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On Saturday, March 15, in observance of the fifth anniversary of the U.S. invasion of Iraq, North Shore Women for Peace and the North Suburban Peace Initiative sponsored a vigil in Port Clinton Square in Highland Park that was designed to focus attention on the economic costs of the Iraq War and how these costs translate into lost opportunities for the American people. Participants displayed banners created by the American Friends Service Committee, some of which are shown above. Other such banners proclaimed: One Day of the Iraq War = 423,529 Children with Healthcare; One Day of the Iraq War = 12,478 Elementary School Teachers; and One Day of the Iraq War = 34,904 Four-Year Scholarships for University Students.



Tenth News

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News That Can Only Be Published on April Fools' Day: Mark Kirk Switches to the Democratic Party

He Still will be Listed as a Republican on the November Ballot

by John Hmurovic

Declaring that he is tired of living a confusing double life, 10th District Republican Congressman Mark Kirk shocked the political world on April 1 by announcing that he is switching to the Democratic Party. However, because the Democrats have already nominated Dan Seals for Congress, Kirk says he has requested permission to remain on the ballot as the nominee of the Republican Party. Republican officials have said they will honor his request, because of their party's "deep respect for the – small d – democratic process."

"I've been pretending to be a Democrat for a long time. Now it's official," Kirk guffawed at the beginning of his news conference in North Chicago. "This year, the polls show that Republicans are in trouble and a growing number of 10th District voters are clearly moving to the Democratic side. I've been truly honored to represent the wonderful people of this great district for seven fantastic years, so I recognize the voice of the people when I hear it. If polls indicate that that's the direction they are moving in, then, as their leader, I have no choice but to join them."

Although he has always been a Republican, in past campaigns Kirk has downplayed his Republican affiliation. His yard signs and campaign literature, for example, have not mentioned that he is a Republican. He says he will continue that practice as a Democrat.

"We have the most highly educated congressional district in the country," Kirk said. "People here vote for the candidate. They don't

care which party I belong to. They want to know how I stand on the important issues of the day, which is why I strongly believe that a congressman should appear to take firm positions. That's why I make sure that voters receive an endless stream of taxpayer-financed robo-calls and newsletters printed on glossy paper to let them know I am for recycling, against pollution, for a strong economy, against crime, and committed to do all I can to combat peanut allergies."

Kirk said that voters are generally unaware of how difficult this double life has been for him. "When we," he said, stopping himself suddenly, "when they, the Republicans, were in power, we, I mean they, wanted me to vote against environmental measures; against money for education and veterans' healthcare; for the war in Iraq; for cutting social programs and building up military spending; and even to let the government, instead of her family, decide if Terri Schiavo should remain on life support. I was willing to vote how the Republicans wanted me to vote on these matters, but I kept telling Tom DeLay that polls showed that voters back home didn't like that."

Kirk said that DeLay was kind enough to develop a way in which Kirk could vote with fellow Republicans on most measures, while appearing to actually be supporting the opposite position, i.e., the one



Change

by Mark Paul

Promises of change from Barack Obama and Hillary Clinton notwithstanding, the real, proven change agents of our time have been Mark Kirk and George Bush. Since they took office, economic performance, the quality of American life, and this country's position in the world have declined precipitously and across a wide range of measurements, as this table demonstrates.

This is what my friend Dan Seals refers to when he asks, "Is this the best we can do?"

If you think we can do better, here's a thought: make a copy of the table, e-mail it to everyone you know, print up copies and hand them out to strangers on the street, get together with your book club or golf foursome, and run it as an ad in a local newspaper.

Use every opportunity possible to remind citizens what a complete mess Mark Kirk, George Bush, John McCain, and every other Republican have made. They want this election to be about anything but these numbers, because if it is about these numbers, they will be grateful to only lose their jobs and that no one tars and feathers scoundrels anymore.

The source of the data in the table is <http://delong.typepad.com/sdj/2008/02/democratic-mess.html>, a website maintained by University of California economist J. Bradford DeLong. Mr. DeLong served in the Clinton Treasury Department under Larry Summers.

The Economy	January 20, 2001	February 28, 2008
Real GDP growth	4.09% over prior 8 years	2.65% over prior 7 years
National debt	\$5.7 trillion	\$9.2 trillion
Budget deficit/surplus	\$431 billion surplus over the previous 3 budget years	\$734 billion deficit over the previous 3 budget years
New private sector jobs created	1.76 million jobs per year over previous 8 years	389,000 jobs per year over previous 8 years
Americans in poverty	31.6 million	36.5 million
Quality of Life	January 20, 2001	February 28, 2008
Americans uninsured for healthcare	38 million uninsured 4.5 million fewer in 2 years	47 million uninsured 8.5 million more in 6 years
Annual total premium cost	\$6,230 for family premium	\$12,106 for family premium
Median household income	\$49,163 \$8,000 increase in 8 years	\$48,023 \$1,100 decrease in 6 years
Price of gas	\$1.39/gallon	\$3.07/gallon
Cost of college	\$3,164 per year	\$6,192 per year
Personal savings rate	+2.3%	-0.5%
Consumer credit debt	\$7.65 trillion	\$12.8 trillion
U.S. and the World	January 20, 2001	February 28, 2008
Trade deficit	\$380 billion	\$759 billion
U.S. dollar	1.07 euros per dollar	0.68 euros per dollar
Combat readiness	All active duty army divisions were rated at the highest readiness level	Not a single active or reserve brigade in the U.S. considered "fully combat ready"
Foreign oil dependency	52.75% of liquid fuel is imported	60.38% of liquid fuel is imported
View of U.S. abroad Pew Poll of 10 nations	58.3% view U.S. favorably	39.2% view U.S. favorably
Great Britain's view of U.S.	83% favorable	56% favorable
Indonesia's view of U.S.	75% favorable	30% favorable
Turkey's view of U.S.	52% favorable	12% favorable
Germany's view of U.S.	78% favorable	37% favorable

TDU Presents Class on Religion and Politics *by Adrienne Kirshbaum*

The more than one hundred Tenth Dems University students who gathered at the Northbrook Public Library on March 4 were treated to a lively tour through America's religious landscape. Their guide for the evening, Dr. Ron Miller, chair of the Religion Department at Lake Forest College and cofounder of Common Ground, was as entertaining as he was informative, providing an historical retrospective on faith and discussing the impact of religion on our culture.

Dr. Miller told the class that Christianity, Judaism, and Islam were now the three main religions in our country, with the Muslim faith being the fastest growing and the least understood of the three. Most people don't realize that Islam is a branch of the same religious tree as Christianity and Judaism. The fact that voters would fear a candidate if he were Muslim evidences how little non-Muslim Americans know about that faith.

Professor Miller explained the historic stages of religion, beginning with a tribal concept, moving through the axial phase, and growing to

a global conceit. Tribal religion was local, with laws on ethics extending only to the boundaries of the tribe. Axial shifted from a local to a universal sense of the divine, with ethics extending to include all human beings. The global phase expanded thinking to the entire globe. In modern times, it is hard to think only about one's own little enclave. Yet, ironically, in this age of emerging fundamentalism, many are returning to a tribal way of practicing their faith.

Dr. Miller suggested that when the United States elects a president, it is not just for this nation but for the world. What is important is not the candidate's denominational affiliation, but how he or she interprets that faith. We need a president who has a global perspective. We can no longer close our eyes and pretend that nobody else is there.

After his lecture, Professor Miller took questions from the audience. When the class drew to a close, students left the library with a fuller knowledge of religion in this country, its evolution, and its impact on the political process.

A Great Lakes Parable

by Debra Shore

In 1968, philosopher Garrett Hardin published a famous essay called "The Tragedy of the Commons." In it, Hardin invites us to consider a pasture shared by numerous herdsmen as a commons. Each herdsman grazes as many cattle as possible in this shared space to maximize the benefit to him and his family, but the numbers are kept in check by disease, poaching, disputes, and so forth. At some point, the "rational herdsman" decides to add one more cow to the pasture. The benefits of the additional cow accrue to him, but the costs – the additional grazing on a finite pasture – are shared by all, so they seem minimal. Soon each herdsman does the same, wanting to increase his income while the degradation to the pasture is only slight. Eventually, however, the ability of the pasture to support many more cows – the carrying capacity of the land – is exceeded and the "commons" is ruined. Hence the tragedy of Hardin's title.

The Great Lakes are our commons. Millions of us – Canadians and Americans alike – share in their bounty. Indeed, our lives are utterly dependent on fresh water – for drinking, for industry, to support the plants and animals that provide us with food and shelter. Happily, we are coming to recognize that not only do we depend on the lakes, but also *they depend on us*. We are the stewards of this precious resource and, vast as the Great Lakes are, they are not inexhaustible. They are not eternally resilient.

The outcry last summer over the plans by BP to increase the discharge of ammonia and suspended solids from its Whiting refinery into Lake Michigan was heartening. But our efforts to protect and restore the lakes only *begin* when we sign a petition or telephone a



senator. When we use fertilizer containing ammonia and nitrates on our lawns, when we apply herbicides and pesticides to our gardens, when we pour oil down a street drain or flush medicines down the toilet, we are adding that additional cow to the finite pasture. We are adding pollution to our lakes and streams.

Certainly, BP must be held accountable for its actions, but we must also change our own habits to improve water quality in the lake. The problem today is much more diffuse than plugging the ends of a few remaining industrial pipes and smokestacks. The problem today is us, the way we live and the products we buy. Fortunately we can change the culture, and signs of progress are all around us. We live on the shores of a grand, glorious, and very great lake. Let's get to work!

Democrats Stand With Israel

by Steve Sheffey

While the rest of the world criticized Israel's response to the terrorism in Gaza, the United States House of Representatives distinguished itself by standing firmly with Israel, voting 404-1 in favor of H. Res. 951 on March 5. The resolution condemned the continuing Palestinian rocket attacks from Gaza and supported Israel's right to defend its citizens, placing responsibility for the ongoing violence on Hamas and Islamic Jihad and their patrons, Iran and Syria.

Since Israel unilaterally withdrew from Gaza in 2005, Hamas has fired over 4,000 rockets into Israel. Not one day has gone by without a rocket attack. As Dan Seals said, "Imagine how we would feel if we were subject to daily rocket attacks and our children were not safe at home, in school, or at restaurants. I doubt that we would exercise even a tenth of the restraint that Israel has exercised thus far."

Hamas deliberately fires from civilian areas, knowing that despite Israel's efforts to limit civilian casualties, some innocent civilians will be harmed. But as H. Res. 951 points out, "The inadvertent inflicting of civilian casualties as a result of defensive military operations aimed at military targets, while deeply regrettable, is not at all morally equivalent to the deliberate targeting of civilian populations as practiced by Hamas and other Gaza-based terrorist groups."

House Majority Leader Steny Hoyer (D-MD) explained, "This resolution is a very strong statement of support by this House for our nation's one true ally in the Middle East, the State of Israel, which has faced clearly criminal rocket attacks by Palestinian terrorists against Israeli civilians over the last three years.

"The international media has focused great attention on Israel's action in Gaza over the last week to combat these attacks. But the

truth is that Israel's actions constitute nothing less than justifiable self-defense. This Congress – and the American people – will not succumb to propaganda which labels Israel's actions 'unjustified' or an 'over-reaction.'"

"Israel has shown great restraint and patience, despite these indiscriminate terrorist attacks on her people, including children," Hoyer continued. "Like any sovereign nation, Israel retains the right of self-defense. This Resolution is an important statement reiterating that right, and reaffirming the strong bond that exists between our two nations."

In the upcoming election, we will hear that one party or one candidate is more pro-Israel than the other, but this vote is but the latest example of the strong, bipartisan support that Israel enjoys in Congress. This is no surprise, because the American people overwhelmingly support Israel. A Gallup poll conducted in February 2008 found that Israel ranked fifth, after Canada, Britain, Germany, and Japan, with a 71 percent favorable rating, while Iran was rated last with an eight percent approval rating, behind North Korea with 12 percent and the Palestinian Authority with a 14 percent approval rating.

Our Republican friends are entitled to their own opinions, but not to their own facts, and the fact is that while there are major differences between Democrats and Republicans and between Dan Seals and Mark Kirk, Israel is not one of them. Support for Israel is entirely consistent with the principles of the Democratic Party and with the actions of the Democratic leadership and rank and file in Congress. When Dan Seals is elected to Congress in November, that tradition of strong support for Israel will continue.

Let's Talk Politics

by John Hmurovic

Do you talk to your TV set?

Don't worry, it's not a sign of insanity. Well...probably not.

At one time or another it happens to all of us who tune into shows hosted by the likes of Olberman, Matthews, O'Reilly, Blitzer, Scarborough, and others. Talking back to these talk show hosts and their parade of professional political pundits is "normal" this time of the year...and it will continue to be on through November 4.

You can be forgiven if you feel a little like Harry "Everybody's Talking At Me" Nilsson. These folks on TV talk and talk and talk -- and expect us to listen. But do they ever listen to us? No! I made a brilliant point recently on "Hardball." It was both wise and witty. But other than my wife yelling, "I'm on the phone," from the other room, no one paid me any attention. Pat Buchanan just kept right on talking.

Well, if you're like me, and have this need to occasionally speak out, there is now an outlet. There's a place, close to home, where you can speak your mind on the news of the day and finally get some appreciation for those zingers you've been holding onto just in case you run into Ann Coulter at the Jewel-Osco.

Tenth Dems has initiated a series of gatherings called "Let's Talk Politics." There's nothing formal about them. People meet in libraries, or coffee shops, and just sit down and talk. The subject is politics. Where the conversation goes from there depends on you and the others who attend. There's a moderator to get things rolling, to keep things moving, and to make sure the conversation is respectful of various opinions. But, generally, you will find people who share your view of the world and have thoughts to share.



"What I like about it," said one participant who attended a "Let's Talk Politics" session in Lincolnshire recently, "is that even though most of us were in agreement, I got a different perspective on the issues by listening to what others had to say about them."

At the Lincolnshire session, most of those present spoke up, but some were there to listen and to hear not what the professional pundits were thinking, but

what some of their neighbors were thinking about the issues of the day. That's okay. The idea is to give you an alternative to what you get on TV and, if the urge comes, to give you a chance to pipe up and add your own (inflation adjusted) five dollars worth.

There's no cost to attend. There's no test at the end. All ages are welcome.

So far, there have been gatherings in Northbrook and Lincolnshire, and those who attended in both locations have said they want to schedule one every month. The next session will be in Arlington Heights on Wednesday, April 2, followed by another gathering in Northbrook on April 22. See the notice on p. 8 for details. If none of these are convenient for you, call 847-266-VOTE (8683), and talk to Tenth Dems about getting a "Let's Talk Politics" gathering organized for your area. It's easy. All you need is a place to meet, and maybe a few choice words about this political season that you'd like to share. Try it. It beats talking to your TV set.

Foster Victory in 14th District Emblematic of What a United Democratic Party Can Accomplish

by Marla Sundb

The election of Bill Foster, albeit for a 10-month term, resonates for many reasons, not the least of which is adding another loss to Jim Oberweis' impressive record. However what is key for Democrats is what this victory portends for the coming months. Foster's victory proves that ours is the party of hope and the party that carries the message that inspires voters. Foster's election sent a shock wave across the country, as Democrats turned out in great number to bring change to the Illinois 14th Congressional District. The final tally showed that Foster won by six percentage points, a wide margin.

With the combined forces of district organizations from outside the boundary of the 14th District, Foster's own unique qualifications, the endorsement of Senator Obama, the power of the Seals campaign and its vast number of volunteers, and financial help from the DCCC -- a victory was snatched from Republicans in a district that had been very much their own. Twenty years of Republican representation came to an end, all thanks to the grassroots efforts of a great many people.

It is important at this historical juncture that Democrats continue to work together to meet our common goals. Our candidates' debates should be characterized by openness, honesty, and decency. On the March 9th *Meet the Press*, former Senate Majority Leader Tom Daschle and Pennsylvania Governor Ed Rendell debated the esoteric

minutiae of the presidential race in a manner that diminished both Senators Clinton and Obama. Arguing semantics rather than substance, this type of conversation ignores and erodes the principles the Democratic Party stands for.

In primaries and caucuses across the country, change has been the common cry. Selecting a candidate in smoke-filled rooms filled with dealmakers is a tradition we want to move away from. As we draw closer to August, the Democratic candidates who carry our banner must step back and allow the debate to proceed in a dignified manner. We want relief from name-calling, gamesmanship, and fear mongering for the sake of personal ambition. Badmouthing either of our presidential candidates leaves the one standing with negative images burned into the minds of voters. Those sound bites constitute much of what voters are subjected to on TV and in the newspapers.

We Democrats are poised to win the presidency in November if we present ourselves with dignity and a modicum of unity. What the Foster victory says to me is that together, we are more effective than separately. So, let's stop the mud slinging and concentrate on party unity. To do otherwise is a disservice to the candidates and only helps John McCain. The Foster victory proves that with Democratic unity we stand the best chance of taking back the White House. And isn't that our goal?

WHERE'S THE OUTRAGE?

by Sharon Sanders

Why aren't we all screaming and yelling and banging on the doors of our lawmakers on all of these issues (and so many more)?

- Elliot Spitzer, in his arrogance, betrayed the trust of the public. The Republicans, who were out to nail him in the first place, would have called for his impeachment had he not resigned. But, should we allow the Bush administration to get off scot-free for its misdeeds?



The administration's crimes, in my opinion, are much more serious than Spitzer's – blatant disregard of the Constitution, going to war based on lies, ignoring subpoenas, ignoring the Geneva Convention, wiretapping citizens, disregarding the separation of church and state, and stepping all over our civil rights.

- **The price of oil** now exceeds \$108 a barrel. Mark Kirk wants more drilling and more refineries even though the major oil companies have intentionally shut down usable refineries to boost the price of

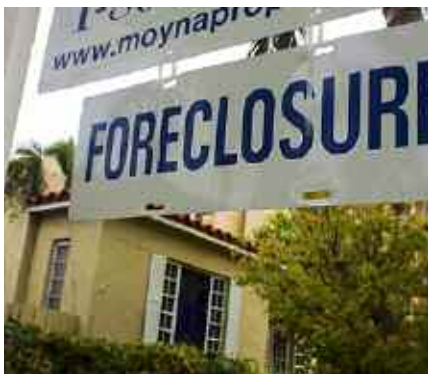


oil; the average family, already deeply in the red, cannot afford to fill up its cars and trucks; and Detroit auto companies keep blaming their failures on the high cost of union salaries and benefits, as well as the desire of the American

public to keep buying gas guzzlers. But, if our children want the biggest and the best, do we necessarily have to buy it for them? The answer should be a resounding "no!" If Detroit knows that the continued reliance on fossil fuels is not only unsustainable, but also a major cause of global warming, should it be building motor vehicles that go contrary to these facts? Domestic auto companies look at Honda and Toyota and they see nothing. They blame everything else but the real culprits – themselves.

- I hate to beat a dead horse, but the massive problems in our economy rest squarely on the shoulders of the anti-regulatory, laissez-faire, Republicans. Let's start with the **mortgages**.

About five or six years ago, Mr. Bush and Mr. Greenspan decided to make the American dream of homeownership a reality for everyone, regardless of whether or not they could pay for their loans. The clever mortgage brokers constructed all sorts of exotic instruments. They received their fees and commissions, repackaged and sold the loans all over the world as AAA investments, and "got out of town." Mr. Greenspan had brought down interest rates so low that most people



could pay for the first five years of the adjustable rate mortgage, and they were falsely promised that after five years they could easily refinance at a low rate. Now it's payback time and even though the unbelievably low interest rates are out there for a select few, not only do these rates not benefit the families whose loans are being foreclosed, but they have also led to a devalued dollar, which is a major factor in the skyrocketing price of gasoline.

Last November, Mark Kirk voted "no" on a bill to protect homeowners' rights and ensure transparency in home loans, thereby protecting the mortgage industry over the individual. Now Kirk is taking credit for proposing a depression-style temporary Home Owners' Loan Corporation II, which, in reality, bails out the financial institutions only. In his proposal, the government would purchase non-performing loans, albeit at a not-yet-determined percent on the dollar. This would remove those bad loans from the financial institutions' books. For Wall Street, Kirk's version of HOLC is a lot better than taking a total loss on foreclosed homes. In reality, Kirk has taken his version of this legislation as much from the ideas of the neoconservative American Enterprise Institute as from Roosevelt's HOLC I plan that revived the economy that was, then, deep in a depression. Kirk has turned HOLC around so that it basically is a bail-out for the banks.

- **Our economy** is now in horrible shape, thanks to the antiregulatory views of Bush and Kirk, et al. The domino effect from deregulation goes something like this: Many corporations have been showing profits over the last few years by firing employees and reducing or eliminating benefits, and their executive-level employees, having no "skin in the game," are still receiving exorbitant salaries or massive golden



parachutes based on air. Now there's very little left to cut. Meanwhile, the individuals who can no longer pay for their homes have no money to buy the goods offered by these companies. More and more stores and small businesses are closing every day. Yet inflation is continuing, leaving us in a stagflation recession, the hardest to get out of. Many of what we thought were safe investments, such as money market or mutual funds, we are now finding are loaded with sub-prime collateralized mortgage paper.

So, we need to hold Kirk's feet to the fire as to what he specifically plans to do to help the homeowner, not just the corporations, and why he failed to vote for stronger regulations to protect the homeowners in the first place. We must also keep asking him why he voted for stricter bankruptcy rules for the individual, but he is silent on regulating the credit card companies for their usurious rates and hidden fees, and why they are allowed to entice the very individuals they know can't pay them back in the first place, forcing them into bankruptcy.

Yes, the buyer needs to beware of these traps and loopholes and, yes, regulation is not a cure-all, but we do need to have fair regulations and guidelines in all areas of government to protect the consumer. We need only to look around us today to see what lack of such reasonable regulations has done to our economy. We also need to remove Mark Kirk from office in November. He, and those of his ilk, are the problem; and now we need to find new solutions.

Kirk Unmasked: Appearances Aside, Kirk Supports Republicans on Two Important Bills: House Ethics Office and FISA



This is the eleventh in an ongoing series.

Tenth District Republican Congressman Mark Kirk is once again relying on deceptive tactics to trick the 10th District's Democratic voters into believing he represents their values. But a careful look at Kirk's procedural vote on H. Res. 895 – the bill that establishes an ethics office within the House of Representatives – reveals that, appearances aside, Kirk's true allegiance lies with the right wing Republican leadership.

On Tuesday, March 11, the House of Representatives passed H. Res. 895 in a 229:182 vote – a misleadingly wide margin. As the *Washington Post* notes, "Several Republicans appear to have registered their affirmative votes only when it was clear the bill would pass. (Whip teams in both parties are usually willing to release their most vulnerable lawmakers on politically important votes, particularly if it appears that the other side will prevail anyway.)" After his narrow 2004 victory over Democratic challenger Dan Seals, there's no question Kirk is among the more vulnerable Republican House members.

The final vote on H. Res. 895 came only minutes after a tight procedural vote (207:206) in which Kirk supported Republican efforts to kill the bill by voting NO on roll call 121 ("On ordering the previous question").

The bottom line: Kirk's vote on the final passage of H. Res. 895 gives the impression he supports the creation of an ethics office within the House of Representatives. But the fact is he actually opposed it and tried to prevent the legislation from coming to a final vote.

* * *

In a more blatant display of his allegiance to the Bush Administration, Kirk voted against H. R. 3773 – the House version of the FISA Amendments Act of 2008. This House bill removes from the Senate version of the bill key provisions giving retroactive immunity to telecommunication companies for assisting in the administration's warrantless surveillance program and thus permits lawsuits against the phone companies. The bill also adds additional provisions to protect civil liberties.

Specifically, the House bill prohibits the government from circumventing the Fourth Amendment by reverse-targeting American citizens through surveillance of foreigners' communications with American citizens. It also prohibits warrantless surveillance of American citizens abroad. In addition, the bill imposes prospective oversight and reporting responsibilities and requires an audit of government warrantless surveillance practices after 9/11 by a congressional commission. The bill's surveillance authorities will sunset with provisions of the Patriot Act, on December 31, 2009. Finally, the House bill reaffirms that FISA contains the exclusive means for conducting surveillance within the United States for foreign intelligence purposes.

Representative John Conyers, chair of the House Judiciary Committee, explained that the Democratic revisions to the bill were necessary, given this administration's significant abuse of powers granted in the name of national security. "We learned just yesterday that the FBI was continuing to misuse the authorities we granted it under the Patriot Act six years ago to unlawfully obtain information about law abiding Americans. ... [and] just four days ago we learned that the National

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Lest We Forget: Bush's Iraq War

This is the second in an ongoing series about the abuses of the Bush administration.

by George Rosenblit

The genesis of the Iraq War and what it begat.

March 19 marked the fifth anniversary of the Iraq War. After more than 4,000 deaths of our loyal and brave Armed Forces, nearly 30,000 wounded and many maimed for life, over one million innocent Iraqi men, women, and children killed, it's time to review how we got into this ill-advised war, and to question why we are still there.

In the beginning – The "Downing Street Memo" opened the curtain to shed some light on how it all began. It contained the minutes of a meeting held by Prime Minister Tony Blair with some of his senior ministers and advisors eight months before the U.S.-led invasion of Iraq. It clearly stated that President George Bush wanted a regime change in Iraq and that he wanted to depose Saddam Hussein by military force. However, Bush knew that Congress and the international community would not condone waging a war for the purpose of regime change. Therefore, Bush and his administration fabricated false information about terrorism in conjunction with WMDs in Iraq to extract Congress' approval for an invasion, and to convince the United Nations to go along.

According to the Center for Public Integrity, President Bush and seven of his administration's top officials conducted a misinformation campaign in which at least 935 false statements were made over the

two years following September 11, 2001. (See <http://www.publicintegrity.org/WarCard/>) Key among these were fabricated statements about the existence of weapons of mass destruction, mobile biological laboratories, an Al Qaeda training camp in Iraq, and liaisons between Iraqis and Al Qaeda. The media provided wide coverage, validating this disinformation program.

Then, Bush uttered the 16 fateful words in his 2003 State of the Union address, "The British government has learned that Saddam Hussein recently sought significant quantities of uranium from Africa." This misinformation was based on a forged document written by an Italian spy, which stated that Iraq had tried to obtain uranium "yellow cake" from the African country of Niger. Ambassador Joe Wilson was dispatched to Niger by the CIA to investigate whether Saddam had tried to obtain uranium there, and found the information to be false. After Bush's address, Wilson disclosed in a *New York Times* Op-Ed that Bush's statement was not true.

The White House allegedly retaliated against Wilson with vicious vengeance by leaking information to the media that Wilson's wife, Valerie Plame, was an undercover CIA agent, which she was. But disclosing the CIA employment of officers under cover can endanger the officers, their operations, and their agents, as well as violate the "Intelligence Identities Protection Act of 1982." That law prompted the investigation of the leak by Special Prosecutor Patrick Fitzgerald.

No single person has been blamed to date for the leak, although Lewis "Scooter" Libby, Vice President Dick Cheney's Chief of Staff, was

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Kirk Switches *continued from page 1*

favored by 10th District voters. "I just hope that Nancy Pelosi is as sweet a guy as Tom DeLay was and allows me that same flexibility to vote with the Republicans – just in case the mood of the district swings back in that direction."

Kirk made the announcement with 5th District Republican Congressman Peter Roskam at his side. When asked why a Republican was joining him for this announcement, Kirk answered that even though he is now a Democrat, he will not abandon his policy of appearing to work with both parties. "In fact, I am already lining up events with Republican state legislators Sid Mathias and Beth Coulson." He said he will continue his aggressive efforts to tell all 10th District voters about his attempts to appear bipartisan. "It's important that they hear this from their congressman," he said, "because that's what they want to hear."

Roskam said he was saddened by Kirk's decision to join the

Democratic Party, but said he didn't think it would change things. Kirk agreed. "What really matters is getting re-elected," Kirk said. "The other details, like party affiliation and believing in an issue, are all secondary, because if you don't get re-elected you don't have a chance to vote on issues. And without a vote what are we? No better than the Iranians."

In its news release, the Illinois Republican Party said that although it is disappointed by Kirk's move, it will honor his request to remain on the Republican ballot, especially since Jim Oberweis is not available to run in the 10th District. "As Americans," the release said, "we know that God works in strange ways, and we as a party take pride in following God's guidance by doing the same."

If re-elected in November, Kirk would be the first Democrat elected as a Republican to ever represent the 10th District in Congress. He is already our first incumbent congressman reported to have switched parties on April Fools' Day.

Kirk Unmasked *continued from page 6*

Security Agency was using its massive powers to create a nationwide data base of American citizens," said Conyers on the House floor.

"This Congress owes the American people more than blind obeisance to the executive branch," added House Majority Leader Steny Hoyer in response to Republican arguments that the House bill weakens national security.

President Bush, who is demanding retroactive immunity for the telecommunication companies that participated in the warrantless

domestic spying program, has vowed to veto the House bill. For as long as Mark Kirk holds his seat in the House of Representatives we, the residents of the 10th Congressional District, cannot rely on our congressman to support a veto override. Rather, Kirk has made clear his unwavering support of the Bush Administration's assault on the civil liberties of law-abiding Americans. In November, we will have the opportunity to replace Kirk with Dan Seals, a Democrat who shares our values and who will vote to protect our civil liberties.

Lest We Forget *continued from page 6*

convicted of obstruction of justice, perjury, and making false statements during this investigation. His penalty was a 30-month prison term, two years probation, and a \$250,000 fine. Bush subsequently commuted his prison term, but his conviction remains on the books and the probation and fine were left in effect.

According to *Truthout Perspective*, July 19, 2005, "The Iraq-Niger lie was thus both the cornerstone of the Bush agenda for war and the key to unraveling how the 'fixing' worked." It raised the question about what else they were lying about.

Over time, as the truth about each of the false statements made to justify the Iraq War became obvious, the excuse was made that Bush received faulty intelligence. When no Al Qaeda training camp and no WMDs were found, Bush retroactively changed the war's objective to nation-building and began establishing an elaborate embassy compound as well as permanent bases in Iraq.

We may never know the real reason why the Bush/Cheney cabal lied to get us mired down in Iraq – for five years to date – instead of pursuing Al Qaeda where they really were and are, at the Afghanistan-Pakistan border.

What we begat from spending \$600 billion for Iraq operations through FY 2008 (and between \$1 and \$2 trillion through end of occupation according to the Congressional Budget Office) on an ill-advised, unwinnable war is that we are destined to become a colonial occupying power unless a Democratic Congress and a Democratic president act to prevent it. Continuing to spend the hard earned money of our taxpayers, with no end in sight, is not an option. We are in huge debt already, and our children and grandchildren will be paying for this.

Occupation was never foreseen as an objective by our Congress or by the American people. In August 2002, a U.S. government website

stated that Bush and Cheney urged a preemptive military invasion of Iraq to accomplish two main goals; (1) The removal from power of Saddam Hussein, and (2) the discovery and destruction of suspected Iraqi facilities being used for the development and production of weapons of mass destruction.

(See <http://usgovinfo.about.com/library/weekly/aa082702a.htm>) We passed those two benchmarks long ago, when Saddam was arrested and no WMDs were found. Yet, just a few weeks ago, in March 2008, it was reported in a House Foreign Affairs Committee meeting that the Bush Administration is planning to bypass Congress by way of a Status of Forces Agreement (SOFA), which would not only allow the U.S. to conduct unlimited warfare in Iraq, but would also provide immunity for U.S. government contractors. Such terms have never before been included in a SOFA. Congressional authority must not be bypassed, and Congress should assert itself. We'll have to watch this development carefully.

In view of the above, every American of voting age should go to the polls to let his or her voice be heard. Then every American should volunteer to help take back America: to regain the prestige we once had in the eyes of the world; to rebuild our economy; to provide jobs for our citizens; to support meaningful retirement plans; to eliminate senseless earmarks; to be serious about lobby reform; to rescue our education system; to achieve universal healthcare; to preserve our environment; to have a crash program to develop meaningful alternative sources of energy to eliminate our dependency on oil; to protect our civil liberties, and to finally fix the Social Security Program on a responsible and equitable basis without privatization.

And I would add a caveat: Do not let Congress use our debt as an excuse to shoot down and deny us domestic programs that are sorely needed. We have shown that the voice of the people can make a difference, so stand up and be counted and let your voice be heard at every opportunity.

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Rep. Karen May Urges Continuation of Healthcare Insurance for Employees of Small Businesses *by State Rep. Karen May*

With our economic uncertainty, I believe it is good policy to address healthcare insurance coverage continuation for employees. For many of us, our only healthcare insurance coverage comes from our employer. Large companies are subject to the federal COBRA program, which provides for continuation of insurance coverage for up to 18 months (and in some instances 24 months) following a discontinuation of employment. For many people, coverage during this gap period is crucial.

Small businesses, however, are not subject to COBRA and instead are covered by Illinois insurance laws, which currently provide a shorter period of coverage continuation for employers of less than 20 employees. I have introduced HB 4830, which will bring Illinois laws for healthcare insurance coverage continuation closer to the federal requirements. The major enhancement is to extend the continuation of coverage from nine months to 18 months at employee expense.

In addition, I have added some administrative changes, such as allowing an employee up to 30 days (instead of 10) to decide whether to continue coverage with this employer during the gap period. The bill also clarifies employer notification guidelines, which according to insurance agents are now somewhat vague.

HB 4830 passed unanimously out of committee and now awaits action on the House floor. I believe that this bill is important because for many people healthcare costs, both on-going and emergency, can devastate their savings quickly. During a lapse in employment, people are least able to absorb such costs and providing healthcare insurance coverage continuation can take some of the financial risks and burdens out of this difficult time.

We're Still Talking Politics!

Join the Tenth Congressional District Democrats in another in a series of coffees throughout the district.

Wednesday, April 2, at 7:00 pm

at the Panera Bread

at Arlington Heights Annex Shopping Center

5 West Rand Road

- and -

Tuesday, April 22, at 7:00 pm

at the Northbrook Library

1201 Cedar Lane, in the Pollack Room

- Add your voice to the discussion. Bring your friends.
- Have you read any good political books?
- Want to talk about a particular article?

**Please also Join Tenth Dems
on Wednesday, April 16, at 7:00 pm
to view the Clinton-Obama Philadelphia Debate
(location to be announced)**

For more information, call 847-266-VOTE (8683) or email Events@TenthDems.org.

REFRESHMENTS ARE ON US