

OUTCRY:

AMERICAN VOICES OF CONSCIENCE, POST-9/11

Compiled and Edited by
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Foreword by David Cortright

Outcry: American Voices of Conscience, Post-9/11

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Introduction

*The answer to injustice is not to silence the critic,
but to end the injustice.* - Paul Robeson

This all started for us during the Monica Lewinsky debacle, as we watched the piranha-like attack on Bill Clinton by a fraternity of neo-conservative Republicans, corporate-owned media, and fanatic Christian fundamentalists. We were stunned not only by the assault's sheer viciousness, but also by its enthusiastic endorsement from a large and self-righteous mass of mainstream Americans clamoring for liberal blood. It was not only shocking, but heart-breaking and isolating when so many of our friends and neighbors joined the mob. The intensity and determination of these neo-conservatives in their quest to destroy Clinton, ostensibly for his sexual indiscretion and verbal hair-splitting, slapped us awake.

Naively, we had once believed Americans were as socially and politically progressive as they were technologically and economically advanced. We'd assumed that our system of checks and balances and our collective common sense would protect us from such an unimaginable, insane, media-driven lynching. However, on the TV screen right before our eyes, we witnessed perhaps the most cunning *coup d'état* in all history by those who portrayed themselves as religious, moral, and compassionate. The bad guys no longer packed rods and dressed in black; instead, they brandished Bibles and cloaked themselves in red, white, and blue.

Furthermore, we found the acquiescence by much of the Democratic leadership to this extreme, right-wing onslaught to be deeply alarming. After George W. Bush secured presidential authority through the power of the corporate-owned media, the Supreme Court, and without verification of citizens' votes in 2000, it was obvious to us that the once powerful and unified Democratic party of our generation had virtually disappeared. Figuratively speaking, they handed over the head of the legitimate president, Al Gore, to George Bush on a silver platter, much the same as they had Clinton's.

Thus, the stage was set for the neocons in Washington to put their pre-planned program of global domination, Project for the New

American Century (PNAC) into overdrive. All they needed was a catalyst, which came literally out of the blue on the morning of September 11, 2001. The sequence of events is well known, but the underlying motivations and facts of our government's failure to act upon intelligence warnings, to protect our air space, to investigate the subsequent anthrax mailings, etc. remain taboo.

Our corporate-owned TV and radio news stations and newspapers no longer provided comprehensive, factual and probing news and information. Rather, we observed that the mainstream media, having insidiously shaped our culture into one of violence and hedonism, had become strident "presstitutes" for the government's neo-conservative agenda. How expertly they normalized the abnormal and sanctioned what Americans have always deemed immoral, unjust, and unthinkable: invading and occupying a country, already crippled by years of sanctions and bombing, that had not even threatened us. The media's propaganda machine hypnotically drummed into us a gospel of lies. In the wake of 9/11 and the anthrax scares, preemptive war - the *modus operandi* of the Caesars, Hitlers, and Napoleons - had been rammed down our terrified throats in the dead of a congressional night.

News show personalities burst onto our glass teats (as McLuhan referred to television), setting the most extreme level of arrogant reporting and interviewing we've known. Jockeying for ratings, rude loudmouth after rude loudmouth dominated our influential air waves. They portrayed themselves as moral, concerned, patriotic reporters; however, what we observed were carnival-barking, spin-artists creating fear by sensationalizing the neocons' concept of terrorism and spewing unsubstantiated, fascist, pro-war propaganda. They attacked and discredited all who dared to disagree or protest - Americans and foreigners alike - branding them as unpatriotic or anti-American. The mainstream media helped the administration to undermine the United Nations, while cheer-leading the country into an illegal and unjustified war. These media pros effectively marketed the war as if it were a wrestling match with sensational headlines such as, "Shock and Awe," "Countdown Iraq" and "Operation Iraqi Freedom." To further manipulate our fears (and our votes), Homeland Security devised a color-coded system of terror alerts.

In the servitude of this administration's goals and policies, this new, unprincipled and ruthless breed of reporters expertly battered America into believing that Saddam Hussein was Bin Laden's blood brother and an imminent threat to our great land of liberty.

Furthermore, they implied that George W. Bush, Donald Rumsfeld, Colin Powell, Condoleezza Rice, et al. were the only people on earth qualified to run the entire world. Forget Shock and Awe - it was now the Twilight Zone!

Before Americans had time to visit the restroom or get a snack, we'd been media-whipped into yet another frenzy of patriotic bloodlust - the War on Terror against The Axis of Evil. If turning Americans against one of their most successful presidents had been so easy, marching them into an illegal war in the wrong country for the wrong reason, post-9/11, would be a cinch.

Adding fuel to the wildfire was the groundswell of fanatic, religious fervor embracing patriotism and politics. Bible-spouting televangelists, with costumes and sets rivaling Las Vegas revues, became superstars, warning of the coming Rapture, hawking creation science, justifying the war on Iraq, and politically indoctrinating the frightened masses. All the while, the Dalai Lama's and the Pope's anguished pleas for peace were ignored. These new dominant cyber-Christians and their Moral Majority pals in the government had grown into a powerful political pack promoting war and attacking our precious separation of Church and State. Moreover, these new sophisticated, tent-style, faith-healing TV ministries rake in tax-free fortunes from the vulnerable poor all over the world without regulation.

Our shock, outrage and anguish transformed itself into a frenzy of letter writing to a spectrum of indifferent newspapers, media and congressmen. Nevertheless, we worked tirelessly for our local anti-war and other activist groups. Without a weekend of sleep, we rode an uncomfortable, cramped bus from Ft. Lauderdale to DC and back, and protested the war in freezing cold on January 18, 2003. However, the government and press literally turned their backs on the millions who took part in national and international protests. Undaunted, we worked even harder for impeachment and demonstrated against the US invasion of Iraq, locally at the Freedom Torch in Miami, at various locations throughout Ft. Lauderdale, and held weekly candlelight vigils in our former hometown of Weston, FL. A few passersby waved support, while others pelted us with eggs, cursed us, and staged counter demonstrations; the majority, however, stared in confusion or looked away. We knew our efforts weren't enough to prevent the most disgraceful tragedy in our history: American armed forces brutally bombarded Baghdad on March 20, 2003.

The Cabal's power now seemed absolute. They swiftly began creating their own fascist-style government, undermining our freedoms, our Constitution, and the very core of our democracy. This neocon administration, with the rubber stamp of an obedient Congress, launched a broad attack on our foundation of socially progressive and environmentally responsible legislation. A partial list of their more infamous policies and acts included: abandoning the Kyoto Protocols on global warming, enacting the Draconian Patriot Acts, repeatedly lying to Congress and the American people about Saddam's weapons of mass destruction and his fictitious alliance with Al-Qaeda, paying lip service to "supporting the troops" while drastically cutting their veterans' benefits, under-funding their own touted "No Child Left Behind" program, giving generous tax cuts to the wealthiest Americans while reducing a broad range of vital programs for the middle and lower classes, handing out lucrative, no-bid Iraqi "reconstruction" contracts to favored corporations like Haliburton, allowing the shocking and barbaric torture and human rights violations in Abu Ghraib, Afghanistan and Guantanamo Bay, stonewalling attempts to establish a trustworthy, standardized and verifiable voting system throughout the states, ignoring the plight of more than 43 million Americans who have no health insurance, and currently, attempting to destroy our Social Security system.

As of June, 2005, the litany of government lies, deception, and criminal policies continues unabated and virtually unchallenged. To date, over 1,700 American young men and women have lost their lives in Iraq and Afghanistan, with tens of thousands wounded and psychologically crippled. Over 100,000 Iraqi civilians have been killed in the name of "freedom." In spite of an enormous and growing body of evidence, including the recently exposed "Downing Street Memo," which stated in black and white that the Bush/Cheney administration had "fixed" the intelligence to justify the already-planned Iraq invasion, the Republican juggernaut rolls on, committing outrage after outrage, cheered on by a cowed and corporate media who no longer practice true journalism. As a result, we have a large and ignorant sector of our citizenry who haven't a clue as to what's really going on - nor understanding how they've been marginalized, manipulated, abused, cheated, and robbed.

We, along with all other world citizens who work for peace and justice, have been ignored, neglected, abused, and attacked both psychologically and physically, not by the Axis of Evil and Saddam

Hussein, but by the corrupt power structure and unenlightened populace of the United States. Yet there are many among us who still believe in reason, sanity, non-violence, true democracy, and our Constitution. We have solicited their writings and rants from progressive groups all over the country. It is our great hope that their voices will show that real human values are still alive and well in this beleaguered nation, and that the true wisdom of America has not been silenced. Paradoxically, our chorus of truth crescendos with every blow. Here, then, is our outcry.

Marie Spike and Charles Reskin
Boca Raton, Florida
June, 2005

Foreword

On February 15, 2003 an estimated ten million people across the world demonstrated against the impending U.S. war in Iraq. It was the largest single day of antiwar protest in human history. Millions marched in London, Rome, Berlin, Paris, Sydney, and hundreds of other cities. An estimated 400,000 braved bitter cold in New York, and an equal number demonstrated in San Francisco. The people of the world spoke out as never before in one unified voice against the planned attack against Iraq. “The world says no to war” was the slogan and the reality.

The February demonstrations were the high point of a vast, unprecedented mobilization of public opposition to war. The movement against war represented a vast outcry by the people of the world against U.S. militarism and the Bush administration’s agenda for political and economic domination in the oil-rich Middle East. Religious communities, students and youth, women’s organizations, trade unions, environmentalists, academics, business executives, Hollywood artists and musicians - all participated in this outpouring for peace. The movement was built largely through the Internet, which served as the primary tool for developing strategies and actions, and which accounted for the movement’s extraordinary capacity for organizing massive numbers of people on short notice with limited resources. The Internet also became the primary vehicle through which millions of people in the United States and around the world communicated their anguished concerns about the deranged directions of U.S. foreign policy and their fervent pleas for peace.

The crisis in Iraq was rooted in the misguided U.S. response to the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001. The president declared an open-ended war on terror and immediately halted inspections of Iraqi military capabilities and the continued isolation and containment of Saddam Hussein. Let the inspections work, many antiwar activists urged. Claims of an imminent Iraqi weapons threat or links to al-Qaida were unproven, they insisted. The Bush administration ignored these voices of reason and persisted with its planned invasion and occupation.

Although the Iraq antiwar movement was unable to prevent the Bush administration from attacking Iraq, the movement nonetheless exerted significant influence. Worldwide antiwar sentiment left the Bush administration alone and isolated and prevented the White House from gaining UN support for its war policies. Not only France, Germany, and Russia, but less powerful countries dependent on the United States—including Chile, Mexico, Angola, and Pakistan—also refused to support a draft UN Security Council resolution authorizing war. The Bush administration lost the battle for hearts and minds, as public opinion polls in every country but Israel showed overwhelming opposition to war. Even in the United States, majorities favored continued UN inspections over war.

Many of the arguments made by antiwar critics prior to the invasion were proven correct in the aftermath. The administration's deceit in justifying war set the context for the political problems the White House encountered afterward. The antiwar movement's criticisms about the lack of justification for war (the absence of a verified weapons threat & the failure to demonstrate a link between Baghdad and al-Qaida) laid the groundwork for the subsequent political vulnerability of the Bush administration, when in fact no weapons or terrorist connections were found. The political legitimacy of the Bush administration and of the militarized policy of unilateral preemption suffered major setbacks domestically and internationally.

The disaster of the postwar occupation further undermined the credibility of the administration and confirmed many of the worst fears of antiwar critics. Instead of being greeted as liberators, as the White House predicted, U.S. troops found themselves bogged down in a dangerous and debilitating confrontation with an indifferent and often hostile Iraqi population. A war fought supposedly to counter terrorism ended up fueling greater terrorist violence. Iraq descended into lawlessness and chaos, as the Iraqi people suffered from a lack of electricity, fuel, water, jobs and public safety. In response to this tragedy, antiwar critics called on the White House to abandon its failed occupation policy and to turn over responsibility for Iraq's transition to the United Nations and the Iraqis themselves.

Through all of these debates, citizens spoke courageously for sanity and reason, consistently opposing military madness, while favoring rational and just alternatives to war and violence. Their voice went unheeded by the White House, but they spoke a powerful and eloquent truth that deserves to be heard. This volume records

that critical voice and offers an inspiring and unique insight into the ongoing debate over the future of U.S. foreign policy.

David Cortright
President, Fourth Freedom Forum
Washington, D.C.
www.fourthfreedom.org

CHAPTER ONE

ACTIVISTS and STATESMEN

Brian Bogart

48 Years Old

Eugene, Oregon

Mr. Bogart is director of IntelligentFuture, an antiwar group based in Eugene, Ore. He holds a masters' degree in Peace Studies, and worked with Dr. Carl Sagan on the US/USSR Space Bridge project in 1986. His letter explores the sad tendency of many people to accept the establishment's lies and justifications even as conditions deteriorate around them.

Land of Tradition

Americans just don't get it, though we see it every day: A million dollars a minute to the Pentagon, sucking every state dry.

The wealthiest nation on Earth creates a hostile global environment to sell weapons and pits hardworking citizens against each other over dwindling funds while leaders give themselves pay raises.

They tell us things are complex, as if there are no options. But there are. Economists have designed systems with balanced benefits for all humans, putting us to work caring for Earth and its inhabitants. We wouldn't even have to meditate or eat soybeans.

But we follow deadly products of our past, not intelligent visions of the future. It's an American tradition.

America makes lots of money militarizing the world. What don't the Americans get? Any of it. Not to mention affordable health care, functional schools and a hopeful existence.

For as long as we have a system that profits from wars and the threat of wars, for as long as Americans fail to acknowledge and oppose the global injustices of our system, we and others will live and suffer at the mercy of it, and people everywhere will hate us for it.

But be a good American. Don't think. Don't question. Don't imagine something better. Be content as we fade away, financially, morally, completely. The last thing our leaders want are people demanding an end to corruption and the start of an era good for all people.

Greed? Who gives a damn about others? Selfishness is patriotic. Kindness? What a stupid idea! People have always killed each other,

so it's okay. It's a tradition. Like sleeping in church.

Kevin Chestnut

47 years old

St. Louis, Missouri

Mr. Chestnut is director of the Leader Support Groups program, a forum for grassroots leaders of all walks of life, promoting communication and a venue for exchanging ideas and discussing projects (www.geocities.com/leader-support/). In this petition statement from June, 2003, Mr. Chestnut and 61 of his neighbors decry the Iraqi occupation and U.S. postwar economic domination.

U.S. Should Not Dominate Iraq

In March, on the eve of the U.S. war with Iraq, 22 of us as neighbors in St. Louis published many clear reasons for opposing that choice. Now, as President Bush focuses his attention on tax cuts for the rich and more wars upon other nations, our eyes are still fixed on Iraq. While thousands of Iraqi citizens and soldiers have died in our effort to ensure our security, we have found none of the weapons of mass destruction that Colin Powell said so clearly threatened us. While we have spent more than 50 billion dollars waging war, we have not established a lasting peace in Iraq.

As young American troops die daily in Iraq, an atmosphere of deprivation and alienation is growing among the Iraqi people under the administration of Paul Bremer. The true "Shock and Awe" of this occupation came with his U.S. appointment as interim authority. With trade sanctions removed after 12 years of harsh restrictions, unfair competition from abroad has bankrupted Iraqi businesses. Under Bremer, the public sector is being forced to privatize. The press, oil, water, and even medical services are being destabilized at a massive rate, and the Iraqi people have no say whatsoever in the process.

The Iraqi people do not want this U.S. occupation. While most are joyful for Saddam Hussein's removal, they do not welcome foreign rule. They have no reason to trust U.S. intentions, nor do they appreciate the unforgiving restrictions, the massive layoffs in

the civil sector, or the hijacking of the democratic process by Bremer and company. War is still surging below the surface of this so-called liberation. The Iraqi people desire freedom not only in word but also in deed.

We, the 61 neighbors undersigned, call upon Congress to make the Bush administration release its grip over Iraqi reconstruction contracts. There should be no U.S. domination over Iraqi oil production and sale, no U.S. bases in Iraq, and no U.S. control over the constitution building process. We call for the immediate removal of Paul Bremer as chief of the reconstruction government and his replacement with a UN-appointed interim authority.

Furthermore, we call on President Bush to cease his saber rattling at nations that do not bow to U.S. demands.

Finally, we call on all Americans to stand up to the fear tactics of the Bush administration and to bravely defend both the sovereignty of other nations and the rights of the American people.

Signed,

Angi Mayes, Anna Sandige, Anne Hagen, Barry Kirk, Brian Koebbe, Bridget Rush, Carol Iglauer, Carrie Sissel, Cathy Keane, Charles Conwell, Charles Hatcher, Daniel "Digger" Romano, David L. Boger, David R. Bates, Dean E. Martin, Diana Oleskevich, Donita Bauer, Erin M. Finneran, Fred Blumenthal, Gerry Rauch, Gwendolyn Moore, Hannah Joyce-Hoven, Ida C. Walz, Irv Engelmann, Jackie Martin, Jeanette Mott Oxford, Jeanne Meurer, Jill S. Thompson, Jim Oleskevich, John McEnulty, Joseph M. Hagen, Kevin Chestnut, Kip Wellborn, Leah Camp, Liz Baker, Lyn Magee, Lynn Fingerhut, Mahrya Monson, Marie Andrews, Marjorie Wisor, Mary Santanello, Matthew T. Hoven, Maureen "Mo" Costello, Michael Ferris, Michael Levinson, Mike Eggleston, Mike Ohlman, Mike Schaefer, Mimi Newsham Mahoney, Molly Koebbe, Quinn Grimes, Peter F. Hesel, Robert Garavaglia, Robin Page, Serra Bording-Jones, Sonya Pelli, Tom Sandidge, Tommy Franklin, Trish Powers, Van Ferrington

David Cobb
42 Years Old
Houston, Texas

David Cobb was the Green Party nominee for president in 2004. He served as the general counsel for the Green Party of the United States until declaring his candidacy, and was the Green Party of Texas (GPTX) candidate for attorney general in 2002. A graduate of the University of Houston law school, Mr. Cobb has focused intensely on community activism and building the Green Party in Texas. In addition, he lectures and facilitates "Rethinking Corporations/Rethinking Democracy" seminars across the country, which focus on how corporations have become unelected governing institutions, and how we can provoke (and win) a nonviolent democratic revolution in response. The following is a letter to his supporters in which Mr. Cobb thanks them and summarizes the struggle to seek answers and consequences for the Ohio voting scandals and anomalies in the 2004 presidential election.

Dear Friends,

Thank you for your support. The response to our call for contributions and volunteers to make the Ohio Recount a reality was amazing. We have been humbled by this outpouring of support and feel privileged to have stood up on behalf of the people of this country and the democratic process we cherish.

On January 7, the day after Congress debated the historic challenge to Ohio's tainted Electoral College votes, The New York Times wrote: "*in many ways, the debate came about because of the relentless efforts of a small group of third-party activists, liberal lawyers, internet muckrakers and civil rights groups...*"

A week after the election, after thousands of reports of irregularities, intimidation and stories of voters standing for six-eight hours in the rain, we decided to demand a recount of the Ohio vote and asked Michael Badnarik of the Libertarian Party to join us. Within ten days of making our announcement, we received over 6,000 individual donations from voters around the country who feel, as we do, that the integrity of our democracy is at stake. By the time the recount began, over 3,400 volunteers had offered to witness the recount.

Genuine democracy takes the hard work of ordinary citizens

doing extraordinary things.

We sent our recount request and filing fee to all of Ohio's 88 counties on November 18th. We then filed in federal court asking that the process be expedited because it was clear that Ohio's Republican Secretary of State, J. Kenneth Blackwell, planned to delay certifying the statewide vote totals until the last possible moment - December 6th - the day before the Ohio electors were certified. We went to court again on December 3rd, this time defending ourselves from a suit filed against us by Delaware County, who didn't want to do the recount. On December 10th, we went back to federal court asking for judicial intervention because we were alarmed at the widely varying standards being proposed for the recount by the County Boards of Elections.

In each case, the court made it clear that while we had a right to a recount, the court would not grant emergency relief since our campaign would not suffer "irreparable harm" as we were unlikely to gain any electors.

The Ohio Recount began on December 13 at 7am. Almost all the county boards of elections did not follow Ohio law and did not *randomly* select the precincts to be hand counted. Other problems included a lack of security for the ballots and voting machines and the refusal of some counties to do a full hand recount when required by law to do so. In some places. Witnesses were threatened with expulsion if they asked questions and were told to stand up to twenty feet away from where the recount was taking place. In far too few places, our volunteers were treated with the respect they deserved. On December 30th, we filed an amended complaint in federal court, demanding that the recount of Ohio's presidential vote be done again, this time in conformance with state and federal law.

The recount was frustrating, exhausting - and inspiring. At every step, the established power structure was against us. But *We the People*, all of us who worked together to make the recount and the challenge to Ohio's electors, were there to stand up for our right to vote and for the right for those votes to be counted. We trained two thousand volunteers to serve as legal witnesses for the recount. You can read preliminary reports from these witnesses and from our county coordinators at www.votecobb.org/recount/ohioreports/.

Although we still have many more reports to sift through and post to our site, we already know that the recount re-enfranchised thousands of voters. In Conshocton County alone, one thousand and eighty new votes were counted because of our recount demand.

Together, we are building a loud and joyous movement for democracy.

The Green Party is committed to genuine grassroots democracy. Remember that the founders of this country denied many people - including women and people of color - the right to vote. Our democracy is constantly evolving. In order to create an accountable and transparent democratic process worthy of our country and people, we need many electoral reforms. We need an end to partisan administration of elections. We need voter verifiable paper trails and meaningful recounts. We need Election Day Registration (EDR), already in use in six states, so that every eligible citizen who shows up on Election Day can register and vote.

Our current, undemocratic voting system often forces people to vote for a candidate they don't really support in order to keep an even worse candidate out of office. Instant Runoff Voting (IRV) is a simple solution that allows people to vote their conscience and rank candidates in their order of preference. IRV guarantees that the winner has the support of a majority of voters. IRV also eliminates the "spoiler" dynamic in elections.

We urgently need publicly funded elections to eliminate the influence of private money in our democracy and allow ordinary citizens to run for - and win - public office. We need to change restrictive ballot access laws which deny voters choice. We need to abolish the anachronistic Electoral college. We need a constitutional right to vote, something provided for in the interim constitutions of Iraq and Afghanistan but not in the U.S. Constitution. Over four million Americans are not allowed to vote because of felony disenfranchisement laws that strip voting rights from citizens with criminal records, many of whom have fully completed their sentences.

It is not enough to ensure that every vote is counted; we want every vote to count towards the result. We need a multi-party democracy with proportional representation, where candidates and parties are elected in proportion to the level of support received at the polls. An entire Voters Bill of Rights needs to be enacted (www.codepinkalert.org/NationalActionsVoterBillofRights.html).

The second generation of the voting rights movement, committed to these critical election reforms, is a growing, vibrant force.

The Green Party will continue the important work of building genuine democracy. We are poised and ready to work in cooperation

and collaboration with individuals and parties across the political spectrum. If you have not already done so, please take a moment to visit www.gp.org. To learn more about the Green Party. If you're in Ohio, you can find the Ohio Green Party at www.ohiogreens.org. And please continue to visit our web site, www.votecobb.org, which is a valuable resource for information on electoral reform and the New Voting Rights Movement.

Together we are making progress towards a more just, peaceful, sustainable and democratic world.

In solidarity,
David Cobb
2004 Green Party presidential candidate
Lynne Serpe
Ohio Recount Manager

P.S. Your input is essential for continuing to create genuine democracy. Please contribute your time and talents and donate to your state Green Party, the national Green Party or to your favorite voting rights organization. A list of voting rights organizations can be found at www.votecobb.org/resources/sites. Thank you!

Rep. John Conyers et al.

This is a letter circulated by Congressman John Conyers in reaction to the so-called "Downing Street Memo," which appears to affirm that there was a secret U.S.-U.K. agreement to attack Iraq based upon inaccurate or falsified intelligence. The letter, signed by over eighty members of Congress, calls for further inquiry into the matter.

May 5, 2005

The Honorable George W. Bush
President of the United States of America
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue, N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20500

Dear Mr. President:

We write because of troubling revelations in the Sunday *London Times* apparently confirming that the United States and Great Britain had secretly agreed to attack Iraq in the summer of 2002, well before the invasion and before you even sought Congressional authority to engage in military action. While various individuals have asserted this to be the case before, including Paul O'Neill, former U.S. Treasury Secretary, and Richard Clarke, a former National Security Council official, they have been previously dismissed by your Administration. However, when this story was divulged last weekend, Prime Minister Blair's representative claimed the document contained "nothing new." If the disclosure is accurate, it raises troubling new questions regarding the legal justifications for the war as well as the integrity of your own administration.

The Sunday *Times* obtained a leaked document with the minutes of a secret meeting from highly placed sources inside the British Government. Among other things, the document revealed:

* Prime Minister Tony Blair chaired a July 2002 meeting, at which he discussed military options, having already committed himself to supporting President Bush's plans for invading Iraq.

* British Foreign Secretary Jack Straw acknowledged that the case for war was "thin" as "Saddam was not threatening his neighbours and his WMD capability was less than that of Libya, North Korea, or Iran."

* A separate secret briefing for the meeting said that Britain and America had to "create" conditions to justify a war.

* A British official "reported on his recent talks in Washington. There was a perceptible shift in attitude. Military action was now seen as inevitable. Bush wanted to remove Saddam, through military action, justified by the conjunction of terrorism and WMD. But the intelligence and facts were being fixed around the policy."

As a result of this recent disclosure, we would like to know the following:

1) Do you or anyone in your Administration dispute the accuracy of the leaked document?

- 2) Were arrangements being made, including the recruitment of allies, before you sought Congressional authorization to go to war? Did you or anyone in your Administration obtain Britain's commitment to invade prior to this time?
- 3) Was there an effort to create an ultimatum about weapons inspectors in order to help with the justification for the war as the minutes indicate?
- 4) At what point in time did you and Prime Minister Blair first agree it was necessary to invade Iraq?
- 5) Was there a coordinated effort with the U.S. intelligence community and/or British officials to "fix" the intelligence and facts around the policy as the leaked document states?

We have of course known for some time that subsequent to the invasion there have been a variety of varying reasons proffered to justify the invasion, particularly since the time it became evident that weapons of mass destruction would not be found. This leaked document - essentially acknowledged by the Blair government - is the first confirmation that the rationales were shifting well before the invasion as well.

Given the importance of this matter, we would ask that you respond to this inquiry as promptly as possible. Thank you.

Sincerely,

Neil Abercrombie, Brian Baird, Tammy Baldwin, Xavier Becerra, Shelley Berkley, Eddie Bernice Johnson, Sanford Bishop, Earl Blumenauer, Corrine Brown, Sherrod Brown, G.K. Butterfield, Emanuel Cleaver, James Clyburn, John Conyers, Jim Cooper, Elijah Cummings, Danny Davis, Peter DeFazio, Diana DeGette, Bill Delahunt, Rosa DeLauro, Lloyd Doggett, Sam Farr, Bob Filner, Harold Ford, Jr., Barney Frank, Al Green, Raul Grijalva, Louis Gutierrez, Alcee Hastings, Maurice Hinchey, Rush Holt, Jay Inslee, Sheila Jackson Lee, Jessie Jackson Jr., Marcy Kaptur, Patrick Kennedy, Dale Kildee, Carolyn Kilpatrick, Dennis Kucinich, William Lacy Clay, Barbara Lee, John Lewis, Zoe Lofgren, Donna M. Christensen, Carolyn Maloney, Ed Markey, Carolyn McCarthy, Jim McDermott, James McGovern, Cynthia McKinney, Martin Meehan, Kendrick Meek, Gregory Meeks, Michael Michaud, George Miller, Gwen S. Moore, James Moran, Jerrold Nadler, Grace

Napolitano, James Oberstar, John Olver, Major Owens, Frank Pallone, Donald Payne, Charles Rangel, Bobby Rush, Bernie Sanders, Linda Sanchez, Jan Schakowsky, Jose Serrano, Ike Skelton, Louise Slaughter, Hilda Solis, Pete Stark, Ellen Tauscher, Bennie Thompson, Edolphus Towns, Stephanie Tubbs Jones, Chris Van Hollen, Nydia Velazquez, Debbie Wasserman Schultz, Maxine Waters, Diane Watson, Melvin Watt, Robert Wexler, Lynn Woolsey, David Wu, and Albert R. Wynn.

Jamie Lynn Gooley

25 Years Old
Sebastopol, California

Ms. Lynn, a counselor, expresses her feelings and frustrations with the current political climate in a series of ongoing e-mails to her friends. Here are a few of these heartfelt writings.

Mon., March 24, 2003

Monday - brings me back home to rest and finish up a paper for school (well, start it). I feel ignored and helpless against the violent rage and terror attacks on Iraq. I have been in San Francisco protesting this war with hundreds of thousands of people - military families, children, students, business people and all for WHAT? To get no response from the government at all - with little media coverage - 5-second blips on the "news." The city of San Francisco was SHUT DOWN (including the Bay Bridge and Golden Gate Bridge) on Thursday. Non-violent direct actions were going on into the night and they still are...What's going on here is ten times bigger than the WTO battle in Seattle: Buildings in the financial district were closed ALL DAY and we said, "NO Business as Usual until the war ends!" SO what's missing? Well, there is no tear gas, no water cannons, some property destruction - but generally peaceful protesters...is that why the media is not watching - what will people do next? I do not know one person who thinks this war is JUST. Is Saddam an evil man? Perhaps so, but so is G. Dubya Bush. Tears fall from my eyes every day. I also think it's very manipulative that the U.S. government has co-opted the feelings of shock and awe,