

ARTICLES OF LASTING INTEREST

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Girl Guerrilla A Child Soldier in the FARC

by Yvonne E. Keaims, *Harper's Magazine*, March 2005

"IT'S NOT HOW THEY SAY IT IS" From an interview with a girl in a reintegration program for former child soldiers in Colombia, conducted by Yvonne E. Keaims and recently published by the Quaker United Nations Office. Human Rights Watch estimates that 11,000 children are fighting in Colombia's civil war, most of them as members of FARC, the largest of Colombia's left wing rebel groups. The children typically join the guerrillas between the ages of eleven and thirteen. Translated from the Spanish.

My family was very, very strict. I was beaten a lot. My legs were black and blue from the beatings. The guerrillas asked me why my legs were like that, and so I told them, and they asked me why I didn't go with them, because they didn't beat people, they didn't treat you badly, they didn't insult you, nothing. And so I told them that I would think about it, and the next day I went off with them. My mum found out, and she came to look for me and told the guerrillas to give me back because I was underage and how on earth could they even have thought about taking me. I said that I wasn't going to go back home, and since then I haven't seen my family. And then, when I was with the guerrillas, I didn't miss them anymore; I didn't need them, or anything.

Among the guerrillas, no man has the right to be disrespectful toward a woman, nor do you have the right to insult someone there. If you insult someone you get punished. Nobody hit me, nobody insulted me. I mean, after that the guerrillas were like my family. I settled in. I never got bored or fed up with the guerrillas, but I had a good time, because the commanders helped you a lot, and it's very different when nobody is telling you off or hitting you all the time, and I really changed a lot. But then later, I don't know, that changed, and I ran away from there.

Before I was a teenager, I had a husband in the guerrillas. He knew that I was still a girl, he told me not to be afraid, he wasn't



going to abuse me, he wanted me to be his girl. The girls, the women, who had been there the longest, gave me advice—they said that it was better because then I wasn't going to be bothered by any of the others, and that he would look after me and help me, and so I accepted. I was fitted with an IUD. I had that for about a year and a half, then I got ill and I had it taken out. In spite of being my "husband" he was like a dad, and I told him all about my family. He helped me a lot, he carried my things, sometimes he helped me with the rifle, and so I just carried my clothes. Then he told me that he, well, that he wanted someone else because I was still a little girl, and so he said he was going to get another girlfriend, someone older, a woman. I was transferred and I never saw him again.

In the evening we were given talks in the classroom. The talks were about Plan Colombia—which is what the United States wanted to do with Colombia—about drug trafficking, and about how a guerrilla should behave in public. You shouldn't treat anyone badly, and you shouldn't insult anyone. If you get insulted, you shouldn't insult back. You shouldn't take things belonging to the civilians. You should respect them, not bother the girls, and show solidarity; for example, if you get to a house and there's a woman doing dishes or washing clothes, then go and help her, or if a man is chopping wood, then the men should go and help him, to show solidarity. That's what we did if we saw people working—we set about helping them.

Most of all I liked traveling. I liked getting to know lots of places. Where we were, the guerrillas had never been before, and the people, the poor people, had to sleep with everything inside. Sometimes they even had the cattle in the kitchen, because there were many thieves about, and we arrived and we killed about ten of the thieves, and that finished it. There were no more robberies, and so the people were very grateful. I had to organize some meetings in the villages to explain the value of the women guerrillas, and sometimes you have to argue with the men because they say that women should stay at home, and so you try to get that idea out of their heads.

I was in several battles. I wasn't afraid. I don't know, when you're actually there, the fear just goes, and after the first ten shots, I wasn't afraid anymore and I carried on like normal. Once when we attacked and then went in to check it over, there were about four dead policemen, all covered in blood. That was the first time that I saw a dead body, and for more than a week afterward, as soon as I closed my eyes, I could see them. That

was pretty tough. I never thought that I might get killed. I just said, I hope God helps me and nothing happens to me.

I wasn't afraid of dying but of being taken alive by the army. One of the girls was taken alive; she was about sixteen years old. They captured her and they all raped her, all the soldiers, more than a hundred, and then at the end when they were tired of that, they stuck their rifle barrels into her vagina and fired and then they poured sulfuric acid on her. They buried her, and then afterward we went there and dug her up, and we gave her military honors, and we bathed her, and then we looked at her, and then we dressed her, and then we took her to be buried in another cemetery. We were very angry, and so we went and fought the army for two days running.

What I most liked doing was helping the poor people, the children and old people, and what I didn't really like doing was kidnapping people, or taking money from people, or taking the cars that they were driving. The civilians got on better with the women. They were afraid of the men, but with the women it was easier to get things across to them, because a woman can go in and talk to the woman of the house, she can help her tidy the kitchen, and so the civilians trust them more. And so because of that, there were always two or three women in each squadron or group.

Every day there was a "relations session," when everyone was called together, except for those on guard. You step forward and say that so and so treated me badly or any other problem, and you tell everyone, or suggestions you want to make, so you step forward and say, I've got an idea, and the idea is that we have two cooks or to have one less, or my suggestion is that we all stay in bed, etc., and we solved our problems like that. If there are problems between two people, if you're about to come to blows, then you're told to talk about it. They explain that you shouldn't fight among companions: the enemy is outside, not inside; and sometimes they understand, or if not, if they're very angry, then they put the two that are fighting face-to-face until—it could be all night—until finally they begin to talk, and if they don't make up like that then they're made to sleep in the same bed, or made to eat off the same plate, and like that, sleeping together they have to make it up.

The ideology from before is very different from the ideology now. I mean, when I was with them, the guerrillas said that we were fighting for the people, for a socialist country, and now it's totally different. People are killed just for the sake of it. The guerrillas used to be, I don't know how, they had more goodwill, they used to help the needy people more, and now they don't, now it's like, "I don't give a damn if people suffer."

For the moment, I'd like to stay here until I'm eighteen and then see if the reinsertion program helps me to set up a project. Sometimes I feel okay, as some people don't know that you've been in that. You know, they have a really low opinion of the guerrillas, and for me, this is hard, because I was there, and it wasn't how they think. Sometimes I feel like talking to them and telling them the truth about how it really was.

My biggest dream is to have a big house with a really big living room and to invite all the children and old people that you see out on the street, the ones that they call "disposable people," and take them all to this big room with loads of beds., and help them all. I mean, to make it a home for them. That's what I'd like to do.

But who knows?

Perhaps I'd tell the girls who are with the guerrillas to get out of there, to think carefully and make a good decision, one that they know will help them, and that they should get out and give themselves up because it's not how they say it is. It's not a place for girls to be, or for those underage, or even men and women. Children should have some kind of freedom, be free and do what they want to do—for example, to study, to progress, and not be there with the guerrillas.

Yvonne Keaims, a developmental psychologist, is the author of The Voices of Girl Child Soldiers, interviewing in depth 23 such girls in Colombia, Angola, Sri Lanka, and the Philippines. <http>

Foo On Oligarchs Time to Really Practice Iroquois

by Charles C. Mann, *New York Times*, 4 July 2005

Seeking to understand this nation's democratic spirit, Alexis de Tocqueville journeyed to the famous centers of American liberty (Boston, Philadelphia, Washington), stoically enduring their "infernal" accommodations, food and roads and chatting up almost everyone he saw.

He even marched in a Fourth of July parade in Albany just ahead of a big float that featured a flag-waving Goddess of Liberty, a bust of Benjamin Franklin, and a printing press that spewed out copies of the Declaration of Independence for the cheering crowd. But for all his wit and intellect, Tocqueville never realized that he came closest to his goal just three days after the parade, when he stopped at the "rather unhealthy but thickly peopled" area around Syracuse.

Tocqueville's fascination with the democratic spirit was prescient. Expressed politically in Americans' insistence on limited government and culturally in their long-standing disdain for elites, that spirit has become one of this country's great gifts to the world.

When rich London and Paris stockbrokers proudly retain their working-class accents, when audiences show up at La Scala in track suits and sneakers, when South Africans and Thais complain that the police don't read suspects their rights the way they do on "Starsky & Hutch," when anti-government protesters in Beirut sing "We Shall Overcome" in Lebanese accents—all these raspberries in the face of social and legal authority have a distinctly American tone. Or, perhaps, a distinctly Native American tone, for among its wellsprings is American Indian culture, especially that of the Iroquois.

The Iroquois confederation, known to its members as the Haudenosaunee, was probably the greatest indigenous polity north of the Rio Grande in the two centuries before Columbus and definitely the greatest in the two centuries after. A political and military alliance formed by the Seneca, Cayuga, Onondaga, Oneida, Mohawk and, after about 1720, the Tuscarora, it dominated, at its height, an area from Kentucky to Lake Ontario and Lake Champlain. Its capital was Onondaga, a

bustling small city of several thousand souls a few miles south of where Tocqueville stopped in modern Syracuse.

The Iroquois confederation was governed by a constitution, the Great Law of Peace, which established the league's Great Council: 50 male royaneh (religious-political leaders), each representing one of the female-led clans of the alliance's nations. What was striking to the contemporary eye was that the 117 codicils of the Great Law were concerned as much with constraining the Great Council as with granting it authority. "Their whole civil policy was averse to the concentration of power in the hands of any single individual," explained Lewis Henry Morgan, a pioneering ethnographer of the Iroquois.

The council's jurisdiction was limited to relations among the nations and outside groups; internal affairs were the province of the individual nations. Even in the council's narrow domain, the Great Law insisted that every time the royaneh confronted "an especially important matter or a great emergency," they had to "submit the matter to the decision of their people" in a kind of referendum open to both men and women.

In creating such checks on authority, the league was just the most formal expression of a regionwide tradition. Although the Indian sachems on the Eastern Seaboard were absolute monarchs in theory, wrote the colonial leader Roger Williams, in practice they did not make any decisions "unto which the people are averse." These smaller groups did not have formal, Iroquois-style constitutions, but their governments, too, were predicated on the consent of the governed. Compared to the despotisms that were the norm in Europe and Asia, the societies encountered by British colonists were a libertarian dream.

To some extent, this freedom reflected North American Indians' relatively recent adoption of agriculture. Early farming villages worldwide have always had less authoritarian governments than their successors. But the Indians of the Northeast made what the historian José António Brandão calls "autonomous responsibility" a social ideal—the Iroquois especially, but many others, too. Each Indian, the Jesuit missionary Joseph-François Lafitau observed, viewing "others as masters of their own actions and themselves, lets them conduct themselves as they wish and judges only himself."

So vivid were these examples of democratic self-government that some historians and activists have argued that the Great Law of Peace directly inspired the American Constitution. Taken literally, this assertion seems implausible. With its grant of authority to the federal government to supersede state law, its dependence on rule by the majority rather than consensus and its denial of suffrage to women, the Constitution as originally enacted was not at all like the Great Law. But in a larger sense the claim is correct. The framers of the Constitution, like most colonists in what would become the United States, were pervaded by Indian images of liberty.

For two centuries after Plymouth Rock, the border between natives and newcomers was porous, almost nonexistent. In a way difficult to imagine now, Europeans and Indians mingled, the historian Gary Nash has written, as "trading partners, military allies, and marital consorts."

In a letter to Thomas Jefferson, the aging John Adams recalled the Massachusetts of his youth as a multiracial society. "Aaron Pomham, the priest, and Moses Pomham, the King of the

Punkapaug and Neponsit Tribes, were frequent visitors at my father's house," he wrote nostalgically. Growing up in Quincy, Mass., the young Adams frequently visited a neighboring Indian family, "where I never failed to be treated with whortleberries, blackberries, strawberries or apples, plums, peaches, etc." Benjamin Franklin was equally familiar with Indian company; representing the Pennsylvania colony, he negotiated with the Iroquois in 1754. A close friend was Conrad Weiser, an adopted Mohawk who at the talks was the Indians' unofficial host.

As many colonists observed, the limited Indian governments reflected levels of personal autonomy unheard of in Europe. "Every man is free," a frontiersman, Robert Rogers, told a disbelieving British audience, referring to Indian villages. In these places, he said, no person, white or Indian, sachem or slave, has any right to deprive anyone else of his freedom. The Iroquois, Cadwallader Colden declared in 1749, held "such absolute notions of liberty that they allow of no kind of superiority of one over another, and banish all servitude from their territories." (Colden, surveyor general of New York, was another Mohawk adoptee.)

Not every European admired this democratic spirit. Indians "think every one ought to be left to his own opinion, without being thwarted," the Flemish missionary monk Louis Hennepin wrote in 1683. "There is nothing so difficult to control as the tribes of America," a fellow missionary unhappily observed. "All these barbarians have the law of wild asses—they are born, live, and die in a liberty without restraint; they do not know what is meant by bridle and bit."

Indians, for their part, were horrified to encounter European social classes, with those on the lower rungs of the hierarchy compelled to defer to those on the upper. When the 17th-century French adventurer Louis-Armand de Lom d'Arce, Baron de Lahontan, tried to convince the Huron, the Iroquois's northern neighbors, of Europe's natural superiority, the Indians scoffed.

Because Europeans had to kowtow to their social betters, Lahontan later reported, "they brand us for slaves, and call us miserable souls, whose life is not worth having." Individual Indians, he wrote "value themselves above anything that you can imagine, and this is the reason they always give for it, that one's as much master as another, and since men are all made of the same clay there should be no distinction or superiority among them."

Influenced by their proximity to Indians—by being around living, breathing role models of human liberty - European colonists adopted their insubordinate attitudes. Lahontan was an example, despite his noble title; his account highlighted Indian freedoms as an incitement toward rebellion. Both the clergy and Louis XIV, the king whom Lahontan was goading, tried to suppress these dangerous ideas by instructing French officials to force a French education upon the Indians, complete with lessons in deferring to their social betters. The attempts, the historian Cornelius J. Jaenen reported, were "everywhere unsuccessful."

In the most direct way, Indian liberty made indigenous villages into competitors for colonists' allegiance. Colonial societies could not become too oppressive, because their

members—surrounded by examples of free life—always had the option of voting with their feet.

It is likely that the first British villages in North America, thousands of miles from the House of Lords, would have lost some of the brutally graded social hierarchy that characterized European life. But it is also clear that they were infused by the democratic, informal brashness of American Indian culture. That spirit alarmed and discomfited many Europeans, aristocrat and peasant alike. Others found it a deeply attractive vision of human possibility.

Historians have been reluctant to acknowledge this contribution to the end of tyranny worldwide. Yet a plain reading of Locke, Hume, Rousseau and Thomas Paine shows that they took many of their illustrations of liberty from native examples. So did the colonists who held their Boston Tea Party dressed as "Mohawks." When others took up European intellectuals' books and histories, images of Indian freedom had an impact far removed in time and space from the 16th-century Northeast.

The pioneering suffragists Elizabeth Cady Stanton and Matilda Joslyn Gage, both Finger Lakes residents, were inspired by the Great Law's extension of legal protections to women. "This gentile constitution is wonderful!" Friedrich Engels exclaimed (though he apparently didn't notice its emphasis on limited state power).

Just like their long-ago confreres in Boston, protesters in South Korea, China and Ukraine wore "Native American" makeup and clothing in, respectively, the 1980's, 1990's, and the first years of this century. Indeed, it is only a little exaggeration to claim that everywhere liberty is cherished—from Sweden to Soweto, from the streets of Manila to the docks of Manhattan—people are descendants of the Iroquois League and its neighbors.

Charles C. Mann is the author of the forthcoming "1491: New Revelations of the Americas Before Columbus."

Apocalypse Now How Mankind is Sleepwalking toward Ecological Disaster

by Geoffrey Lean, *The Independent* (UK), 6 Feb 2005

Floods, storms and droughts. Melting Arctic ice, shrinking glaciers, oceans turning to acid. The world's top scientists warned last week that dangerous climate change is taking place today, not the day after tomorrow. You don't believe it? Then, says Geoffrey Lean, read this...

Future historians, looking back from a much hotter and less hospitable world, are likely to play special attention to the first few weeks of 2005. As they puzzle over how a whole generation could have sleepwalked into disaster - destroying the climate that has allowed human civilization to flourish over the past 11,000 years - they may well identify the past weeks as the time when the last alarms sounded.

Last week, 200 of the world's leading climate scientists - meeting at Tony Blair's request at the Met Office's new

headquarters at Exeter - issued the most urgent warning to date that dangerous climate change is taking place, and that time is running out.

Next week the Kyoto Protocol, the international treaty that tries to control global warming, comes into force after a seven-year delay. But it is clear that the protocol does not go nearly far enough.

A man cycles past the cooling towers of a state-owned steel mill in Beijing. The effects of global warming are already apparent, unexpected problems are looming and there are no 'magic bullets' for tackling the peril, a top forum of climate scientists warned. (AFP/Goh Chai Hin)

The alarms have been going off since the beginning of one of the warmest Januaries on record. First, Dr Rajendra Pachauri - chairman of the official Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) - told a UN conference in Mauritius that the pollution which causes global warming has reached "dangerous" levels.

Then the biggest-ever study of climate change, based at Oxford University, reported that it could prove to be twice as catastrophic as the IPCC's worst predictions. And an international task force - also reporting to Tony Blair, and co-chaired by his close ally, Stephen Byers - concluded that we could reach "the point of no return" in a decade.

Finally, the UK head of Shell, Lord Oxburgh, took time out - just before his company reported record profits mainly achieved by selling oil, one of the main causes of the problem - to warn that unless governments take urgent action there "will be a disaster".

But it was last week at the Met Office's futuristic glass headquarters, incongruously set in a dreary industrial estate on the outskirts of Exeter, that it all came together. The conference had been called by the Prime Minister to advise him on how to "avoid dangerous climate change". He needed help in persuading the world to prioritize the issue this year during Britain's presidencies of the EU and the G8 group of economic powers.

The conference opened with the Secretary of State for the Environment, Margaret Beckett, warning that "a significant impact" from global warming "is already inevitable". It continued with presentations from top scientists and economists from every continent. These showed that some dangerous climate change was already taking place and that catastrophic events once thought highly improbable were now seen as likely (see panel). Avoiding the worst was technically simple and economically cheap, they said, provided that governments could be persuaded to take immediate action.

About halfway through I realized that I had been here before. In the summer of 1986 the world's leading nuclear experts gathered in Vienna for an inquest into the accident at Chernobyl. The head of the Russian delegation showed a film shot from a helicopter, and we suddenly found ourselves gazing down on the red-hot exposed reactor core.

It was all, of course, much less dramatic at Exeter. But as paper followed learned paper, once again a group of world authorities were staring at a crisis they had devoted their lives to trying to avoid.

I am willing to bet there were few in the room who did not

sense their children or grandchildren standing invisibly at their shoulders. The conference formally concluded that climate change was "already occurring" and that "in many cases the risks are more serious than previously thought". But the cautious scientific language scarcely does justice to the sense of the meeting.

We learned that glaciers are shrinking around the world. Arctic sea ice has lost almost half its thickness in recent decades. Natural disasters are increasing rapidly around the world. Those caused by the weather - such as droughts, storms, and floods - are rising three times faster than those - such as earthquakes - that are not.

We learned that bird populations in the North Sea collapsed last year, after the sand eels on which they feed left its warmer waters - and how the number of scientific papers recording changes in ecosystems due to global warming has escalated from 14 to more than a thousand in five years.

Worse, leading scientists warned of catastrophic changes that once they had dismissed as "improbable". The meeting was particularly alarmed by powerful evidence, first reported in *The Independent* on Sunday last July, that the oceans are slowly turning acid, threatening all marine life.

Professor Chris Rapley, director of the British Antarctic Survey, presented new evidence that the West Antarctic ice sheet is beginning to melt, threatening eventually to raise sea levels by 15ft: 90 per cent of the world's people live near current sea levels. Recalling that the IPCC's last report had called Antarctica "a slumbering giant", he said: "I would say that this is now an awakened giant."

Professor Mike Schlesinger, of the University of Illinois, reported that the shutdown of the Gulf Stream, once seen as a "low probability event", was now 45 per cent likely this century, and 70 per cent probable by 2200. If it comes sooner rather than later it will be catastrophic for Britain and northern Europe, giving us a climate like Labrador (which shares our latitude) even as the rest of the world heats up: if it comes later it could be beneficial, moderating the worst of the warming.

The experts at Exeter were virtually unanimous about the danger, mirroring the attitude of the climate science community as a whole: humanity is to blame. There were a few skeptics at Exeter, including Andrei Illarionov, an adviser to Russia's President Putin, who last year called the Kyoto Protocol "an interstate Auschwitz". But in truth it is much easier to find skeptics among media pundits in London or neo-cons in Washington than among climate scientists. Even the few contrarian climatologists publish little research to support their views, concentrating on questioning the work of others.

Now a new scientific consensus is emerging - that the warming must be kept below an average increase of two degrees centigrade if catastrophe is to be avoided. This almost certainly involves keeping concentrations of carbon dioxide, the main cause of climate change, below 400 parts per million.

Unfortunately we are almost there, with concentrations exceeding 370ppm and rising, but experts at the conference concluded that we could go briefly above the danger level so long as we brought it down rapidly afterwards. They added that this would involve the world reducing emissions by 50 per cent by 2050 - and rich countries cutting theirs by 30 per cent by 2020.

Economists stressed there is little time for delay. If action is put off for a decade, it will need to be twice as radical; if it has to wait 20 years, it will cost between three and seven times as much.

The good news is that it can be done with existing technology, by cutting energy waste, expanding the use of renewable sources, growing trees and crops (which remove carbon dioxide from the air) to turn into fuel, capturing the gas before it is released from power stations, and - maybe - using more nuclear energy.

The better news is that it would not cost much: one estimate suggested the cost would be about 1 per cent of Europe's GNP spread over 20 years; another suggested it meant postponing an expected fivefold increase in world wealth by just two years. Many experts believe combating global warming would increase prosperity, by bringing in new technologies.

The big question is whether governments will act. President Bush's opposition to international action remains the greatest obstacle. Tony Blair, by almost universal agreement, remains the leader with the best chance of persuading him to change his mind.

But so far the Prime Minister has been more influenced by the President than the other way round. He appears to be moving away from fighting for the pollution reductions needed in favor of agreeing on a vague pledge to bring in new technologies sometime in the future.

By then it will be too late. And our children and grandchildren will wonder - as we do in surveying, for example, the drift into the First World War - "how on earth could they be so blind?"

Water Wars

What could happen? Wars break out over diminishing water resources as populations grow and rains fail.

How would this come about? Over 25 per cent more people than at present are expected to live in countries where water is scarce in the future, and global warming will make it worse.

How likely is it? Former UN chief Boutros Boutros-Ghali has long said that the next Middle East war will be fought for water, not oil.

Disappearing Nations

What could happen? Low-lying island such as the Maldives and Tuvalu - with highest points only a few feet above sea-level - will disappear off the face of the Earth.

How would this come about? As the world heats up, sea levels are rising, partly because glaciers are melting, and partly because the water in the oceans expands as it gets warmer.

How likely is it? Inevitable. Even if global warming stopped today, the seas would continue to rise for centuries. Some small islands have already sunk for ever. A year ago, Tuvalu was briefly submerged.

Flooding

What could happen? London, New York, Tokyo, Bombay, many other cities and vast areas of countries from Britain to Bangladesh disappear under tens of feet of water, as the seas rise dramatically.

How would this come about? Ice caps in Greenland and Antarctica melt. The Greenland ice sheet would raise sea levels by more than 20ft, the West Antarctic ice sheet by another 15ft.

How likely is it? Scientists used to think it unlikely, but this year reported that the melting of both ice caps had begun. It will take hundreds of years, however, for the seas to rise that much.

Uninhabitable Earth

What could happen? Global warming escalates to the point where the world's whole climate abruptly switches, turning it permanently into a much hotter and less hospitable planet.

How would this come about? A process involving "positive feedback" causes the warming to fuel itself, until it reaches a point that finally tips the climate pattern over.

How likely is it? Abrupt flips have happened in the prehistoric past. Scientists believe this is unlikely, at least in the foreseeable future, but increasingly they are refusing to rule it out.

Rainforest Fires

What could happen? Famously wet tropical forests, such as those in the Amazon, go up in flames, destroying the world's richest wildlife habitats and releasing vast amounts of carbon dioxide to speed global warming.

How would this come about? Britain's Met Office predicted in 1999 that much of the Amazon will dry out and die within 50 years, making it ready for sparks - from humans or lightning - to set it ablaze.

How likely is it? Very, if the predictions turn out to be right. Already there have been massive forest fires in Borneo and Amazonia, casting palls of highly polluting smoke over vast areas.

The Big Freeze

What could happen? Britain and northern Europe get much colder because the Gulf Stream, which provides as much heat as the sun in winter, fails.

How would this come about? Melting polar ice sends fresh water into the North Atlantic. The less salty water fails to generate the underwater current which the Gulf Stream needs.

How likely is it? About even for a Gulf Stream failure this century, said scientists last week.

Starvation

What could happen? Food production collapses in Africa, for example, as rainfall dries up and droughts increase. As farmland turns to desert, people flee in their millions in search of food.

How would this come about? Rainfall is expected to decrease by up to 60 per cent in winter and 30 per cent in summer in southern Africa this century. By some estimates, Zambia could lose almost all its farms.

How likely is it? Pretty likely unless the world tackles both global warming and Africa's decline. Scientists agree that droughts will increase in a warmer world.

Acid Oceans

What could happen? The seas will gradually turn more and more acid. Coral reefs, shellfish and plankton, on which all life depends, will die off. Much of the life of the oceans will become extinct.

How would this come about? The oceans have absorbed half the carbon dioxide, the main cause of global warming, so far emitted by humanity. This forms dilute carbonic acid, which attacks corals and shells.

How likely is it? It is already starting. Scientists warn that the

chemistry of the oceans is changing in ways unprecedented for 20 million years. Some predict that the world's coral reefs will die within 35 years.

Disease

What could happen? Malaria - which kills two million people worldwide every year - reaches Britain with foreign travelers, gets picked up by British mosquitos and becomes endemic in the warmer climate.

How would this come about? Four of our 40 mosquito species can carry the disease, and hundreds of travelers return with it annually. The insects breed faster, and feed more, in warmer temperatures.

How likely is it? A Department of Health study has suggested it may happen by 2050: the Environment Agency has mentioned 2020. Some experts say it is miraculous that it has not happened already.

Hurricanes

What could happen? Hurricanes, typhoons and violent storms proliferate, grow even fiercer, and hit new areas. Last September's repeated battering of Florida and the Caribbean may be just a foretaste of what is to come, say scientists.

How would this come about? The storms gather their energy from warm seas, and so, as oceans heat up, fiercer ones occur and threaten areas where at present the seas are too cool for such weather.

How likely is it? Scientists are divided over whether storms will get more frequent and whether the process has already begun.

On the Road in a Changed America

by Susan Lenfestey, *Star Tribune* (Minneapolis), 4 July 2005

Recently I drove from Mackinac Island, Michigan, to Minneapolis. Making that trip in a 15-year-old VW van, with no AC, is like spending the day in a crock pot, but it does give a person time to observe the terrain and to think about the lives of folks in the upper Midwest as we get ready to celebrate our nation's independence.

Driving across Michigan's Upper Peninsula is like driving across Alaska, without the scenery. In the last 30 years the changes to the flinty landscape have been few, though now there are trucks everywhere hauling off freshly cut timber. Commerce that isn't based on lumber or mining never seems to take hold in the UP, and everything from farms to auto dealerships to motels sit barren and abandoned.

What has changed is the people and their politics. The iron-hard bodies of the scrappy farmers and miners have given way to fast-food pudge, just as their left-leaning political views, long the solid core of the Democratic Party, have given way to a George Bush go-it-alone belligerence, with trucks and T-shirts sporting sentiments having mostly to do with guns (love 'em) and gays (hate 'em) or support for our troops.

There are a few new flat-roofed mini-marts plunked down along the roadside, surrounded by an acre of cement, selling

everything from gas to deer bait to bubblegum-pink baby dresses, with "I'm too sexy for my diaper" written across the front.

If you can get any local radio at all, your choices are Christian, country, hard rock or oldies, which about sums up who's still inhabiting this neck of the woods -- rock for the crystal meth crowd, country for the hefty moms in GMC minivans, oldies for, well, oldies, and Christian for just about everyone else.

When you drop down into Wisconsin everything changes, from the terrain to the light. Chalky soils give way to chocolate-colored loam, and the sun loses its hard edge. But many of the small towns here are dead too, and Wal-Marts shimmer like mirages in what just five years ago were corn and hay fields.

This time of year there are also small tents all along the way selling fireworks, many of them flying the Confederate flag, an odd choice given the nature of the holiday we're about to celebrate with their wares. Of course the Confederate flag does fly below the Green Bay Packer flag.

On the outskirts of Chippewa Falls I listened to President Bush on the radio speaking of the sacrifices necessary to "do the job" in Iraq, while in the dusky soft night I could see colt-legged children dancing on tidy lawns, twirling little American flags and sparklers (both probably made in China), their decent, I'm sure, hard-working parents looking on.

What sacrifices have these parents already made to pay for this war, and what sacrifices lie ahead, with every child in America now born shouldering a \$150,000 share in the national debt? And which will do these children the most good in the future, the flag of a country that is letting them down so fast they don't even know it, or a magic wand full of sparks?

Judging from our president's skewed and wishful thinking on Iraq, I'd say we'd all better light more sparklers and count on the magic.

Susan Lenfestey is a Minneapolis writer.

China's Tango in Latin America

by Saul Landau, Foreign Policy in Focus, 8 July 2005

A century ago, US policy planners looked to a then weak and divided China as the answer to the country's future trade and economic problems. Anxious exporters implored president William McKinley to act because "the Chinese market rightfully belongs to us", as a member of the Riverside (New York) Republican Club told secretary of state William Hay.

This low-wage labor source and vast potential market in the East would also supposedly solve the periodic depression problem, which in 1893 shook the country's economic structure and motivated the elite to think about how expansion eastward would resolve that issue.

"Under the stimulus of a narrowing marketplace at home and widening market opportunity of an awakening China, America's leadership made a conscious, purposeful, integrated effort to solve the economic crisis at home by promoting national interest abroad," wrote historian Thomas McCormick. It did so "by using America's most potent weapon, economic supremacy, to begin

the open-door conquest of the China market."

In 1898, McKinley "took the Philippines", alleged McCormick, because it made the ideal jumping-off base for future China excursions. The US kept a naval base there for 100 years, when technology no longer required refueling stops. "East Asia is the prize for which all nations are grasping," wrote Brooks Adams, sixth president John Quincy Adams' grandson.

In 2005, the weak and vulnerable "prize" that feuding Europeans had carved up for imperial aspirations at the end of the 19th and early 20th centuries, now blankets all continents with its goods -- and its capital. As the "made in China" label has become ubiquitous in US department stores, the Chinese government has scooped up US Treasury securities worth hundreds of billions of dollars. Maybe that makes the US China's "prize". Indeed, US officials may well worry that the Chinese might stop recycling dollars they earn from trade surplus back into the US economy.

In early March, a US Embassy official confided to a visiting businessman that he believed that Chinese leaders viewed the US as a declining superpower whose time had passed and which would be forced to share world power with other powerful nations, including China.

Latin American Invasion

To demonstrate how China's strategic position has changed in the past two decades, the embassy official explained that China has not only widely penetrated the US consumer market, but also invaded Latin America, a region that the US has traditionally dominated.

He referred to two high-level visits. In November 2004, Chinese President Hu Jintao signed 39 commercial agreements with five Latin American nations. Chinese investments in Argentina alone totaled some US\$20 billion. He then made an investment trip to the Caribbean as well. In January and February, Chinese Vice President Zeng Qinghong followed his boss's visit with his own entourage of officials and top business executives. During these two aggressive trips to pursue investment in strategic areas, China stepped into potentially contentious turf when they signed an accord with Venezuela's President Hugo Chavez for future Venezuelan oil and gas exploration. Zeng also offered Venezuela a \$700 million credit line for new housing construction to help reduce Venezuelan poverty, ignoring US complaints over Chavez's "authoritarianism".

Chavez, who has won three free and fair elections in the past six years, gets stuck with the "authoritarian" label, while his pro-US opponents who staged a 2002 military coup merit the "democratic" badge. For all the tension between the two nations, US imports from Venezuela still stood at \$25 billion last year, far outweighing exports to that country, which totaled \$4.8 billion.

But Beijing's real poke in Washington's eye came with the announcement that it would give credits to Cuba. In the globalization era, Cuba remains the exception to all rules. The Bush administration's Latin American policy targets the "containment" of Chavez or the "punishing" of Fidel Castro, who holds the world record for "most years of disobedience".

So far, official Washington has ignored or denied the significance of China's Latin America strategy. Indeed, "President Hu Jintao spent more time in Latin America last year than President George W Bush," Miami Herald columnist Andres Oppenheimer has observed. "China's vice president, Zeng Qinghong, spent more time in the region last month than his US counterpart, Vice President Dick Cheney, over the past four years."

Helping Meet China's Demand for Energy

At the end of 2004 and the beginning of 2005, China offered more than \$50 billion in investment and credits to countries inside the traditional Monroe Doctrine's shield. That's beginning to rival the cash infusion from president John F Kennedy's highly-publicized Alliance for Progress, which pumped \$20 billion into the region in the 1960s (that would be worth about \$120 billion today after adjusting for inflation).

Trade with Latin America can help meet China's wildly expanding energy demands. In 2007, the Central Intelligence Agency estimated, China will import half its oil. China also needs to import other raw materials and food as its economy grows.

As US dependency on foreign oil grows and the price of crude reaches record levels, most recently over the \$60 per barrel mark, the Chinese might maneuver themselves into a position to actually sell some of that viscous substance to the US. Long before the Alaska drilling results in a drop of crude prices, China's new investments have targeted oil, gas and minerals, signs that the Chinese pursue strategic gains and markets rather than simple profit designs.

China already operates two Venezuelan oil fields, and after signing a January agreement in Caracas, China will also begin developing other fields – seemingly in decline - in eastern Venezuela. China also agreed to buy 120,000 barrels of oil a month and build an additional fuel-producing facility. Venezuelan officials announced that they expected trade with China to reach \$3 billion in 2005, more than double 2004. And - Castro-haters hold onto your hats - a huge Chinese oil company will begin searching for potential oil fields off the Cuban coast.

When Hu visited several Latin American countries in November 2004, he told the Brazilian Congress that China would invest \$100 billion in Latin America over the next 10 years. In Argentina alone, China reportedly will invest \$20 billion in the next decade.

Foreign direct investment has declined in Latin America in recent years, dropping from \$78 billion in 2000 to \$36 billion in 2004. That's why "many Latin American nations welcome the increase in foreign capital that the Chinese are promising", according to a recent Congressional Research Service report by Kerry Dumbaugh and Mark P Sullivan. China has also invested in energy, primary resources and food in Peru and Chile. Colombian President Alvaro Uribe traveled to China in mid-April promoting increased investment in his country.

Why did Chinese leaders choose late 2004 and early 2005 to make their whirlwind spending tour of several Latin American nations? First, they may well have noticed that Latin American governments no longer race to sign onto the US-backed Free Trade of the Americas agreement, as they did previously to the North America Free Trade Agreement in the 1990s.

Because the free-trade, free-market model failed to perform as predicted - in Argentina it led to bankruptcy - governments that question Washington's economic model now sit in Uruguay, Argentina, Brazil, Venezuela and Cuba. Bolivia and Ecuador may be next. Indeed, if the radical populist Mexico City mayor Lopez Obrador succeeds in winning the 2006 Mexican presidential election – he is currently the leading contender - US-sponsored trade agreements in the region may be doomed.

Second, the petroleum mavens don't expect supply to rise above demand in the near future. So, given this climate, China's gaining access to oil and gas sources in the US backyard has flustered the Bush administration, which remains preoccupied with Iraq, Afghanistan, North Korea and Iran, social security privatization and abortion criminalization.

Turnaround in 35 Years

Under Bush, the US has shelved its national interests and pursued imperial adventures in the Middle East. While Beijing has invested strategically, Washington has spent resources on a strategy that will only further deplete the national wealth.

Latin America has said basta (enough) to the US development model. In Argentina, Brazil, Uruguay, Venezuela and Bolivia, presidents who adhered to the International Monetary Fund's notion of development have had to look for other jobs. This should send more than a hint to Washington.

China has behaved in a civil and friendly manner and invested in the very resources it will need in the coming years. Over the next decades the leading economies will vie for the fuels that drive their production and distribution machines. It might take several buckets of ice water to wake up the policy planning dreamers at the White House that war and military occupation of foreign lands and threats to governments that don't share a common world view - like Venezuela and Cuba - do not bode well for the future.

China apparently sees its future in the US and Latin American markets. That's a complete turnaround from 35 years ago, when China remained "unrecognized" by the US and most of its lackey governments in Latin America. In 1975, Chinese trade with the region amounted to \$200 million. In 2004, trade between China and all the Americas had soared to over \$40 billion. China has become one of the foremost players in the era of globalization, which US leaders promoted without considering that China might avail itself of this opportunity to move into its own turf.

While government leaders silently wring their hands in frustration over China's capital moves into "our backyard", some journalists are beginning to report on China's investment invasion. China is "nurturing alliances with many developing countries to solidify its position in the World Trade Organization, flex its muscles on the world stage and act as a counterbalance to US power", according to Chicago Tribune reporter Gary Marx.

Indeed, China has succeeded in forcing an open-door policy on the US, one similar to that fashioned in 1898 by secretary of state Hay. China's leaders now say implicitly to Washington what acting secretary of state Edwin Uhl wrote to the US minister in China in 1895: "This country will expect equal and liberal trading advantages ..."

Now China expects the US to offer it "equal and liberal trading advantages". Senator Richard Lugar, chair of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, has worried aloud about the contradictions that arose from Venezuela's new deals with China. Like other prudent and truly conservative Republicans, Lugar wonders whether Bush's aggressive anti-Chavez rhetoric and actions might lead Venezuela to retaliate and cut the US off from its oil supply. After all, China will pick up the purchase slack.

"The Chinese are taking advantage of it. They're taking advantage of the fact that we don't care as much as we should about Latin America," a Lugar aide told *The New York Times*.

Likewise, China has undercut Washington's policy of starving Cuba for resources. Chinese leaders have pledged large investment credits for Cuban nickel. Beijing thus befriends US enemies, Chavez and Castro, as US prestige slips in its own "backyard". It has used the open-door ploy against the US in Latin America as the US once used it against Europe to get at Chinese resources and labor.

Hey, doesn't globalization mean that all's fair in the game of trade?

Saul Landau is a Foreign Policy in Focus scholar. He wrote Dangerous Doctrine: National Security and US Foreign Policy. He is a fellow of the Institute for Policy Studies and teaches at Cal Poly Pomona University.

Is Al Qaeda Just a Bush Boogeyman?

by Robert Scheer, *Los Angeles Times*, 11 Jan 2005

Is it conceivable that Al Qaeda, as defined by President Bush as the center of a vast and well-organized international terrorist conspiracy, does not exist?

To even raise the question amid all the officially inspired hysteria is heretical, especially in the context of the U.S. media's supine acceptance of administration claims relating to national security. Yet a brilliant new BBC film produced by one of Britain's leading documentary filmmakers systematically challenges this and many other accepted articles of faith in the so-called war on terror.

"The Power of Nightmares: The Rise of the Politics of Fear," a three-hour historical film by Adam Curtis recently aired by the British Broadcasting Corp., argues coherently that much of what we have been told about the threat of international terrorism "is a fantasy that has been exaggerated and distorted by politicians. It is a dark illusion that has spread unquestioned through governments around the world, the security services and the international media."

Stern stuff, indeed. But consider just a few of the many questions the program poses along the way:

- If Osama bin Laden does, in fact, head a vast international terrorist organization with trained operatives in more than 40 countries, as claimed by Bush, why, despite torture of prisoners, has this administration failed to produce hard evidence of it?
- How can it be that in Britain since 9/11, 664 people have been

detained on suspicion of terrorism but only 17 have been found guilty, most of them with no connection to Islamist groups and none who were proven members of Al Qaeda?

- Why have we heard so much frightening talk about "dirty bombs" when experts say it is panic rather than radioactivity that would kill people?
- Why did Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld claim on "Meet the Press" in 2001 that Al Qaeda controlled massive high-tech cave complexes in Afghanistan, when British and U.S. military forces later found no such thing?

Of course, the documentary does not doubt that an embittered, well-connected and wealthy Saudi man named Osama bin Laden helped finance various affinity groups of Islamist fanatics that have engaged in terror, including the 9/11 attacks. Nor does it challenge the notion that a terrifying version of fundamentalist Islam has led to gruesome spates of violence throughout the world. But the film, both more sober and more deeply provocative than Michael Moore's "Fahrenheit 9/11," directly challenges the conventional wisdom by making a powerful case that the Bush administration, led by a tight-knit cabal of Machiavellian neoconservatives, has seized upon the false image of a unified international terrorist threat to replace the expired Soviet empire in order to push a political agenda.

Terrorism is deeply threatening, but it appears to be a much more fragmented and complex phenomenon than the octopus-network image of Al Qaeda, with Bin Laden as its head, would suggest.

While the BBC documentary acknowledges that the threat of terrorism is both real and growing, it disagrees that the threat is centralized:

"There are dangerous and fanatical individuals and groups around the world who have been inspired by extreme Islamist ideas and who will use the techniques of mass terror — the attacks on America and Madrid make this only too clear. But the nightmare vision of a uniquely powerful hidden organization waiting to strike our societies is an illusion. Wherever one looks for this Al Qaeda organization, from the mountains of Afghanistan to the ' sleeper cells ' in America, the British and Americans are chasing a phantom enemy."

The fact is, despite the efforts of several government commissions and a vast army of investigators, we still do not have a credible narrative of a "war on terror" that is being fought in the shadows.

Consider, for example, that neither the 9/11 commission nor any court of law has been able to directly take evidence from the key post-9/11 terror detainees held by the United States. Everything we know comes from two sides that both have a great stake in exaggerating the threat posed by Al Qaeda: the terrorists themselves and the military and intelligence agencies that have a vested interest in maintaining the facade of an overwhelmingly dangerous enemy.

Such a state of national ignorance about an endless war is, as "The Power of Nightmares" makes clear, simply unacceptable in a functioning democracy.

My Right-Wing Degree

How I learned to convert liberal campuses into conservative havens at Morton Blackwell's Leadership Institute, alma mater of Karl Rove, Ralph Reed, Jeff Gannon and two Miss Americas.

by Jeff Horwitz, July 2005

May 24, 2005 | One recent Sunday, at Morton Blackwell's Leadership Institute, a dozen students meet for the second and final day of training in grass-roots youth politics. All are earnest, idealistic and as right wing as you can get. They take careful notes as instructor Paul Gourley teaches them how to rig a campus mock election.

It's nothing illegal -- no ballot stuffing necessary, even at the most liberal colleges. First you find a nonpartisan campus group to sponsor the election, so you can't be accused of cheating. Next, volunteer to organize the thing. College students are lazy, and they'll probably let you. Always keep in mind that a rigged mock election is all about location, location, location.

"Can anyone tell me," asks Gourley, a veteran mock electioneer, "why you don't want the polling place in the cafeteria?"

Stephen, a shy antiabortion activist sitting toward the rear of the class, raises his hand: "Because you want to suppress the vote?"

"Stephen has the right answer!" Gourley exclaims, tossing Stephen his prize, a copy of Robert Bork's "Slouching Toward Gomorrah."

The students, strait-laced kids from good colleges, seem unconvinced. The lesson -- that with sufficient organization, the act of voting becomes less a basic right than a tactical maneuver -- doesn't sit easy with some students at first. Gourley, a charismatic senior from South Dakota and the treasurer of the College Republican National Committee, assures them: "This is not anti-democracy. This is not shady. Just put [the polling place] somewhere where you might have to put a little bit of effort into voting." The rest, Gourley explains, is just a matter of turnout.

When the state or national candidate you're backing wins by a suitably large margin, as he or she surely will, have the nonpartisan group that sponsored the election sign off on your prewritten celebratory press release and send it statewide. Reporters will almost certainly ignore it, but after a dozen similar victories, they'll start dashing off articles about the youth phenomenon behind your candidate's campaign -- or better yet, just start plagiarizing your press releases.

There is no better place to master the art of mock-election rigging -- and there is no better master than Morton Blackwell, who invented the trick in 1964 and has been teaching it ever since. Blackwell's half-century career in conservative grass-roots politics coincides neatly with the fortunes of the conservative movement: He was there when Goldwater lost, when Southern voters abandoned the Democratic Party in droves, and when the Moral Majority began its harvest of evangelical Christian voters. In the 1970s, Blackwell worked with conservative direct-mail king

Richard Viguerie; in 1980, he led Reagan's youth campaign. Recently, he's been fighting to save Tom DeLay's job.

Yet Blackwell's foundation, the Leadership Institute, is not a Republican organization. It's a nonpartisan 501(c)(3) charity, drawing the overwhelming majority of its \$9.1 million annual budget from tax-deductible donations. Despite its legally required "neutrality," the institute is one of the best investments the conservative movement has ever made. Its walls are plastered with framed headshots of former students -- hundreds of state and local legislators sprinkled with smiling members of the U.S. Congress, and even the perky faces of two recently crowned Miss Americas. Thirty-five years ago, Blackwell dispatched a particularly promising 17-year-old pupil named Karl Rove to run a youth campaign in Illinois; Jeff Gannon, a far less impressive student, attended the Leadership Institute's Broadcast Journalism School.

The institute's classes aren't tickets into an exclusive and shadowy club, however: I am also an institute graduate. In March, I attended its Youth Leadership School, a one-weekend, 28-hour crash course in political organizing. Registration was open to the public and cost \$60, which got me a sourcebook, six free meals, up to three nights in a dorm, and a six-hour lecture on political principles delivered by the 65-year-old Blackwell himself. The morning I arrived at the Leadership Institute, I identified myself as a reporter for Salon. "That's great," said communications director Michelle Miller. By the end of the weekend, Blackwell took me on a tour of the headquarters, chatted with me for nearly an hour, and gave me a copy of the institute's antisocialism in-house film, "The Roots of the Ultra Left." The institute is a very friendly place.

Over the last 25 years, more than 40,000 young conservatives have been trained at the institute's Arlington, Va., headquarters in everything from TV makeup for aspiring right-wing talking heads to prep courses for the State Department's Foreign Service exam. Classes are taught by volunteers recruited from the ranks of the conservative movement's most talented organizers, operatives and communicators.

The Leadership Institute has succeeded, in part, because it's had little to no competition from the left. College campuses may still be havens for liberal thought, but the right-wing students are the ones organized enough to win major battles. Perhaps expecting that American youth would organize themselves as they did in decades past, progressive organizations have been outstripped by their conservative counterparts in professionalizing the ragtag world of college activism. "When it comes to campus controversy, from affirmative action to free speech, the right wing pumps in money and expertise and shows [students] how to out-hustle their opponents," says David Halperin of the liberal Center for American Progress.

Still, Blackwell says conservatives are underdogs on college campuses. Conservative students may be better organized, but they're still outnumbered. The Leadership Institute contends that liberal higher education is robbing the conservative movement of new blood -- and thereby handicapping the institute's efforts. "You know, the most conservative students are the freshmen," Blackwell told me. "There is an acculturation there."

And that's where the institute is taking its fight. For most of

its 25-year history, it has focused on grooming students to work in conservative politics; it's now increasingly devoting its efforts to making campuses more conservative places. Through its Campus Leadership Program, the institute is leading a growing effort to found and support a national network of conservative student groups and publications capable of permanently altering the intellectual and social environment of universities to conservatives' advantage. That goal alone is a stark rejection of the standard conservative complaint that post-Vietnam War higher education is not just grossly liberal, but irredeemably so. Already, the program has shown considerable success. Asked about his campus initiative, Blackwell simply says, "You're talking about the major project for the rest of my life."

In the wake of the 2004 election, some progressive groups have been working to reinforce their positions on campus. Last February, the Center for American Progress launched Campus Progress, a student activism support center, to combat what Halperin describes as "30 years of effective organizing" by conservative groups like the Intercollegiate Studies Institute, Young Americans for Freedom, and of course, the Leadership Institute. But Blackwell is unfazed by the competition. "If they asked me, which they haven't, I could let them know that it's a lot harder than it appeared on the surface," he told me. "You've got to work years before you see any results."

And Blackwell has put in those years. A young Louisiana Republican in the days when Democrats owned every statewide office, he cut his political teeth on Barry Goldwater's doomed 1964 presidential bid. "Don't fully trust anyone until he has stuck with a good cause which he saw was losing," is an institute maxim rooted in Blackwell's own political education. "After Goldwater's defeat, the number of people who would admit to being movement conservatives could all have fit into an average phone booth," Blackwell said in an interview. "And among us, we didn't have a dime for a telephone call."

That was a long time ago. According to Blackwell, allied "movement conservatives" took the first steps toward outmaneuvering their party's moribund minority leadership in the '70s. More than a test of character, conservatism's formerly abject status provided the key to those gains. With a wealth of political talent but few resources or constituencies, conservatives had no choice but to look beyond the two- and four-year cycles that dictate traditional political strategy. Instead of fighting an intra-party struggle they were certain to lose, they built an infrastructure outside the Republican Party dedicated to promoting talent, not winning the next election.

The Leadership Institute is a perfect example of that strategy, according to Peter Murray, a progressive management trainer who studied the institute's model before launching his own nonprofit political training organization, the Center for Progressive Leadership, last year. "Being a 501(c)(3) not only means they can get tax deductions for their donors and build endowments, but they're forced to look long term," Murray says. "They're not allowed to endorse candidates and get sucked into electoral politics. Year in and year out, all they do is build leaders."

It's an approach, Murray believes, that has long since paid off. "Sure, [Blackwell] has trained Karl Rove and Ralph Reed and Grover Norquist and 223 other legislators and members of

Congress," Murray notes, "but more importantly, he's trained 40,000 other local organizers." The institute's graduates, in other words, are part of a movement. "We spent \$2 billion trying to win this last election," Murray says of progressives. "They already spent 25 years, and nearly \$100 million, building the talent pool that won the election. And which will consistently win them elections for the next several decades."

The structure of Blackwell's Campus Leadership Program is simple. The Leadership Institute trains promising conservative college graduates over the summer and dispatches them to campuses in the fall with a mandate to start conservative student organizations. Need \$500 and some ideas to start a combative right-wing campus publication? The institute would love to help you. Is the campus administration discriminating against your Second Amendment club? The institute will help you take your cause to the Internet. No one on campus at your Christian college has ever heard of the institute? Staffers will be glad to drive down, take you to a steakhouse, and talk it up. Last year, the CLP doubled in size, to 418 clubs and counting. By the end of 2006, Blackwell is confident he will have created 1,000 conservative campus organizations.

Unlike chapter-based political organizations, CLP clubs are unaffiliated with either the Leadership Institute or each other. According to Blackwell, this trait offers a serious advantage: "No purges." The clubs' independence also comes with the benefit of plausible deniability. "You can get away with stuff that you would take a lot of flak for doing in the College Republicans," says CLP director Dan Flynn. "Because we're independent, we can do activities that push the envelope," agrees University of Miami senior Sarah Canale, whose CLP-organized Advocates for Conservative Thought threw an affirmative action bake sale last year in which the price of a cupcake varied according to the race of its buyer. That it was controversial, she believes, was a victory in itself.

The Leadership Institute teaches the same principle. Controlled controversy -- making your point in a manner so bombastic that your opponents blow their cool -- is a Blackwell specialty. Before the 2004 Republican Convention, the conservative elder personally went to a drugstore and bought little pink heart stickers, bandages and purple nail polish. At home, he made the "Purple Heart Band-Aids" that he later distributed in Madison Square Garden to mock John Kerry's war wounds. From Blackwell's perspective, the Kerry camp's outrage at the gag was a tactical disaster. Democratic Party chairman Terry McAuliffe, Blackwell says, kept the story alive for days by "running around like a chicken with its head cut off."

A stunt is one way to get press -- but a more effective and sustainable method is to start your own publication. The Leadership Institute trains around 250 students yearly in its student publication workshop, and CLP staff assisted in launching 22 campus publications last year alone.

The Rutgers Centurion is a conservative monthly that got off the ground this fall with institute help. Rutgers student James O'Keefe founded the magazine after coming across a conservative publication at Tufts. "I said, why don't we have this?" O'Keefe remembers. He taught himself a page-layout program

and got in touch with the Leadership Institute, which dispatched a staffer to take him and his coeditors to dinner at an upscale local brewery. The institute gave O'Keefe books on starting a publication, awarded him a \$500 "Balance in Media Grant," and suggested never-fail places on campus to ferret out liberal excess. "They were really excited," O'Keefe recalls.

The Rutgers Centurion has since analyzed faculty campaign contributions that favored John Kerry over George W. Bush 104 times over, and it accused one of Rutgers' most esteemed alumni, African-American author and actor Paul Robeson, of being a Stalinist. The magazine has published poetry about abortion from a fetus's point of view and run allegations of prejudice against Condoleezza Rice, "The Black Woman Liberals Love to Hate."

The Centurion's favorite subject, however, seems to be people who don't like the Centurion. Rutgers student Tabitha Rice earned the February "Liberal of the Month" title for allegedly defacing copies of the Centurion's previous issue, and in the spirit of Valentine's Day, the editors framed an excerpt from their hate mail -- "F*** [The editors of The Centurion.] F*** Them till they're dead" -- in a heart-shaped box.

The Centurion's assertion that campus liberals are intolerant lends its vitriolic criticism of leftists the veneer of the free speech movement. CLP coordinator Flynn, the author of "Why the Left Hates America," recalls that during a speech at Berkeley, he encountered "a Nazi-style book burning" of his work and an attempt to rip his microphone cord from the wall. That might not have quite the allure of Mario Savio's rallying a crowd from a squad car's roof during Berkeley's student protests, but it's a start.

CLP publications play a crucial role in publicizing such run-ins. Right-wing watchdog groups like Accuracy in Media have railed against liberal bias in the classroom for years, but as outsiders, they lack both standing and a direct connection to campus life. CLP publications have both, allowing them to monitor bias in every classroom. In December, the editor of the Louisville Patriot, a CLP-organized publication at the University of Louisville, reported that sociology lecturer John McTighe had made a very, very tasteless joke about how religious conservatives who had voted for Bush ought to be shot. With sufficient outrage, the story jumped from the Patriot to the local media and the Internet, resulting in McTighe's suspension and a thoroughly public debate of liberal bias in, of all places, Kentucky.

Sparking such scandals is "absolutely" a part of CLP's plan, Blackwell says. "In the last year or so, not taking into account the flap over Ward Churchill, you have no doubt noticed more news coverage about complacent leftists' abuses on campus," he says. "Academia is the last unbreached citadel of the left, and I believe we are today over the moat."

There's still plenty to do before then. Chris Stio, an institute staffer who directed the Bush-Cheney field operations in northeast Michigan, warns his students not to buy into second-term crowing about America's irrevocable slide into conservatism. "Enough people were yelling and screaming about the president that if they'd actually picked up the phone book and started calling, they might have won," he says. "They went to concerts, they bashed the president, but they didn't work. If enough people had, maybe we'd have a different president. The election was not inevitable. And too many think it was."

Some progressives have come to that conclusion as well. "This was certainly needed 25 years ago," says Peter Murray, of the Center for Progressive Leadership. "Investing beyond any individual election cycle is the way that we're going to develop the progressive movement into a more robust, coordinated, compact force that can win elections." But getting donors to think beyond 2008 is a tough sell. "Our budget this year will be just over a million. We'd love to be bigger than that," he says. "It's really going to be up to the progressive donor community as to whether they're going to look long term and invest in a superstructure. If they do, we can build it relatively quickly."

In the meantime, the Leadership Institute will continue its work. Blackwell has found plenty of humor in his recent vilification as the evil genius that smoothed fake reporter Jeff Gannon's path to White House press briefings. "If they want to believe that there's a vast conspiracy, and they want to waste their time trying to decide who gives all the orders to the conservative movement, well, let 'em spend their time on that," he says, laughing.

The Leadership Institute has better things to do, Blackwell says, than conspire to put a male escort up to lobbing softballs to White House spokesman Scott McClellan. For example, training the next generation of Karl Roves.

"Everyone knows that for certain breeds of dogs it is customary to cut their tails short when they are a few weeks old," begins Blackwell's lecture to us on the importance of releasing negative information on your opponent incrementally. "Every time you clip the puppy's tail it hurts. It hurts. You might traumatize the puppy for life."

"The moral is that if it's your tail that's being clipped, you want it clipped once," concludes Blackwell. "But if you get a chance to clip your opponent's tail, clip that puppy as often as you can."

It may be hardball, but it isn't cheating, and it would be far less effective if it were. "These are powerful techniques," Blackwell tells the class at the end of his marathon lecture. "So I don't want anyone going out of here and acting unethically. It's not necessary."

Jeff Horwitz, a former editorial fellow at Salon, writes for the Washington City Paper.

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