

# News 'n' Views

by and for members of the Hubert Humphrey Democratic Club

Volume 6 Issue 7

July, 2005

## HHDC General Membership Meeting

**Monday, July 18**  
**Coco's Restaurant**  
11510 South Street Cerritos, CA  
1/2 mile east of the 605 freeway  
6:00 dinner 7:00 program

**Program: Kinde Durkee, Campaign Finance Guru**

**Topic: Democratic War Stories from the Campaign Front**



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# *My President's Report*

*By Alon Barlevy*



I recently attended a play at the Long Beach International City Theatre named *Judgement at Nuremberg*. The play, written by Abby Mann, an academy award winner, is about the second wave of the Nuremberg Trials, which came after the trials of the Nazi leaders. Specifically, the play was about four judges who served in the Nazi regime who sent people to concentration camps. Their defense was that they were merely doing their job of interpreting Nazi law, and not making Nazi law. One of the defendants took the stand to make the case against himself and the three other accused. In the end, all four were found guilty.

Throughout the show I was thinking how similar the situation is today, where we have an administration that is clearly guilty of war crimes on a similar level to those committed by Saddam Hussein. We invaded a country that was not a threat to us, we killed and tortured hundreds of their citizens, all in the name of spreading freedom and liberty (after the WMD excuse fell apart like a house of cards).

At the end of the play, the writer, Abby Mann, went on stage to discuss the play. To my surprise, he echoed my sentiments exactly. He received a standing ovation for his comments.

We must start repeating the words "impeachment" and "war criminal" to describe G. W. Bush. The more often we repeat those words, the more credibility they will start gaining. Remember 1997 when everybody marginalized the extreme right wing for suggesting impeachment? Two years later they turned it from a dream into reality. We must do the same !!!!!

## *Is A Woman Ready for the Job?*

The CIA had an opening for an assassin. After all the background checks, interviews and testing were done, there were 3 finalists: two men and a woman.

For the final test, the CIA agents took one of the men to a large metal door and handed him a gun. "We must know that you will follow your instructions, no matter what the circumstances. Inside this room, you will find your wife sitting in a chair. "Kill her!!!"

The man said, "You can't be serious. I could never shoot my wife."

The agent said, "Then you're not the right man for this job. Take your wife and go home."

The second man was given the same instructions.

He took the gun and went into the room. All was quiet for about five minutes. Then the man came out with tears in his eyes. "I tried, but I can't kill my wife."

The agent said, "You don't have what it takes. Take your wife and go home."

Finally, it was the woman's turn. She was given the same instructions to kill her husband. She took the gun and went into the room. Shots were heard, one shot after another. They heard screaming, crashing, banging on the walls.

After a few minutes, all was quiet. The door opened slowly and there stood the woman. She wiped the sweat from her brow. "This gun is loaded with blanks", she said. "I had to beat him to death with the chair."

**Moral: Never put a woman to the test.**

## *Bush Should Face Torture Probes*

Abid Aslam, [OneWorld US](#)

WASHINGTON, D.C., May 26 (OneWorld) - Rights watchdog Amnesty International urged foreign governments to investigate and prosecute President George W. Bush much as they once did former Chilean dictator Augusto Pinochet.

"If the United States permits the architects of torture policy to get off scot-free, then other nations should step into the breach," William Schulz, executive director of Amnesty International USA, said in a statement launching Amnesty's annual report.

Bush is among a dozen former or current U.S. officials who should be probed by foreign governments because Washington has failed to conduct "a genuinely independent and comprehensive investigation" of torture allegations against U.S. troops, commanders, and their civilian overseers, Schulz said.

Others on the Amnesty list of potential targets for investigation and prosecution include Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld, Attorney General Alberto Gonzales, and former Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) chief George Tenet.

"If the U.S. government continues to shirk its responsibility, Amnesty International calls on foreign governments to uphold their obligations under international law by investigating all senior U.S. officials involved in the torture scandal," Schulz said.

**"If those investigations support prosecution, the governments should arrest any official who enters their territory and begin legal proceedings against them," he added. "The apparent high-level architects of torture should think twice before planning their next vacation to places like Acapulco or the French Riviera because they may find themselves under arrest as Augusto Pinochet famously did in London in 1998."**

Torture and other grave breaches of the Geneva Conventions amount to crimes against humanity and therefore all states have a responsibility to investigate and prosecute people responsible for them, Amnesty said in its 308-page report.

The U.S. government had yet to respond to the Amnesty report Wednesday but Rumsfeld and others on the Amnesty list have strongly denied that they condoned torture or did anything wrong.

Military officials and administration spokespersons have repeatedly and strenuously denied any policy promoting or tolerating torture and have said that allegations of abuses have resulted in dozens of investigations and a number of prosecutions and disciplinary actions.

Some 125 such cases have been filed, Amnesty acknowledged, but it said they have involved only soldiers and their superiors in the field and have yet to trace lines of responsibility back to Washington. Characterizing this as a refusal to investigate, Schulz said it amounted, in effect, to "tolerance" for torture and mistreatment and warned that it would destroy U.S. credibility when Washington assails human rights violations by other governments, like those in Syria or Egypt.

"It is the height of hypocrisy for the U.S. government itself to use the very torture techniques that it routinely condemns in other countries," Schulz said. "When the U.S. government then calls upon foreign leaders to bring to justice those who commit or authorize human rights violations in their own countries, why should those foreign leaders listen?"

Amnesty's demand dovetails with a lawsuit by Human Rights First and the American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU) alleging that Rumsfeld and others authorized torture-like interrogation techniques by U.S. troops at U.S. bases in Afghanistan, Cuba, and Iraq.

It also buttresses a campaign by non-governmental organizations demanding a full-scale independent probe of the prisoner abuse scandals modeled on the 9/11 Commission. That effort has brought together rights advocates of a liberal as well as conservative stripe, former Republican lawmakers, and retired military officers.

The call for foreign governments to take action also coincided with the release by the ACLU Wednesday of documents that it said revealed that prisoners at the U.S. base at Guantanamo Bay, Cuba, complained that guards mistreated the Koran and in one incident, flushed a copy of the Muslim holy book down a toilet.

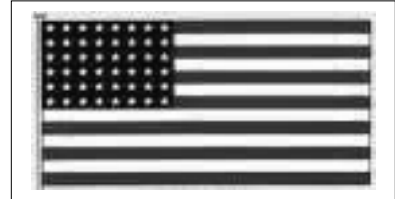
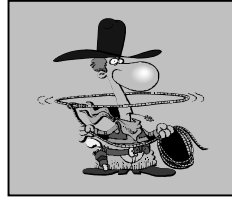
The ACLU said it obtained the documents under court order from the Federal Bureau of Investigation and that they also provided accounts of beatings, sexual assaults, and hunger strikes.

The revelations follow Newsweek's recent retraction of a report saying that government investigators had corroborated almost identical incidents involving the Koran. The magazine ultimately withdrew its story saying a confidential government source no longer could be confirmed.

While Schulz singled out the United States as what he called "a leading purveyor and practitioner" of torture, Amnesty's report surveyed 149 countries and found that for the most part, 2004 had been a bleak year for human rights everywhere.

# The Caballero Roundup

By Larry Caballero



## Why I'm Joining the GOP

Leaving the Left for fun and profit

by Jeff Gillenkirk

After a lifetime voting for and working for Democratic candidates and independents, I'm finally going to make the switch and become a Republican.

The reasons are many, not the least of which is age. I turned 55 recently and, having lived more than half my life, I can't afford to worry anymore about the other guy. It's time for me.

As a Republican, I can now proudly -- indeed, defiantly -- pledge to never again vote for anyone who raises taxes for any reason. To hell with roads, bridges, schools, police and fire protection, Medicare, Social Security and regulation of the airwaves.

President Bush has promised to give me more tax cuts even though our federal government owes trillions of dollars to its creditors. But that's someone else's problem, not mine. Republicans are about the here and now, and I'm here now.

As a Republican, I can favor exploiting the environment for everything she's got. No need to worry about quaint notions like posterity and natural legacy. There are plenty of resources left for everyone, and if we don't use them, someone else will.

I want a party that doesn't worry about things before we have to.

Republicans refuse to get hog-tied by theories such as global warming, ozone depletion, fished-out oceans and disappearing wetlands. The real problems -- if there are any -- aren't forecast to take hold for at least 50 years. So what do I care? I'll be dead.

As a Republican, I can swagger and clamor for war -- in Iraq, Afghanistan, Colombia, wherever -- even though I've never fought in one or even been in the military. I can claim that we're fighting for Democracy, ignoring reports of torture at Abu Ghraib, Bagram Air Base and Guantanamo Bay, and a spreading gulag of secret detention centers around the world.

Freedom, as every American should know after spending \$300 billion for wars in Afghanistan and Iraq, isn't free.

As a Republican, I can insist on strict moral values when it comes to sex and ignore the growing moral chasms in business, politics, sports, journalism and the leadership of the Roman Catholic Church.

A society that loses control of its sexual urges faces unwanted pregnancies, socially transmitted disease, broken families. Those

overzealous about wealth, however, produce only a higher GDP, lifelong security for their family and more minimum wage jobs for the lower classes. What's wrong with that?

As a Republican, I can favor strict punishment of criminals, except for those who happen to be my friends or neighbors. Isn't that the very definition of community -- looking out for **friends and family**?

I will be pro-death penalty and anti-abortion, pro-child but anti-child care, for education but against funding of public schools. As a Republican, I'll have a better chance of getting to spout my opinions in the media, which for some reason seems convinced that since Bush was re-elected with the smallest electoral margin of any sitting president in history, liberals are passé.

As a Republican, I'll say goodbye to "old Jesus" and hello to "new Jesus." Sure Christ started out as a liberal Jew, and look where that got him. Compassion, love and diatribes against the rich only encourage the weak and punish the most successful among us. The Jesus that Republicans worship is a muscular, decisive, pro-war crusader hard at work cleansing the world of evildoers, not, God forbid, turning the other cheek.

My decision to become a Republican didn't come easily. For years I clung to the idea that the foundation of a democratic society was our implied social contract, each of us committing some level of personal sacrifice to the common good of all.

I regarded taxes as dues we pay for better roads and schools, safe inspection of meat and dairy products, maintenance of parks and protection of wilderness areas. I see now that looking out for the common good resulted in shortchanging the most important element in this formula -- me.

# GOP---The Party of Family Values!





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## Democracy---American Style!

By **Brendan Smith and Zeynep Toufe**  
t r u t h o u t | Report

Istanbul, Turkey - Today in Istanbul the jury was taken aback by witness testimony from Iraqi war victims and a US Air Force veteran.

"Snipers hunt people in the streets. People attempting to go to health centers are shot at," testified Eman Kmammas, an Iraqi translator. "There are many crippled children. There are thousands of widows and orphans. There are no police for security and there are no courts. Even hospitals are occupied and bombed and burned."

**Former US Air Force combat veteran Tim Goodrich stunned the jury by revealing his role in the "softening up" of Iraq months before the US declaration of war. "We were dropping bombs then, and I saw bombing intensify," Goodrich explained to a hushed room. "All the documents coming out now, the Downing Street memo and others, confirm what I had witnessed in Iraq. The war had already begun while our leaders were telling us that they were going to try all diplomatic options first."**

This gripping but unsettling revelation came on the second day of proceedings at the World Tribunal on Iraq, held in Istanbul, Turkey, which is collecting evidence of war crimes in Iraq.

Goodrich's testimony had just begun when a 75-foot banner prepared by the Iraqi delegation and composed of harrowing pictures of Iraqi child victims of the war was carried into the courtroom. In the presence of the father of one of the victims shown on the banner, Goodrich and others stood and a moment of silence spread through the room while the banner was carried through the hall. The teeming press contingent rushed to photograph the scene as some members of the audience cried.

While the first day of the trial had concentrated on moral and political issues, emotional testimony from Iraqi witnesses dominated the second day of proceedings. Fadil al Bedrani, an Iraqi journalist who survived the siege of Fallujah, told the audience that he watched as "20-25 persons were running barefoot when an American warplane bombed, killing and wounding them; only one elderly woman and 2 children stayed safe. While the doctors and the staff of the Fallujah hospital were detained, the warplanes bombed the alternative hospital in downtown ... and bombed the medicine warehouses in Nazzal area, killing 4 doctors, and 8 medical workers."

Dahr Jamail, an unembedded journalist who had been reporting from Iraq during the past year, narrated the story told to him by Ali Shalal Abbas from Baghdad. While detained at Abu Ghraib and tortured, Abbas was approached by two men, "one a foreigner and one a translator," who asked him who he was. "I said I'm a human being. They told me, 'We are going to cut your head off and send you to hell, we will take you to Guantánamo.'" Abbas questioned why only Saddam Hussein, who also had people tortured, was put on trial while the Americans were not.

The fate and the rights of the detainees remained a recurring theme at the Tribunal. Iraqi lawyer Amal Sawadi expressed her frustration at being stonewalled by occupation authorities who refused to tell her of the charges against her clients, if there was any evidence, and even if the person was under detention. "All of Iraq has become a vast prison," she sighed. "Is this what they call democracy?"

There was also ample discussion at the Tribunal - supported by nearly 200 non-governmental organizations ranging from Greenpeace to the Vietnam Veterans Against the War - of various forms of resistance. Goodrich, who refused to return to Iraq for an additional tour of duty, urged more soldiers to become conscientious objectors. And to those who questioned his anti-war activism, he responded, "Some people accuse us of being against the troops or unpatriotic, but we are the troops. How can I be unpatriotic by asking our soldiers to come back home alive?"



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