime Minister, Winston Churchill. He said "The cost of solving the Comet mystery must be reckoned neither in money nor in manpower."

The Airbus is not manufactured in the United States; however, they are being operated by a number of American carriers and U.S. citizens fly on them every day all over the world.

Under the Bush administration, the last FAA administrator, Marion Blakey, "was a fervent free marketeer and opponent of increased government regulation." [76]

President Obama appointed Randy Babbitt to administer the agency, and he was confirmed last month by the Senate. Mr. Babbitt is the former head of the Airline Pilot's Association. What will he decide?

William John Cox is the author of *You're Not Stupid! Get the Truth: A Brief on the Bush Presidency, and he is currently working on a fact-based fictional political philosophy. His writings are collected at <http://www.thevoters.org>, and he can be contacted at u2cox@msn.com.*

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William John Cox is a frequent contributor to Global Research. [Global Research Articles by William John Cox](#)

From the Airbus to the Spaceplane: The Future of Commercial Aviation
by William John Cox



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As commercial aviation becomes increasingly dependent upon computerized digital technology and less reliant upon hands-on human control, we have to consider the crash of Air France Flight 447 into the Atlantic Ocean, with the loss of all aboard, and other similar disasters in the light of our collective experience and expectations.

The Comet

First flown in 1949 and introduced into passenger service in 1951, the Comet was the first pressurized, jet-propelled commercial aircraft. Powered by four "Ghost" turbojet engines, the Comet was found to be fuel efficient above 30,000 feet and flew at almost 500 miles per hour, far faster than the most advanced piston-powered airplanes in service at the time.

England's de Havilland Company rapidly gained a significant advantage in the commercial aircraft market, carrying more than 30,000 passengers and receiving orders for 30 Comets in the first year; however, serious problems with the innovative design quickly developed. Two crashes in the first year in Italy and Pakistan were likely caused by a defective wing profile design that resulted in a loss of lift during steep takeoffs.

A series of catastrophic crashes followed. In 1953, structural failure of the airframe beginning with the stabilizer caused a Comet to crash shortly after takeoff in India. The Comet was equipped with fully powered flight controls that were criticized because they resulted in a loss of "feel" and may have caused excessive stress on the flight control surfaces. Later in 1953, another Comet exploded in midair during a storm over India with the loss of all passengers and crew. The following year, in 1954, two more Comets experienced midair explosive decompression and fell into the Mediterranean killing everyone aboard.

Prime Minister Winston Churchill grounded the fleet saying, "The cost of solving the Comet mystery must be reckoned neither in money nor in manpower." The Comet airframes were subjected to extensive testing that ultimately identified the most likely cause to be metal fatigue caused by stress and strain on the aircraft skin caused by repeated cycles of pressurization.

The first series of Comets were scrapped and modifications were made to the second series; however, the fleet remained grounded until the fourth series was introduced in 1958. Although the plane became the first jet used for transatlantic service, de Havilland had already lost its competitive advantage to Boeing, Douglas and other U.S. manufacturers, who profited from the Comet experience. The last Comet was delivered in 1964, and even the government-owned British Overseas Airways Corporation began to fly American aircraft.

The Airbus

Commencing in the mid-1960, a consortium of European aircraft firms began to collaborate in an attempt to break the lock held by American manufacturers on the commercial aircraft market by agreeing to collectively manufacture a low-cost "airbus" to transport smaller numbers of passengers over shorter distances. Underwritten by the governments of England, France and Germany, the Airbus was intended to be the first mass-produced "fly-by-wire" (FBW) airliner.

Although pilot control of commercial aircraft had progressed beyond the direct use of cables and pulleys to move aircraft control surfaces by relying on hydraulics and electrical assistance, the introduction of electronic control of commercial aircraft increasingly shifted responsibility from human pilots to computers.

First developed by NASA to augment control of the space shuttle and high-performance military

combat planes, FBW technology is similar in some respects to the anti-lock braking systems (ABS) on modern motor vehicles that prevents wheels from locking when the brakes are applied and which automatically controls the allocation of braking between the front and rear brakes. Relying upon sensors on each wheel, the hydraulic pressure to each can be increased or decreased up to 20 times per second, far beyond the abilities of any human driver. However, under conditions other than smooth dry pavements, such as deep snow and gravel, ABS can be far less effective than an experienced operator. Additionally, drivers of ABS equipped vehicles tend to overcome the safety benefit by driving more aggressively.

Airplanes that are flown by "wire" still have a stick, rudders, throttles and brake pedals; however, these controls are only connected to sensors that provide "input" to computers that pass along the information to other computers located at or near the control surfaces, engines or wheels to actuate the desired mechanical response. A software program takes the pilot's input into consideration; however, it is the computer that controls the aircraft. Relying upon the entire range of sensors, the computer can make as many as 40 adjustments per second.

FBW control over the aircraft presents a new set of problems that can have an effect on aircraft safety. Since the pilot can no longer "feel" the control surface response through the mechanical system, there is a risk that the surfaces can be over stressed due to excessive movement, or that the computer may erroneously decide that the pilot is wrong and that it knows best what is better for flight safety.

Aircraft designers decide the limits of the planes' performance and program the computers to prevent the pilots from exceeding these limits. The Airbus is designed with very hard limits, while Boeing takes a softer approach. According to the Seattle Post-Intelligencer, John Cashman, Boeing's director of flight-crew operations, said, "It's not a lack of trust in technology. We certainly don't have the feeling that we do not want to rely on technology. But the pilot in control of the aircraft should have the ultimate authority." Cashman also believes that hard limits reduce a plane's absolute capability. For example a Boeing 747 tumbled out of control over the Pacific Ocean in 1985 and the pilots were able to recover by subjecting the plane to four times the force of gravity. The stress caused by emergency maneuvering of an Airbus is limited to 2.5 times the force of gravity.

Both Boeing and Airbus depend upon FBW technology in aircraft design; however, there are fundamental differences. Basically, a pilot can override the computer in a Boeing aircraft, while Airbus pilots are not allowed to second guess the flight control computer. Boeing pilots also receive greater visual feedback from control surfaces by relying upon a conventional control yoke, while Airbus pilots use a small joystick.

A Boeing pilot can turn the airplane upside down, release the controls and the plane will right itself. If an Airbus pilot wants to lose lift and stall to avoid a midair crash and the computer decides that acceleration and a climb is better, the pilot simply hangs on for the ride. Only if all electronic systems fail does the Airbus default into a "manual backup" mode allowing limited use of basic mechanical systems while the pilots attempt to determine the cause of the electrical and computer failure.

Although airplanes equipped with FBW systems are reportedly easier to fly, the very efficiency can conceal defects that might be otherwise discovered by hands-on mechanical operations and may allow a plane to be operated under conditions where a human operator would fail.

The accident rates for Boeing and Airbus are similar: however, there have been some unusual Airbus accidents apparently caused by computer malfunctions. One of the first occurred in 1988 shortly after the Airbus was placed in service. During a flyover at a French air show, the computer assumed that the plane was supposed to land since it was close to the ground and the landing gear was down. Although the pilot attempted to accelerate and climb, the computer ignored his input and landed the plane in an adjacent forest killing three passengers. Airbus attempted to blame the

accident on pilot error.

Another incongruous accident more recently occurred during the testing of a brand new 472-passenger Airbus A-340-600 being delivered to Etihad Airlines in 2007 at the Toulouse airport. As the flight crew ramped up the four engines to takeoff power with the brakes on, a takeoff warning horn sounded because the computer sensed that the plane was not properly configured for takeoff. When the crew silenced the alarm, the computer apparently decided the plane was flying and trying to land with its brakes on. The computer released the brakes and the plane accelerated into a crash barrier at full power.

The spectacular televised landing of a JetBlue Airbus at the Los Angeles airport in 2005 with its nosewheel locked in place crosswise to the fuselage brought to light at least 67 earlier "nosewheel failures" on a variety of Airbus aircraft that were usually repaired by the replacement or "reprogramming" of the Brake Steering Control Unit computer.

A rudder design implemented by Airbus in 1988 increased the sensitivity of actual rudder movement to the pilot's movement of the pedals by slightly more than one inch and allowed for a wider degree of rudder travel per pound of force on the pedal. Rudder movement is necessarily restricted at cruising speeds; however, the Airbus computer did not impose a limit at lower speeds, such as during takeoff.

These rudder changes contributed to the crash of American Airlines Flight 587 on November 12, 2001 shortly after takeoff from Kennedy Airport in New York City when the aircraft encountered wake vortices from the preceding aircraft. As the copilot attempted to maintain the Airbus' steady-state left turn, he sought to correct an unexpected, vortex-caused "overbank" by using the rudder attached to the back of the tail fin. The copilot commanded rapid left-right rudder movements that exceeded the design loads of the vertical stabilizer, and the computer was not programmed to limit the command at low speeds. The all-composite stabilizer was ripped from the fuselage and the aircraft became uncontrollable. Its crash killed nine crew members, 251 passengers and five people on the ground. The relatively intact tail fin was found floating in the waters of Jamaica Bay.

Although several catastrophic Airbus crashes into the ocean with major loss of life have been blamed on pilot error, including the 2000 losses of Kenya Airways Flight 431 and Gulf Air Flight 072, the crash of an Airbus belonging to Air New Zealand on November 27, 2008 into the Mediterranean Sea has raised new questions about Airbus safety. Seven crew members engaged in a test maintenance flight died in the crash, and the tail section was found floating where the plane went down. No official cause for the accident has been reported.

One month previously, an accident aboard Qantas Flight 72 on October 7, 2008 that injured 106 of the 313 passengers was apparently caused by a malfunction of the FBW system. While traveling at 37,000 feet, the computer reported an autopilot irregularity and trouble with the inertial reference system.

After the Airbus A330-300's autopilot was disengaged, the computer caused the aircraft to suddenly pitch down and rapidly descend 650 feet in 20 seconds before the pilots could regain control. Three minutes later, the computer again caused the plane to pitch down and descend 400 feet in 16 seconds. The crew declared a Mayday and made an emergency landing at the Learmonth airport.

Preliminarily, the "likely origin of the event" has been blamed on the failure of an Air Data Inertial Reference Unit that supplied incorrect data to other aircraft systems. The Unit may have falsely reported that the airplane angle of attack was very high resulting in the flight control computers commanding the nose-down movements, or the computer may have believed that the plane was going too slow and put it into a dive to increase speed.

On June 1, 2009, Air France Flight 447 operating an Airbus A330 carrying 216 passengers from

Rio de Janeiro to Paris was four hours into its flight and was cruising at an altitude of 35,000 feet in excess of 500 mph as it approached an area of thunderstorms that extended upwards to 41,000 feet. Over a four-minute period, Air France received a series of automatic failure and warning messages from the Airbus's Aircraft Communication Addressing and Reporting System, relayed by satellite, indicating there were serious problems aboard the aircraft. The autopilot was disengaged, the electrical and pressurization systems had broken down and the plane's control system was receiving contradictory information about its airspeed.

The final message reported faults with its Air Data Inertial Reference Unit that, among other things, provides speed warnings. In addition, as a result of earlier incidences involving a loss of airspeed data during the cruise phase of Air France A340s and A330 and recent tests, it had been determined that icing of the external speed monitors known as "Pitot tubes" could be a factor in a loss of data. Although Airbus had issued a recommendation in September 2007 to replace the tubes, replacement was not viewed as a

mandatory safety concern. Air France did not commence the replacement of the airspeed indicators with an improved Pitot tube in its fleet of A330s until April 27, 2009. The airline had not gotten around to the aircraft operated by Flight 447 on June 1, 2009.

Irrespective of the cause of the "inconsistency in measured air speeds," the inability of the flight control computers to accurately calculate speed while flying at a high altitude could have caused the disaster. If it was falsely believed that the airplane was going too fast, particularly if the plane had already been slowed down to enter the thunderstorm, the plane could have easily stalled and a recovery in a storm would have been difficult or impossible. Or, if it was falsely believed that the speed was too slow and a stall was imminent, an unnecessary increase in speed could have taken the plane beyond its design capacity.

The plane's tail fin was found floating in the ocean near where the last transmissions occurred indicating that the aircraft broke up in midair. Otherwise, the plane would have been torn into small pieces and sunk immediately when it struck the ocean surface. In addition, 41 bodies have been recovered thus far from the ocean surface, some of which were separated by 53 miles, also indicating a midair disintegration of the aircraft.

The fact that the stabilizer was relatively intact also provides similarities to the crashes of American Airlines Flight 587 in 2001 and the Air New Zealand crash last year. Although the Airbus A330 is equipped with a "rudder limiter" to restrict the movement of the rudder at high speeds, a failure of the computerized control system and disengagement of the autopilot might have allowed the rudder to exceed its limitations, particularly if the plane erroneously exceeded its design speed in the high turbulence of a thunderstorm.

Aided by a French nuclear submarine, the search for the plane's flight data and cockpit voice recorders continues, even though such recorders have never been recovered from ocean depths as deep as 12,000 feet where Flight 447 crashed.

Unless the "black boxes" are recovered, we may never know if the crash resulted from a failure of the computerized flight control system, including its sensors, or if the system was unable to assist the human pilots cope with an emergency, such as the catastrophic loss of the stabilizer.

As the world waits, Airbus continues to deliver more and more aircraft each year. It has more than 5,000 planes flying, including its new A380, the largest passenger plane in history. First flown commercially on October 25, 2007, and depending upon its seating configuration, the A380 can carry between 555 and 853 passengers on two decks.

The A380 has 330 miles of electrical wiring involving 100,000 separate wires and 40,300 connectors. Cockpit instrumentation has been simplified and made easier to use, and a new Network Systems Server is the file cabinet for a paperless cockpit that does away with paper manuals and charts. The entire electrical power system is computerized and many electrical

components have been replaced by solid-state devices.

As we move into the future of commercial aviation, pilots may find themselves increasingly supplanted by computers and ultimately replaced in the cockpit. The military is increasingly launching aircraft without onboard pilots and the day may come when the "welcome aboard" message from the captain is relayed by satellite.

The Spaceplane

The world caught a glimpse of the future as the United States and the former USSR competed to produce the first aircraft capable of orbiting the Earth and landing on runways. Ultimately, the U.S. was able to launch the Space Shuttle, while Russia emerged as the heavy-lift rocket champion. The Shuttle will be grounded next year, and the West will be dependent upon Russian rockets to service the International Space Station.

The Dyna-Soar X-20. Almost forgotten in the race for space is the Dyna-Soar ("Dynamic Soarer") X-20 project originated during the Eisenhower administration as a demonstration of the President's commitment to the demilitarization of space. Originally envisioned as a winged craft launched into orbit by a large rocket, the program was ultimately cancelled during the Kennedy administration by Secretary of Defense McNamara in favor of the ICBM and Apollo programs.

The Air Force wanted a spaceplane to perform a variety of missions, including the maintenance of U.S. satellites and the destruction of U.S.S.R. satellites. In addition, the Air Force imagined the spaceplane could be used as a nuclear-armed bomber subject to recall. Ultimately, the Nixon administration pressured the Air Force to give up the X-20 and its progeny in favor of the space shuttle program.

The X-30. The spaceplane idea was resurrected during the Reagan administration as a project of the Defense Advanced Research Projects Agency (DARPA) between 1982 and 1985. The program called for a supersonic combustion ramjet (scramjet) aircraft that could achieve Mach 8 speeds. The administration encouraged competition between the major defense contractors to produce a hypersonic, air-breathing Single Stage to Orbit (SSTO) aircraft known as the X-30.

President Reagan was relying on the X-30 project when, during his 1986 State of the Union address, he called for "a new Orient Express that could, by the end of the next decade, take off from Dulles Airport, accelerate up to 25 times the speed of sound, attaining low earth orbit or flying to Tokyo within two hours." The X-30 program remained under development until 1993, when it was cancelled by the Clinton administration for both technical and budgetary reasons. The program was probably a secret part of the government's Space Defense Initiative and lost favor as its development proved too complicated.

Aerodynamically, the X-30 was a "waverider" that achieved compression lift under a fuselage that looked much like a surfboard with small tail fins. The design relied upon low weight, high temperature surface materials to deal with the heating problems, and was to be equipped with scramjet engines that compressed and heated hypersonic air in a combustion chamber, where it ignited liquid hydrogen and produced thrust.

Details of the X-30 remain classified; however U.S. interest in spaceplane transport of both passengers and freight continues. There are several basic problems that have to be overcome, including the need for wings to provide lift for takeoff and landings, which become a heating and stability problem during reentry. Moreover, jet engines can be used during takeoff and landing when atmospheric oxygen is available; however, an onboard oxidizer is required to fuel rockets in space.

One solution is a two-stage operation combining a large jet-powered lifting body to transport and launch a smaller rocket-powered craft from high altitudes. A single-stage solution combines a turbojet to reach supersonic speed (Mach 1), a ramjet to attain hypersonic speed (Mach 4), a scramjet to achieve Mach 15, and a rocket to achieve escape velocity (Mach 25) and to perform

space operations, and adapted for use in the current generation of commercial aircraft.

The X-43. Following cancellation of the X-30, NASA developed a B-52 launched and rocket-accelerated aircraft known as the X-43 to test hypersonic flight and scramjet engines. The aircraft was disposable and was designed to crash into the ocean after flight testing. It was successfully flown several times and set a speed record of 7,546 mph (Mach 9.68) in 2004. The X-43 program was indefinitely suspended in 2004 and replaced by an experimental program operated by the U.S. military.

The X-51. The Air Force Research Laboratory, in cooperation with DARPA, created a scramjet program in 2003, and awarded contracts in 2004 to the Boeing Phantom Works to construct the airframe and to Pratt & Whitney Rocketdyne to construct the engines for a demonstration flight test vehicle designated as the X-51.

The scramjet engine was tested in 2006, and test flights of the airframe from a B-52 at 50,000 feet are tentatively planned for late 2009. The plane will be accelerated by a solid fuel rocket to Mach 4.5, whereupon the scramjet engine will engage and take the plane up to 80,000 feet and Mach 6.

The HTV-3X Blackswift. In association with the X-51 program, DARPA contracted with Lockheed Martin's Skunk Works to build a replacement to the famed SR-71 Blackbird spy plane, which had used gigantic turbojets that morphed into ramjets at speeds in excess of Mach 3. Designated as the HTV-3X and commonly known as the Blackswift, the unmanned plane was to be powered by a turbojet to Mach 3 and then by a ramjet to Mach 6.

The secret program was publicly revealed in March 2008 when DARPA called for bids to manufacture a prototype. The proposed robotic hyperplane had to be reusable, able to take off and land on ordinary runways, and be capable of performing a barrel roll. The program was suddenly cancelled in October 2008.

The Orion Crew Exploration Vehicle (CEV). The U.S. plans to replace the space shuttle with a wingless conical spacecraft launched by the same solid rocket booster and upper stage main engine used to lift the current space shuttle into orbit. The CEV is designed to accommodate six astronauts and to carry a payload of up to 25 metric tons. The vehicles are intended to be reusable for up to ten flights and to be capable of parachuting down over water or land. NASA originally planned to launch the first CEV in 2011; however, the contract was modified in 2007 to extend the period of performance to 2013.

With the last space shuttle flight currently scheduled for September 16, 2010, the U.S. has resurrected the idea of rocket-boosted spaceplanes to transport satellites into orbit and astronauts to the International Space Station. In doing so, it will be building upon the computerized flight control systems originally developed during the X programs.

Russia. The Soviet Union reportedly worked on a spaceplane called the Uragan in the 1980s; however, it was apparently cancelled along with the Soviet's Buran space shuttle. Now, with Russia's emergence as the go-to rocket heavy lifter, it has been hard at work to develop a six-person wingless spaceplane known as the "Clipper," or "Kliper" to replace its aging Soyuz capsule.

In 2006, the European Space Agency (ESA) reached an agreement with Russia to cooperate in the design of the Clipper allowing European astronauts to fly to the International Space Station and perhaps to the Moon. Japan also expressed an interest in participating in the program.

As a part of the collaboration, ESA's Guiana Space Center in French Guiana is being modified to accommodate Russia's Soyuz rocket for the launching of satellites, with manned missions to be flown from Russia's Cosmodrome in Kazakhstan.

Russia completed the design of its Kliper spaceplane in 2006 and announced plans to place it into operation by 2015. It is designed to be operated by two crew members and to transport as many as four passengers, including space tourists to orbit, and ultimately to the Moon.

Japan. A report submitted to Japan's Space Activities Commission in 2000 proposed the development of a space plane using reusable rockets for space tourism and outer space energy production in association with Japan's deployment of its Hope-X space shuttle.

In late 2002, Japan's National Space Development Agency and the National Aerospace Laboratory of Japan flew a robotic test model of the space shuttle to an altitude of 8,200 feet and achieved a speed of 212 mph, before landing on a runway.

In fulfillment of Japan's 20-year dream to achieve a presence in outer space, the U.S. space shuttle Discovery delivered the nation's Exposed Facility and Experiment Logistics Module to the International Space Station in May 2008.

Mitsubishi Heavy Industries, Ltd. has designed a single-stage-to-orbit spaceplane using scramjet engines to lift a crew of 10 into Earth orbit.

China. Japan is not alone in its interest to compete with the U.S., Russia, European and the other space faring nations. A Chinese astronaut walked in space last year, and the year before, China demonstrated its space prowess by shooting down one of their own failed satellites.

A secret photograph posted on the Internet in 2008 reveals that the Chinese may have developed a small spaceplane designated as the "Divine Dragon." Although the posting does not appear to be a hoax, there has been no official confirmation of government involvement in developing a spaceplane; however, China's determination to develop a "space combat weapons platform" is well established.

The Future

It is difficult to image the future of commercial air travel given the worldwide economic depression that has wiped out enormous amounts of wealth from the financial accounts of nations and their individual citizens and corporations; however, there have been substantial gains made in the development of spaceplanes, and the momentum should propel hyperspace travel forward into the future. Undoubtedly, all of these spaceplanes will have to increasingly rely upon computerized flight operations to handle the complexities of space travel. There is no going back.

While Airbus is now in the spotlight as a result of the loss of Flight 447, we must keep in mind that the company has been a technological leader in aircraft design, such as fly-by-wire, automated cockpits and the use of composite materials.

Just days before the crash of Flight 447, Airbus announced the first round of winners in its ? 30,000 contest for the best ideas for future aircraft design and engineering. Five entries were chosen from among the proposals submitted by 2,350 students from 82 countries. Suggestions included the elimination of windows and the use of electric motors to taxi aircraft.

Boeing and Airbus continue to go head to head in seeking to manufacture the current and next generation of commercial aircraft. It currently appears that Airbus is ahead in the number of orders on its books and the quantities of aircraft it is delivering; however, unless and until it solves the hazards of computerized flight operations along with taking advantage of the benefits, it could find its planes buried in the Comet graveyard. Passengers will not continue to board commercial aircraft with fear in their gut, when there is a safer alternative.

The flight crew of US Airways Flight 1549 displayed amazing professional competence after the engines of their Airbus A320 automatically shut down after striking a flock of birds shortly after takeoff on January 15, 2009. The crew was able to maintain control of the aircraft and land in the Hudson River without loss of life. Pilot Chesley B. "Sully" Sullenberger III, has become a national hero; however, there remains a question whether the Airbus flight control system unnecessarily shut down both engines, whereas a Boeing aircraft engines might have chewed up the birds and kept flying. When the copilot, Jeffrey B. Skiles was asked by National Transportation Safety Board investigators how he liked the Airbus, he replied that he liked it "right up until the accident."

Nonetheless, as we jet into a future that will increasingly rely on flight control computers to fly commercial airplanes, I believe it is safe to say that most of us would prefer to have a "Sully" in the captain's seat instead of a robot.

William John Cox is the author of [You're Not Stupid! Get the Truth: A Brief on the Bush Presidency](#) and he is currently working on a fact-based fictional political philosophy. His writings are collected at <http://www.thevoters.org>, and he can be contacted at u2cox@msn.com .

William John Cox is a frequent contributor to Global Research. [Global Research Articles by William John Cox](#)

Abortion: The Government's Choice? Women's Reproductive Rights in the

New America

by William John Cox

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Any government having the power to prohibit abortions also has the power to require abortions. Any government having the power to prohibit birth control also has the power to forcibly sterilize women (and men).

The pregnant woman is forcibly strapped to a Gurney and wheeled into the treatment room where her fetus is aborted and her fallopian tubes are tied. Why? A test has shown that the fetus has Down syndrome and she already has one living child. Where? Somewhere in the United States. When? Sometime in the future. Was it her choice? No. Was the procedure legal? Yes.

With a population of almost 1.4 billion people, the Chinese government has enforced strict population control laws for 25 years restricting families to one child and prohibiting unmarried mothers from giving birth. Women are still being forced to undergo abortions as late as the ninth month of pregnancy, and forced sterilizations continue to occur. Considering the program to be a success, China intends to continue its birth control policies, and officials will have to meet rigid family planning goals in every province.

Russia, where abortions continue to be the top birth control method, faces an opposite population problem. In just the first six months of 2008, deaths outnumbered live births by more than 250,000. With Prime Minister Putin reasserting centralized control of the economy, how long will it take for the government to outlaw birth control or abortions, not for religious reasons, but to increase production of its human capital?

With an overall population growth rate of less than one percent, the United States is not facing a decline in its worker or consumer base, nor is it experiencing out-of-control population growth. Currently, with the availability of effective birth control methods and the choice of legal abortions, at least in the early stages of a pregnancy, women are allowed to exercise some control over having children. However, the freedom of choice by American women is under a relentless and increasingly successful attack.

Trampling on the First Amendment's separation of church and state, a powerful religious minority has been aggressively pursuing a broad range of worldwide restrictions on the availability of birth control and on the privacy rights of American women to terminate unwanted or dangerous pregnancies.

On November 4, South Dakotans will vote on a ballot measure to prohibit practically all abortions, allowing exceptions only for rape, incest or the mother's health. Colorado voters are being asked to go even further and officially define any fertilized human egg as a "person" under the state constitution, conceivably prohibiting even widely-accepted birth control methods.

Republican presidential candidate John McCain opposes legal abortions, believes Roe vs. Wade should be overturned and wants to appoint like-minded Supreme Court justices. During a recent debate, he ridiculed the idea of a mother's "health" exception to the criminalization of late-term abortions. Going even further, his running mate, Sarah Palin, believes abortions should be prohibited even for pregnancies conceived during forcible rape or incest.

Acting on her religious beliefs, Palin recently chose to give birth to her fifth child, whom she knew to be suffering from Down syndrome. Although, as governor, she slashed state funding in Alaska for schools for special needs children by 62 percent, she promised this week that, "In a McCain-Palin administration ... the parents and caretakers of children with physical or mental disabilities

will be able to send that boy or girl to the school of their choice - public or private." She went on to say that "federal funding for every special needs child will follow that child."

Sarah Palin made a choice to give birth to a child likely to have expensive "special needs" throughout its life, and she now wants to require tax payers to provide for her child's private education. Not that there's anything wrong with governments helping parents care for their special needs children, but what if there is an economic crisis? For example, in contradiction to Palin's promises, McCain has proposed an across-the-board freeze on all discretionary federal spending.

We do not know what the future holds for the people of the United States. We are being told we now face the most severe economic crisis since the Great Depression and that things will get worse before they get better. It is not difficult to imagine that the time may come when there are insufficient tax revenues to pay for the more expensive care and education of children with special needs.

Might the government, in its infinite wisdom, decide it is better for society that such children are never born? As a matter of policy, would the government have the power to force a woman to abort a Down syndrome baby? Using genetic testing, would the government also have the power to force the sterilization of those women (and men) most likely to procreate children with mental or physical impairments? Unfortunately, the answer is yes. Once a government attains the power to prohibit abortions, it also gains the power to demand them. It becomes a matter of might, not right.

Setting aside all religious considerations, shouldn't we adopt government policies that ensure the greatest freedom of choice for women, who must decide for themselves whether or not to bear children? Mothers, alone, endure the greatest emotional suffering when ending a pregnancy. Mothers, more than anyone, including fathers, religious advisors, or the government, will always have the greatest burden of caring for those to whom they have given life.

Once a government is given the power to decide who can and who cannot have an abortion, all women are at the mercy of the shifting economic, religious and political winds. Perhaps only women should be allowed to vote on issues regarding reproductive rights.

Sarah Palin had the legal and constitutional right to chose whether or not to give birth to her child. Shouldn't all women have the same freedom of choice?

William John Cox is a retired supervising prosecutor for the State Bar of California. As a police officer he wrote the Policy Manual of the Los Angeles Police Department and the Role of the Police in America for a national advisory commission. Acting as a public interest, pro bono lawyer, he filed a class action lawsuit in 1979 on behalf of every citizen of the United States petitioning the Supreme Court to order the other two branches of the federal government to conduct a National Policy Referendum; he investigated and successfully sued a group of radical right-wing organizations in 1981 that denied the Holocaust; and he arranged in 1991 for publication of the suppressed Dead Sea Scrolls. His 2004 book, You're Not Stupid! Get the Truth: A Brief on the Bush Presidency is reviewed at <http://www.yourenotstupid.com>, and he is currently working on a fact-based fictional political philosophy. His writings are collected at <http://www.thevoters.org>, and he can be contacted at u2cox@msn.com.

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