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From: New York Newsday, Dec. 13, 2005

AP: MORE BLACKS LIVE WITH POLLUTION

By David Pace

[DHN introduction: During the Clinton administration, U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) developed a "risk screening environmental indicators project{1}" to examine pollution in neighborhoods. The system links pollution data to information about neighborhood residents themselves.

The EPA's system reveals very clearly that the poor and minorities are living with far more than their fair share of toxic pollution. Both the conservation wing of the environmental movement, and the environment-and-health wing of the movement can find ample reason here to join the downtrodden in building a political movement to fulfill the promise of America. Both Republicans and Democrats have let us down.

If you think race and poverty don't matter, please consider that the political coalition that controlled America from 1932 to 1980 was destroyed by self-styled conservatives who set out to split the coalition using race as the wedge issue. It started with Barry Goldwater, who handed the torch to George Wallace, who carried water for Richard Nixon, who plowed the soil for Ronald Reagan who made the bed of George H.W. Bush who passed the unspoken code to George W. Bush. We need to ask, what were these self-styled conservatives really conserving? Nothing America can be proud of.

If you want detailed evidence about how this all worked, read

** Dan T. Carter, From George Wallace to Newt Gingrich: Race in the Conservative Counterrevolution, 1963-1994{2} (1996; ISBN 0-8071-2366-8);

** Thomas and Mary Edsall, Chain Reaction; The Impact of Race, Rights and Taxes on American Politics{3} (1992; ISBN 0-393-30903-7);

** Sara Diamond, Roads to Dominion; Right Wing Movements and Political Power in the United States{4} (N.Y.: The Guilford Press, 1995); ISBN 0-89862-864-4,

** Jean Hardisty, Mobilizing Resentment{5} (Boston: Beacon Press, 1999); ISBN 0-8070-4316-8).

If you are interested in taking back America from the environmental marauders and destroyers -- the phoney conservatives -- you could give serious thought to the role of race in recent American politics. Then you could consider the political importance of the kind of data EPA collected, but suppressed, during the Clinton administration. (Then ask yourself, why did the Clinton administration suppress it? Which side were THEY on, really?) --DHN Editors]

CHICAGO -- An Associated Press (AP) analysis of a little-known government research project{6} shows that black Americans are 79 percent more likely than whites to live in neighborhoods where industrial pollution is suspected of posing the greatest health danger.

Residents in neighborhoods with the highest pollution scores also tend to be poorer, less educated and more often unemployed than those elsewhere in the country, AP found.

"Poor communities, frequently communities of color but not exclusively, suffer disproportionately," said Carol Browner, who headed the Environmental Protection Agency during the Clinton administration when the scoring system was developed. "If you look at where our industrialized facilities tend to be located, they're not in the upper middle class neighborhoods."

With help from government scientists, AP mapped the risk scores for every neighborhood counted by the Census Bureau in 2000. The scores were then used to compare risks between neighborhoods and to study the racial and economic status of those who breathe America's most unhealthy air.

President Clinton ordered the government in 1993 to ensure equality in protecting Americans from pollution, but more than a decade later, factory emissions still disproportionately place minorities and the poor at risk, AP found.

In 19 states, blacks were more than twice as likely as whites to live in neighborhoods where air pollution seems to pose the greatest health danger, the analysis showed.

More than half the blacks in Kansas and nearly half of Missouri's black population, for example, live in the 10 percent of their states' neighborhoods with the highest risk scores. Similarly, more than four out of every 10 blacks in Kentucky, Minnesota, Oregon and Wisconsin live in high-risk neighborhoods.

And while Hispanics and Asians aren't overrepresented in high-risk neighborhoods nationally, in certain states they are. In Michigan, for example, 8.3 percent of the people living in high-risk areas are Hispanic, though Hispanics make up 3.3 percent of the statewide population.

All told, there are 12 states where Hispanics are more than twice as likely as non-Hispanics to live in neighborhoods with the highest risk scores. There are seven states where Asians are more than twice as likely as whites to live in the most polluted areas.

The average income in the highest risk neighborhoods was \$18,806 when the Census last measured it, more than \$3,000 less than the nationwide average.

One of every six people in the high-risk areas lived in poverty, compared with one of eight elsewhere, AP found.

Unemployment was nearly 20 percent higher than the national average in the neighborhoods with the highest risk scores, and residents there were far less likely to have college degrees.

Research over the past two decades has shown that short-term exposure to common air pollution worsens existing lung and heart disease and is linked to diseases like asthma, bronchitis and cancer. Long-term exposure increases the risks.

The Bush administration, which has tried to ease some Clean Air Act regulations, says its mission isn't to alleviate pollution among specific racial or income groups but rather to protect everyone facing the highest risk.

"We're going to get at those folks to make sure that they are going to be breathing clean air, and that's regardless of their race, creed or color," said Deputy EPA Administrator Marcus Peacock.

Peacock said industrial air pollution has declined significantly in the past 30 years as regulations and technology have improved. Since 1990, according to EPA, total annual emissions of 188 regulated toxins have declined by 36 percent.

Still, Peacock acknowledged, "there are risks, and I would assume some unacceptable risks, posed by industrial air pollution in some parts of the country."

Government scientists and contractors spent millions of dollars creating the health risk measures. They're based on air emission reports from industry, ratings of each chemical's potential health dangers, the paths pollution takes as it spreads through neighborhoods, and the number of people of different ages and genders living near plants.

The AP used EPA risk scores from 2000 so they would match the Census data and because it takes years for the government to get corrected emissions data. Some risks may have changed since then as factories opened or closed or their emissions changed. The risk scores aren't meant to calculate a citizen's precise odds of getting sick but rather to help compare communities and identify those in need of further attention.

The scores also don't include risks from other types of air pollution, such as automobile exhaust.

Kevin Brown's most feared opponent on the sandlot or basketball court while he was growing up wasn't another kid. It was the polluted air he breathed.

"I would look outside and I would see him just leaning on a tree or leaning over a pole, gasping, gasping, trying to get some breath so he could go back to playing," recalls his mother, Lana Brown.

Kevin suffered from asthma. His mother is convinced the factory air that covered their neighborhood triggered the son's attacks that sent them rushing to the emergency room week after week, his panic filling the car.

"I can't breathe! I have no air, I'm going to die!"

The air in the neighborhood where Kevin played is among the least healthy in the country, according to research that assigns risk scores for industrial air pollution in every square kilometer of the United States.

Altgeld Gardens, the housing project where Kevin spent most of his childhood staying with his grandmother and going to school, is in a virtually all-black neighborhood where more than half the people live in poverty. The two-story project is nestled among the south Chicago steel mills, which for decades turned the night skies orange with pollution.

Most of those steel mills are now closed, victims of imports. But the area still retains enough industry to rank among the nation's neighborhoods with the highest health risks.

Just across the Little Calumet River from Altgeld, the ISG Riverdale steel plant annually releases into the air tens of thousands of pounds of heavy metals like manganese, zinc, lead and nickel. Dave Allen, a spokesman for Mittal Steel, which acquired the factory this year, said his company is committed to improvements.

"The environment is a matter of focus and pride for us and we hope to be good operators," he said.

Mrs. Brown said the asthma attacks that hit Kevin, now 29, were most serious and frequent during the time he stayed in Altgeld Gardens.

"He may now get an attack maybe once a year, if that often, where he has to go to a hospital," she said. "He was having them at one point quite frequently, at least two to three times a month."

Mrs. Brown was interviewed at the home she purchased seven years ago on a tree-lined street neighborhood south of the plant, where the health risk from industrial pollution is one-fifth the level in Altgeld Gardens.

She said she never considered pollution the culprit in her son's asthma, even after she left the neighborhood. It was only after she moved back into her mother's home for several years that she began to realize how widespread breathing problems were in Altgeld Gardens. Two children who lived next door had asthma, and one used a breathing machine as many as three times a day, she said.

"You see things happening and then you say let me start investigating," she said. "I found out a lot of people either had bronchitis or some kind of respiratory problem. Someone in each household seemed to have a respiratory problem."

In Louisville, Ky., Renee Murphy blames smokestack emissions in the "Rubbertown" industrial strip near her home for the asthma attacks that trouble her five children. Her neighborhood, which is 96 percent black, ranks among the nation's highest in risk from factory pollution.

"It's hard to watch your children gasp for breath," she said.

The Murphy family lives just a few blocks from Zeon Chemicals, which released more than 25,000 pounds of a chemical called acrylonitrile into the air during 2000. The chemical is suspected of causing cancer, and the government has determined it is much more toxic to children than adults.

Tom Herman, corporate environmental manager at Zeon, said the plant is reducing its emissions and is talking with area residents concerned about air quality to show that "there are real people working here concerned for them as well as our own health."

Malcolm Wright, 43, operates power washing equipment in Camden, N.J., where several neighborhoods also rank among the worst nationally. He said he developed asthma after moving to the city in his early 30s, and he blames the city's air pollution for attacks that sent him to the hospital four times last year.

Air pollution "works with many other factors, genetics and environment, to heighten one's risk of developing asthma and chronic lung disease, and if you have it, it will make it

worse," said Dr. John Brofman, director of respiratory intensive care at MacNeal Hospital in the suburban Chicago town of Berwyn.

"Evidence suggests that not only do people get hospitalized but they die at higher rates in areas with significant air pollution," he said.

Repeated studies during the 1980s and 1990s found that blacks and poor people were far more likely than whites to live near hazardous waste disposal sites, polluting power plants or industrial parks. The disparities were blamed on a lack of political clout by minorities to influence land use decisions in their neighborhoods.

The studies brought charges of racism. Clinton responded in 1993 by issuing an "environmental justice" order requiring federal agencies to ensure that minorities and poor people aren't exposed to more pollution and other environmental dangers than other Americans.

Recent reports suggest little has changed:

* The Government Accountability Office concluded earlier this year that EPA devoted little attention to environmental equality when it developed three major rules to implement the Clean Air Act between 2000 and 2004.

* The EPA's inspector general reported last year that the agency hadn't implemented Clinton's order nor "consistently integrated environmental justice into its day-to-day operations." The watchdog said EPA had not identified minority and low income groups nor developed any criteria to determine if those groups were bearing more than their share of health risks from environmental hazards.

* The U.S. Commission on Civil Rights concluded two years ago after an investigation that "federal agencies still have neither fully incorporated environmental justice into their core missions nor established accountability and performance outcomes for programs and activities."

EPA Assistant Administrator Granta Nakayama disputed those reports, saying the agency has been choosing its enforcement initiatives to maximize the impact on minority and poor communities.

Environmental experts say most pollution inequities result from historical land use decisions and local development policies. Also, regulators too often focus on one plant or one pollutant without regard to the cumulative impact, they say.

Short of government action, citizens in high-risk neighborhoods have little legal recourse. They can file lawsuits under the 1964 Civil Rights Act but must prove intentional discrimination, a difficult burden.

And while some federal agencies have rules that ban environmental practices that result in discrimination, the

Supreme Court has said private citizens can't file lawsuits to enforce those rules.

Citizen complaints to EPA have had little effect. From 1993 through last summer, the agency received 164 complaints alleging civil rights violations in environmental decisions and accepted 47 for investigation. Twenty-eight of the 47 later were dismissed; 19 are pending.

"There is no level playing field," said Robert Bullard, director of the Environmental Justice Resource Center at Clark Atlanta University. "Any time our society says that a powerful chemical company has the same right as a low income family that's living next door, that playing field is not level, is not fair."

The Associated Press analyzed the health risk posed by industrial air pollution using data from the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency and the Census Bureau.

EPA uses toxic chemical air releases reported by factories to calculate a health risk score for each square kilometer of the United States. The scores can be used to compare risks from long-term exposure to factory pollution from one area to another.

The scores are based on:

- * The amount of toxic pollution released by each factory.
- * The path the pollution takes as it spreads through the air.
- * The level of danger to humans posed by each different chemical released.
- * The number of males and females of different ages who live in the exposure paths.

The scores aren't meant to measure the actual risks of getting sick or the actual exposure to toxic chemicals. Instead, they are designed to help screen for polluted areas that may need additional study of potential health problems, EPA said.

The AP mapped the health risk scores to the census blocks used during the 2000 population count, using a method developed in consultation with EPA. The news service then compared racial and socio-economic makeup with risk scores in the top 5 percent to the population elsewhere.

Similar analyses were done in each state, comparing the 10 percent of neighborhoods with the highest risk scores to the rest in the state.

To match the 2000 Census data, the AP used health risk scores calculated from industrial air pollution reports that companies filed for EPA's 2000 Toxic Release Inventory. It often takes several years for EPA to learn of and correct inaccurate reports from factories, and the 2000 data were more complete than data from more recent reports that were still being corrected.

The AP adjusted the 2000 health risk scores in Census blocks around some plants that filed incorrect air release reports in 2000, after plant officials provided corrected data.

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Counties that had the highest potential health risk from industrial air pollution in 2000, according to an AP analysis of government records. The health risk varies from year to year based on the level of factory emissions, the opening of new plants and the closing of older plants.

1. Washington County, Ohio
2. Wood County, W.Va.
3. Muscatine County, Iowa
4. Leflore County, Miss.
5. Cowlitz County, Wash.
6. Henry County, Ind.
7. Tooele County, Utah
8. Scott County, Iowa
9. Gila County, Ariz.
10. Whiteside County, Ill.

Factories whose emissions created the most potential health risk for residents in surrounding communities in 2000, according to an AP analysis of government records:

1. Eramet Marietta Inc., Marietta, Ohio
2. Titan Wheel Corp., Walcott, Iowa (closed in 2003)
3. Eastman Kodak Co., Rochester, N.Y.
4. American Minerals Inc., El Paso, Texas
5. F.W. Winter Inc., Camden, N.J.
6. Meridian Rail Corp., Cicero, Ill.
7. Carpenter Tech. Corp., Reading, Pa.
8. Longview Aluminum LLC, Longview, Wash. (closed in 2001)
9. DDE Louisville, Louisville, Ky.
10. Lincoln Electric Co., Cleveland

On the Net:

The Environmental Protection Agency: <http://www.epa.gov>

Details of the EPA's Risk Screening Environmental Indicators Project can be found here{7}.

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- {1} <http://www.epa.gov/opptintr/rsei/views.html>
- {2} <http://www.powells.com/biblio/1-0807123668-3>
- {3} <http://www.powells.com/biblio/1-0393309037-5>
- {4} <http://www.powells.com/biblio/61-0898628644-0>
- {5} <http://www.powells.com/biblio/1-0807043168-1>
- {6} <http://www.epa.gov/opptintr/rsei/views.html>
- {7} <http://www.epa.gov/opptintr/rsei/views.html>

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URL: <http://www.globalexchange.org/getInvolved/corporateHRviolators.html>

From: Global Exchange, Dec. 10, 2005

THE 14 'MOST WANTED' CORPORATE HUMAN RIGHTS VIOLATORS OF 2005

By {Global Exchange}

Click here{1} to read Global Exchange's definition of human rights.

INTRODUCTION

Corporations carry out some of the most horrific human rights abuses of modern times, but it is increasingly difficult to hold them to account. Economic globalization and the rise of transnational corporate power have created a favorable climate for corporate human rights abusers, which are governed principally by the codes of supply and demand and show genuine loyalty only to their stockholders.

Though it isn't easy, we can check the power of corporations - and citizens around the world are stepping up to do it. Global Exchange developed this list of some of the world's worst corporate abusers to illustrate that on issues as diverse as assassination, torture, kidnapping, environmental degradation, abusing public funds, violently repressing political rights, releasing toxins into pristine environments, destroying homes, discrimination, and causing widespread health problems, familiar companies like Dow Chemical, Coca Cola, Caterpillar, Lockheed, Philip Morris, and Wal-Mart play a big role. Now we need you to take action!

Several of the companies below are being sued under the Alien Tort Claims Act, a law that allows citizens of any nationality to sue in US federal courts for violations of international rights or treaties. When corporations act like criminals, we have the right and the power to stop them, holding leaders and multinational corporations alike to the accords they have signed. Around the world -- in Venezuela, Argentina, India, and right here in the United States -- citizens are stepping up to create democracy and hold corporations accountable to international law.

This list of "MOST WANTED" corporate criminals gives you information about the abusive behavior of this year's top fourteen worst corporations, tells you who is responsible, and how to connect with and support people who are doing something about it. The more you know, the less these corporations can continue their abuses out of public eyesight: so share this information with your friends, get on the phone with the CEOs themselves, and exercise your rights as a citizen and consumer today.

CATERPILLAR

CEO: James Owens Contact the Corporation: Caterpillar Inc.
100 NE Adams St. Peoria, IL 61629 Phone: 309-675-1000
Fax: 309-675-1182

Human Rights Abuses: contracting with known violators of human rights, enabling house demolition, supplying equipment that kills Palestinian civilians and American peace activists

For years, the Caterpillar Company has provided Israel with the bulldozers used to destroy Palestinian homes. Despite worldwide condemnation, Caterpillar has refused to end their corporate participation house demolition by cutting off sales of specially modified D9 and D10 bulldozers to the Israeli military.

Israel seeks to portray the destruction of homes as necessary to its self-defense, but nothing could be further from the truth. As the Israeli Committee Against Home Demolitions has rigorously documented, house destruction is part of Israel's intention to turn the annexation of East Jerusalem and other occupied areas into a concrete fact (<http://www.icahd.org/eng/>).

In a letter to Caterpillar CEO James Owens The Office of the UN High Commissioner on Human Rights said: "allowing the delivery of your... bulldozers to the Israeli army... in the certain knowledge that they are being used for such action, might involve complicity or acceptance on the part of your company to actual and potential violations of human rights..."

Peace activist Rachel Corrie was killed by a Caterpillar, D-9, military bulldozer in 2003. She was run over while attempting to block the destruction a family's home in Gaza. Her family filed suit against Caterpillar in March 2005 charging that Caterpillar knowingly sold machines used to violate human rights. Since Rachel's death at least three more Palestinians have been killed in their homes by Israeli bulldozer demolitions.

Who's working on it: ** Amnesty International ** Jewish Voice for Peace ** Human Rights Watch ** US Campaign to End Israeli Occupation

CHEVRON

Chairman and CEO: David O'Reilly Contact the Corporation: Chevron Corp. 6001 Bollinger Canyon Rd. San Ramon, CA 94583

Human Rights Abuses: environmental destruction, health violations, and violent killings

The petrochemical company Chevron is guilty of some of the worst environmental and human rights abuses in the world. From 1964 to 1992, Texaco (which transferred operations to Chevron after being bought out in 2001) unleashed a toxic "Rainforest Chernobyl" in Ecuador by leaving over 600 unlined oil pits in pristine northern Amazon rainforest and dumping 18 billion gallons of toxic production water into

rivers used for bathing water. The toxic crude oil and formation water seeped into the subsoil, contaminating surrounding freshwater and farmland. As a result, local communities have suffered severe health effects, including cancer, skin lesions, birth defects, and spontaneous abortions. Indigenous communities have been dispossessed of their lands, and millions of hectares of rainforest have been destroyed to make way for the company's pipelines and oil wells.

Chevron is also responsible for the violent repression of peaceful opposition to oil extraction. In Nigeria, Chevron has hired private military personnel to open fire on peaceful protestors who oppose oil extraction in the Niger Delta. In 1998, two indigenous Ilaje activists were killed by Nigerian military officers flown in by the company while protesting at an oil platform in Ondo state. In 1999, two people from Opia village were killed by military personnel paid by Chevron, after soliciting a meeting to complain about the company's harmful effects on local fishing. And in 2005, Nigerian soldiers fired upon protestors at Escravos oil terminal, leaving one protestor dead.

Additionally Chevron is responsible for widespread health problems in Richmond, California, where one of Chevron's largest refineries is located. Processing 350,000 barrels of oil a day, the Richmond refinery produces oil flares and toxic waste in the Richmond area. As a result, local residents suffer from high rates of lupus, skin rashes, rheumatic fever, liver problems, kidney problems, tumors, cancer, asthma, and eye problems.

The Unocal Corporation, which recently became a subsidiary of Chevron, is an oil and gas company based in California with operations around the world. In December 2004, the company settled a lawsuit filed by 15 Burmese villagers, in which the villagers alleged Unocal's complicity in a range of human rights violations in Burma, including rape, summary execution, torture, forced labor and forced migration. Chevron Corporation earns \$155 billion dollars in yearly profits.

Who's working on it: ** Accion Ecologica ** Amazon Watch ** Amazon Defense Front ** Amnesty International ** Earth Rights International ** Human Rights Watch ** International Labor Rights Fund ** Oil Change International ** Oil Watch International ** Richmond Greens

COCA-COLA

President and CEO: Herbert A. Allen Contact the Corporation: Allen & Co. Inc 711 5th Avenue New York, NY 10022 Phone. (212) 832-8000

Human Rights Abuses: violent killings, kidnap and torture, water privatization, health violations, and discriminatory practices

Coca-Cola Company is perhaps the most widely recognized corporate symbol on the planet. The company also leads in

the abuse of workers' rights, assassinations, water privatization, and worker discrimination. Between 1989 and 2002, eight union leaders from Coca-Cola bottling plants in Colombia were killed after protesting the company's labor practices. Hundreds of other Coca-Cola workers who have joined or considered joining the Colombian union SINALTRAINAL have been kidnapped, tortured, and detained by paramilitaries who are hired to intimidate workers to prevent them from unionizing. In Turkey, 14 Coca-Cola truck drivers and their families were beaten severely by Turkish police hired by the company, while protesting a layoff of 1,000 workers from a local bottling plant in 2005.

In India, Coca-Cola destroys local agriculture by privatizing the country's water resources. In Plachimada, Kerala, Coca-Cola extracted 1.5 million liters of deep well water, which they bottled and sold under the names Dasani and BonAqua. The groundwater was severely depleted, affecting thousands of communities with water shortages and destroying agricultural activity. As a result, the remaining water became contaminated with high chloride and bacteria levels, leading to scabs, eye problems, and stomach aches in the local population. Water shortages have occurred in Varanasi, Thane, and Tamil Nadu as well. The company is also guilty of reselling its plants' industrial waste to farmers as fertilizers, despite its containing hazardous lead and cadmium.

Coca-Cola is one of the most discriminatory employers in the world. In the year 2000, 2,000 African-American employees in the U.S. sued the company for race-based disparities in pay and promotions. In Mexico, Coca-Cola FEMSA, the largest Coca-Cola bottler in Latin America, fired a senior bottling manager for being gay. Finally, by regularly denying health insurance to employees and their families, Coca Cola has failed to help stop the spread of AIDS in Africa. The company is one of the continent's largest private employers, yet only partially covers expensive medicines, while not covering generic medicines at all.

Who's working on it: ** Coke Watch ** Corp Watch ** India Resource Center ** Killer Coke ** Polaris Institute ** Public Citizen ** Students Against Sweatshops ** USLEAP

DOW CHEMICAL

CEO: Andrew N. Liveris Contact the Corporation: Dow Chemical Co. 2030 Dow Center Midland, MI 48674

Human rights abuses: creation of chemical weapons, marketing poisonous chemicals, illegal dumping of toxins into populated areas, environmental destruction, health problems, death

Dow Chemical has been destroying lives and poisoning the planet for decades. The company is best known for the ravages and health disaster for millions of Vietnamese and U.S. Veterans caused by its lethal Vietnam War defoliant, Agent Orange. Dow's "invent first, ask questions later" standard of business led the multinational company to

develop and perfect Napalm, a brutal chemical weapon that burned many innocents to death in Vietnam and other wars. In 1988, Dow provided pesticides to Saddam Hussein despite warnings that they could be used to produce chemical weapons.

In 2001, Dow inherited the toxic legacy of the worst peacetime chemical disaster in history when it acquired Union Carbide Corporation (UCC) and its outstanding liabilities in Bhopal, India. As the Students for Bhopal website recounts, "On December 3rd, 1984, thousands of people in Bhopal, India were gassed to death after a catastrophic chemical leak at a UCC pesticide plant. More than 150,000 people were left severely disabled-of whom 22,000 have since died of their injuries-in a disaster now widely acknowledged as the world's worst ever."

Dow refuses to address its liabilities in Bhopal or even admit its existence, continuing in Union Carbide's tradition of profiting from extreme corporate irresponsibility. In India, Dow's subsidiary faces manslaughter charges and is considered a fugitive from justice for a pending criminal case related to the 1984 chemical explosion. Dow and UCC's lack of accountability in the disaster continue to affect the lives in Bhopal to this day.

World wide, Dow is involved in human rights abuses: environmental destruction, water and ground contamination, health violations, chemical poisoning, and chemical warfare. Dow Chemical's impact is felt globally from their Midland, Michigan headquarters to Plymouth New Zealand. In Midland, Dow has been producing chlorinated chemicals and burning and burying its waste including chemicals that make up Agent Orange. In Plymouth, New Zealand, 500,000 gallons of Agent Orange were produced and thousands of tons of dioxin-laced waste was dumped in agricultural fields. Dow's toxic legacies of human rights abuses traverse to agricultural fields in Central America where Dow exported EPA-banned pesticide DBCP for use on banana and pineapple crops. As a result, thousands of banana workers were exposed to DBCP and became sterile. In retail markets across the world Dow's dangerous chemicals are present as common household solvents, plastics, paints and pharmaceuticals.

Who's working on it: ** Dow Accountability Network ** Vietnam Relief and Responsibility Campaign ** Fund for Reconciliation and Development ** The Vietnam Dioxin Collective ** International Campaign for Justice In Bhopal ** Students For Bhopal o Amnesty International-USA ** Greenpeace International ** Ecology Center ** Tittabawassee River Watch ** Beyond Pesticides

DYNCORP

The Corporation: DynCorp (owned by CSC) CEO: Van Honeycutt Contact the corporation: DynCorp/CSC 2100 East Grand Avenue El Segundo, CA 90245 USA Phone: 310.615.0311

Human rights abuses: causing health problems, environmental devastation and death; endangering lives; physically abusing individuals; sex trafficking

Private security contractors have become the fastest-growing sector of the global economy during the last decade -- a \$100-billion-a-year, nearly unregulated industry. DynCorp, one of the providers of these mercenary services, demonstrates the industry's power and potential to abuse human rights. While guarding Afghani statesmen and African oil fields, training Iraqi police forces, eradicating Colombian coca plants, and protecting business interests in hurricane-devastated New Orleans, these hired guns bolster the security of governments and organizations at the expense of many people's human rights.

DynCorp's fumigation of coca crops along the Colombian-Ecuadorian border led Ecuadorian peasants to sue DynCorp in 2001. Plaintiffs argued that DynCorp knew -- or should have known -- that the herbicides were highly toxic, and should therefore be held accountable for health problems and death among local people and widespread environmental damage to their subsistence agriculture. A Colombian newsweekly called DynCorp -- which also sprays herbicides in Peru and Bolivia -- "lawless Rambos."

DynCorp's questionable actions in Haiti include its training of the national police force after the first coup against President Aristide, paving the way for (Tonton Macoutes) to return to power.

In 2001, a mechanic with DynCorp blew the whistle on DynCorp employees in Bosnia for rape and trading girls as young as 12 into sex slavery. According to a lawsuit filed by the mechanic, "employees and supervisors were engaging in perverse, illegal and inhumane behavior [and] were purchasing illegal weapons, women, [and] forged passports." The mechanic observed DynCorp employees buying and selling women and bragging about the ages and talents of their female slaves. DynCorp fired the whistleblower, who later claimed that "DynCorp is just as immoral and elite as possible, and any rule they can break they do." The company transferred the employees accused of sex trading out of the country, eventually firing some. None were prosecuted.

Who's working on it: ** CorpWatch ** International Labor Rights Fund and the Law Offices of Cristobal Bonifaz are handling the Ecuadorians' suit, with help from EarthRights International, Amazon Alliance, and Friends of the Earth.

FORD MOTOR COMPANY

CEO: William Clay Ford, Jr. Contact the Corporation: Ford Motor Company P.O. Box 685 Dearborn, MI 48126-0685 Email: wford@ford.com

Human rights violations: environmental degradation, climate change, fueling wars for oil

The US automobile industry is fueling America's addiction to oil. Automobiles are the single largest consumer of oil in the US, a country that constitutes less than five percent of the world's population but consumes 25 percent of its oil. The US addiction to oil is linked with a host of human rights and environmental problems, including human rights abuses in countries such as Nigeria, Ecuador, Sudan, South Africa and Indonesia. The US oil addiction has prompted the US government to cozy up to human rights violating governments such as that of Saudi Arabia. It has pushed indigenous people off their land and destroyed hundreds of thousands of acres of rainforests, which are home to half the planet and animal species on the planet. It has fueled wars for oil, such as the war in Iraq, which has so far caused the deaths of more than 2,100 US troops and an estimated 27,000 to 100,000 Iraqis. It has polluted cities, endangering the health of millions of people who live in high-ozone communities and leading to hundreds of thousands of cases of childhood asthma. And, by being a major contributor to global warming, has increased the likelihood of extreme weather events like Hurricane Katrina, which killed at least 1,289 people.

Among automakers, Ford Motor Company is the worst. Every year since 1999, the US Environmental Protection Agency has ranked Ford cars, trucks and SUVs as having the worst overall fuel economy of any American automaker. Ford's current car and truck fleet has a lower average fuel efficiency than the original Ford Model-T.

Ford is also in last place when it comes to vehicle greenhouse gas emissions. According to a recent report by the Union of Concerned Scientists, Ford has "the absolute worst heat-trapping gas emissions performance of all the Big Six automakers." In fact, if Ford were a country, it would be the 10th largest global warming polluter worldwide, behind Italy.

Amazingly, despite the company's recent greenwashing PR campaign, its record has actually worsened. According to Ford's own sustainability report, between 2003 and 2004, the company's US fleet-wide fuel economy decreased and its CO2 emissions went up. Ford is also lobbying to prevent the U.S. and state governments from improving the situation: the company has lobbied against lawmakers' efforts to increase fuel economy standards at the national level and is also involved in a lawsuit against California's fuel economy standards.

Who's working on it: ** Bluewater Action Network ** Energy Action ** Jumpstart Ford, a coalition of Global Exchange, Rainforest Action Network and the Ruckus Society

KBR (KELLOGG, BROWN, AND ROOT): A SUBSIDIARY OF HALLIBURTON CORPORATION

President and CEO: CEO Andrew Lane Contact the Corporation: KBR 601 Jefferson Street Houston, TX 77002 Phone. (713) 753-2000

Human rights violations: Overcharging and providing unnecessary services on taxpayer's dollar, bribery, exploiting third country nationals

KBR is a private company that provides military support services. Notorious for its questionable bookkeeping, dishonest billing practices with US taxpayer dollars, and no-bid contracts, KBR has violated human rights on the U.S. dollar.

KBR's dubious accounting in Iraq came to light in December 2003 when Pentagon auditors questioned possible overcharges for imported gasoline. Former employees have testified about KBR's billing for \$100 laundry bags and \$45 cases of soda, failing to provide simple mechanical parts such as oil filters, feeding soldiers outdated rations, and charging for meals never served. In June 2005, a previously secret Pentagon audit criticized \$1.4 billion in "questioned" and "unsupported" expenditures.

However, given KBR's history, this is no surprise. In 2002 the company paid \$2 million to settle a Justice Department lawsuit that accused KBR of inflating contract prices at Fort Ord, California. In 2000, the GAO scrutinized KBR for overcharging and providing unnecessary services in the Balkans. Bribes to local officials (such as in Nigeria) or subcontractors also appear to be part of KBR's modus operandi.

Many third-country national (TCN) laborers have been hired by KBR to "rebuild" Iraq. Generally hailing from impoverished Asian countries, they have unexpectedly become part of the largest civilian workforce ever hired in support of a U.S. war.

An intricate network of subcontractors who recruit and employ most TCNs lowers the prime contractors' costs and hinders any oversight by contract auditors. The laborers often take out usurious loans to pay a finder's fee for the overseas jobs. Once abroad, the workers find themselves with few protections and uncertain legal status. TCNs often sleep in crowded trailers and wait outside in scorching heat to eat "slop." Many lack adequate medical care and put in hard labor seven days a week, 10 hours or more a day. Few receive proper workplace safety equipment or adequate protection from incoming mortars and rockets.

KBR is now accused of perpetuating the same system in areas destroyed or damaged by Hurricane Katrina. Reports have surfaced about KBR's subcontractors exploiting TCN's (this time, Latinos), many of whom are unpaid, unfed, living in squalid conditions and suffering from untreated ailments.

Who's working on it: ** Corpwatch ** Center for Corporate Policy ** Halliburton Watch ** Houston Global Awareness

LOCKHEED MARTIN

CEO: Robert Stevens Contact the corporation: Lockheed Martin Corp 6801 Rockledge Dr Bethesda, MD 20817 Phone: (301) 897-6000

Human Rights Abuses: War profiteering, warmongering

Lockheed Martin is the world's largest military contractor. In 2003, the year of the Iraq invasion, the company held \$21.9 billion in Pentagon contracts. Providing satellites, planes, missiles, and other lethal high tech items to the Pentagon keeps the profits rolling in. Since 2000, the year Bush was elected, the company's stock value has tripled.

A large company like Lockheed Martin has the ability to shape it's the business environment, and marketing war is very beneficial to the bottom line. As the Center for Corporate Policy (www.corporatepolicy.org) notes, it is no coincidence that Lockheed VP Bruce Jackson -- who helped draft the Republican foreign policy platform in 2000 -- is a key player at the Project for a New American Century, the intellectual incubator of the Iraq war.

Lockheed Martin is not the only defense contractor that goes behind the scenes to influence public policy, but it is one of the worst. Stephen J. Hadley, who now has Condoleezza Rice's old job as Assistant to the President for National Security Affairs, was formerly a partner in a big DC law firm representing Lockheed Martin. He is only one of the beneficiaries of the so-called revolving door between the military industries and the "civilian" national security apparatus. These war profiteers -- the makers of the Trident missile; aircraft like the F-16 Fighting Falcon and the F/A-22 and the C-130 Hercules, as well as high tech space based military components like the DSCS-3 satellite -- have a profound and illegitimate influence on our country's international policy decisions.

Who's working on it: ** Brandywine Peace Community ** Center for Corporate Policy ** War Resisters League

MONSANTO

CEO: Hugh Grant Contact the Corporation: c/o Kathleen Klepfer, Chief of Staff for Hugh Grant 800 North Lindbergh Boulevard St. Louis, MO 63167 Phone:(314) 694-1000 Fax: (314) 694-8394 kathleen.lee.klepfer@monsanto.com

Human Rights Abuses: Displacement, health violations, and child labor

Monsanto is, by far, the largest producer of genetically engineered seeds in the world, dominating 70% to 100% of the market for crops such as soy, cotton, wheat, and corn. The company is also one of the most egregious abusers of the human rights of food sovereignty, access to land, and health.

Monsanto promotes mono-culture -- the practice of covering large swaths of land with a single crop. This practice pushes out subsistence farms and destroys arable land by drastically decreasing soil and water quality for years, draining soil of

key nutrients. The company also undercuts food prices by flooding countries like Mexico, India, and Brazil with cheap, genetically modified foods, resulting in the displacement of millions of farm workers, who are forced to migrate to cities or work as landless peasants or share croppers.

Monsanto is the world's leading producer of the herbicide glyphosate, marketed as "Roundup." Roundup is sold to small farmers as a pesticide, yet harms crops in the long run as the toxins accumulate in the soil. Plants eventually become infertile, forcing farmers to purchase genetically modified Roundup Ready Seed, a seed that resists the herbicide. This creates a cycle of dependency on Monsanto for both the weed killer and the only seed that can resist it. Both products are patented, and sold at inflated prices.

Roundup Ultra, a version of the pesticide that is unavailable on the commercial market, is regularly employed in fumigation of areas of illicit crop production. However, as it destroys fields of drug plants, it also destroys subsistence crops like banana, palm heart, and coffee. Exposure to the pesticide is documented to cause cancers, skin disorders, spontaneous abortions, premature births, and damage to the gastrointestinal and nervous systems.

According to the India Committee of the Netherlands and the International Labor Rights Fund, Monsanto also employs child labor. In India, an estimated 12,375 children work in cottonseed production for farmers paid by Indian and multinational seed companies, including Monsanto. A number of children have died or became seriously ill due to exposure to pesticides.

Monsanto's yearly profits are \$5.4 billion.

Who's working on it: ** Food First ** GM Watch ** GRAIN ** India Resource Center ** Institute for Agriculture and Trade Policy ** Landless Workers' Movement ** Organic Consumers' Association ** Via Campesina

NESTLE USA

CEO: Joe Weller Contact the Corporation: Nestle USA 800 N. Brand Blvd. Glendale, CA 91203 Phone: 818-549-6000 Fax: 818-549-6952

Human Rights Violations: Abusive child labor, repression of worker rights, aggressive marketing of harmful products, violation of national health and environmental laws

There's a secret in the chocolate industry, and once people find out about it, their chocolate doesn't taste as sweet any more: Much of the chocolate eaten all over the world is made of cocoa beans that have been harvested by illegal child labor, including child slave labor.

The problem of illegal and forced child labor is rampant in the chocolate industry, because more than forty percent of the world's cocoa supply comes from the Ivory Coast, a country that the US State Department estimates had approximately

109,000 child laborers working in hazardous conditions on cocoa farms in what's been described as the worst form of child labor. In 2001, Save the Children Canada reported that 15,000 children between 9 and 12 years old, many from impoverished Mali, had been tricked or sold into slavery on West African cocoa farms, many for just \$30 each. Just this summer, the International Labor Rights Fund and a Birmingham law firm filed a class-action lawsuit against Nestle and several of its suppliers on behalf of former child slaves.

Nestle is the target of this lawsuit and is singled out by corporate campaigners, because it is the third largest buyer of cocoa from the Ivory Coast, has processing, storage and export facilities there, and is well aware of the tragically unjust labor practices taking place on the farms with which it continues to do business. Nestle and other chocolate manufacturers agreed to end the use of abusive and forced child labor on cocoa farms by July 1, 2005, but they failed to do so.

Nestle is also notorious for its aggressive marketing of infant formula in poor countries the 1980s, which may have led to the deaths of countless children who did not receive the nutrients that would have been present in breast milk. Because of this practice, Nestle is still one of the most boycotted corporations in the world, and its infant formula is still controversial. In Italy in 2005, police seized more than two million liters of Nestle infant formula that was contaminated with the chemical isopropylthioxanthone (ITX), a component in the packaging's ink. It turned out the company knew about the contamination for months, but did not recall the formula.

Additionally, violations of labor rights are reported from Nestle factories in numerous countries. In Colombia, Nestle replaced the entire factory staff with lower-wage workers and did not renew the collective employment contract. In Cabuyao Laguna, Philippines, a 3-year strike against Nestle was partially precipitated by Nestle's refusal to include the retirement benefits of the workers in the collective bargaining agreement, despite the Supreme Court's ruling in favor of the workers. The company has brutally attempted to break the strike; this year, two unionists, including prominent labor leader Diosdado Fortuna, have been murdered.

Who's working on it: ** Global Exchange ** International Baby Milk Action ** International Labor Rights Fund

PHILIP MORRIS USA and PHILIP MORRIS INTERNATIONAL (a.k.a. the Altria Group Inc.)

Chairman and CEO: Louis C. Camilleri Contact the Corporation: Philip Morris USA Consumer Response Center P.O. Box 26603 Richmond, Virginia 23261 <http://www.philipmorrisusa.com> Email form: http://www.philipmorrisusa.com/en/contact_us/contact_us_by_email.asp?action=init Philip Morris International Consumer Service Case Postale 1171 1001 Lausanne, Switzerland <http://www.philipmorrisinternational.com>

Human Rights Abuse: aggressively marketing lethal products

According to the World Health Organization, tobacco is the second major cause of preventable death in the world. Nearly five million lives per year are claimed by the tobacco industry, whose products results in premature death for half the people who use them. Among tobacco companies, Philip Morris is notorious. Now called Altria, it is the world's largest and most profitable cigarette corporation and maker of Marlboro, Virginia Slims, Parliament, Basic and many other brands of cigarettes. Philip Morris is also a leader in pushing smoking with young people around the world. Philip Morris has consistently misled consumers about the dangers of its products. Documents uncovered in a lawsuit filed against the tobacco industry by the state of Minnesota showed that Philip Morris and other leading tobacco corporations knew very well of the dangers of tobacco products and the addictiveness of nicotine, yet they continued to deny these realities in public until the internal company documents were brought to light. To this day, Philip Morris deceives consumers about the harm of its products by offering light, mild and low-tar cigarettes that give consumers the illusion that these brands are "healthier" than traditional cigarettes. Philip Morris has actively targeted the world's youth by researching smoking patterns and attitudes and targeting youth as potential customers. Marlboro cigarettes are the top brand for youth in the United States. Although the company says it doesn't want kids to smoke, it spends millions of dollars every day marketing and promoting cigarettes to youth. Overseas, it has even hired underage Marlboro girls to distribute free cigarettes to other children and sponsored concerts where cigarettes were handed out to minors.

As anti-tobacco campaigns and government regulations are slowing tobacco use in Western countries, Philip Morris has aggressively moved into developing country markets, where smoking and smoking-related deaths are on the rise. According to a study by the Harvard School of Public Health, tobacco's killing fields are shifting to the developing world and Eastern Europe, where most of the world's smokers now live. Preliminary numbers released by the World Health Organization predict global deaths due to smoking-related illnesses will nearly double by 2020, with more than three-quarters of those deaths in the developing world. Meanwhile, Philip Morris' profits continue to grow. In the third quarter of 2005 alone, Altria's net revenue was \$25 billion, up from 2004 in large part due to the high performance of Philip Morris USA and Philip Morris International.

Who's working on it: ** Campaign for Tobacco-Free Kids ** Essential Action ** Framework Convention Alliance ** World Health Organization

PFIZER

CEO: William Steere Contact the Company: Pfizer 235 East 42nd Street NY, NY 10017-5755 Phone: 212-573-1000 (switchboard) Fax: 212-573-7851 Jim Brigaitis, Team Leader Diflucan Phone: 212-573-7789 Fax: 212-573-3253

Human Rights Abuse: The denial of universal access to HIV/AIDS medicines

Pfizer is the largest pharmaceutical company in the world, representing 11% of the world market, and earning more than \$4 billion dollars in profit per year in the world's most profitable industry. It is also one of the worst abusers of the human right of universal access to HIV/AIDS medicine.

In addition to Viagra, Zoloft, Zithromax, and Norvasc Pfizer produces the anti-retroviral drug fluconazole under the name Diflucan, and sells it at prices that poor people with AIDS cannot afford. The company refuses to grant generic licenses of fluconazole to governments in countries like Brazil, South Africa, or Dominican Republic, where patients are forced to pay \$20 per weekly pill, though the average national wage is only \$120 per month.

Instead of helping eradicate the world's worst pandemic in history, Pfizer chooses to follow World Trade Organization intellectual property rules and refuses to grant governments licenses to make generic, accessible AIDS drugs available to their citizens.

Pfizer also values shareholder profits over safety standards. In Europe in 2005, it withdrew from scientific studies of a new class of AIDS drugs called CCR5 inhibitors, choosing instead to rush its own untested CCR5 inhibitor onto the European market without full information about the drug's side effects..

Who's working on it: ** ACTUP: New York, Philadelphia, Paris ** Consumer Project on Technology ** Doctors Without Borders ** Generics Now ** Health GAP ** Interfaith Center on Corporate Responsibility ** Treatment Action Campaign

SUEZ-LYONNAISE DES EAUX (SLDE)

CEO: Mr. Gerard Mestrallet Contact the Corporation: Suez 16, rue de la Ville-l'Eveque 75383 PARIS Cedex 08 France Phone: +33 1 40 06 64 00 gerard.mestrallet@suez.com

Human rights abuse: Water privatization

The privatization of water has had a disastrous impact on the human right to clean water, and the French company Suez is the worst perpetrator of this abuse. The company's billions of dollars in profit come at the expense of poor people living in countries where thousands lack access to potable water, and, because of private water contracts, are also facing skyrocketing water prices.

Suez goes by many names around the world -- Ondeo, SITA, and others -- to mask its worldwide net of controversial activities. But no sleight of hand can hide the fact that Suez, which is one of the largest water companies in the world, has been a leader in turning the human right to water into an

unaffordable luxury. According to Public Citizen, Suez has raised water rates, cut off the water of people unable to pay, refused to extend services to poverty-stricken neighborhoods, and then threatened legal action when contracts are terminated.

For example, in Manila, Philippines, after seven years of water privatization under a Suez company (Maynilad Water) contract, studies showed that water rates increased in some neighborhoods by 400 to 700 percent. These studies also showed that the negligence of the company resulted in cholera and gastroenteritis outbreaks that killed six people and severely sickened 725 in Manila's Tondo district.

In Argentina, Suez mixed companies have refused to make promised investments in the water infrastructure, which has resulted in serious water pollution problems. They also charge high consumer rates and cut off water access for citizens unable to pay, leaving those most in need without access to a life-sustaining natural resource.

In Bolivia, a Suez company (Aguas de Illimani) left 200,000 people without access to water and caused a revolt when it tried to charge between \$335 and \$445 to connect a private home to the water supply. Countless people were unable to afford this charge in a country whose yearly per capita GDP is \$915.

Unfortunately, the IMF and World Bank are playing a key role in pushing water privatization all over the world. Many countries have been required to open up their water supply to private companies as a condition for receiving IMF loans, and the World Bank has approved millions of dollars in loans for the privatization of water systems.

Who's working on it: ** Corporate Accountability International ** Food and Water Watch ** Stop Suez

WAL-MART

CEO: Lee Scott Contact the Corporation: Wal-Mart Stores, Inc. 702 Southwest 8th Street Bentonville, AR 72716 Tel. (479) 273-4000 Email corporate headquarters: <http://walmartstores.com/GlobalWMStoresWeb/navigate.do?catg=221>

Human Rights Abuses: worker rights violations, labor discrimination, union busting

Wal-Mart is the biggest corporation in the world. It owns 5,100 stores worldwide and employs 1.3 million workers in the United States and 400,000 abroad, as well as a millions more in the factories of its suppliers. Because of the company's enormity, its business model has a huge influence on workers and businesses around the world; so far Wal-Mart has used that influence to ruthlessly drive down costs as a means of making profit, violating a vast array of human rights and labor rights along the way.

By Deb Price

Many people have heard of the way that Wal-Mart steamrolls its way into every possible town, destroying local supermarkets and countless small businesses. We have also heard about Wal-Mart's long track record of worker abuse, from forced overtime to sex discrimination to illegal child labor to relentless union busting. Wal-Mart also notoriously fails to provide health insurance to over half of its employees, who are then left to rely on themselves or taxpayers, who provide for a portion of their healthcare needs through government Medicaid.

Less well known is the fact that Wal-Mart maintains its low price level by allowing substandard labor conditions at the overseas factories producing most of its goods. The company continually demands lower prices from its suppliers, who, in turn, make more outrageous and abusive demands on their workers in order to meet Wal-Mart's requirements. In September 2005, the International Labor Rights Fund filed a lawsuit on behalf of Wal-Mart supplier sweatshop workers in China, Indonesia, Bangladesh, Nicaragua and Swaziland. The workers were denied minimum wages, forced to work overtime without compensation, and were denied legally mandated health care. Other worker rights violations that have been found in foreign factories that produce goods for Wal-Mart include locked bathrooms, starvation wages, pregnancy tests, denial of access to health care, and workers being fired and blacklisted if they try to defend their rights.

Additionally, nearly 70% of Wal-Mart's goods are made in factories in China, a country where garment workers are often kept under 24-hour-a-day surveillance and can be fired for even discussing factory conditions. The Chinese government does not allow independent human rights groups to exist, and all attempts to form independent unions have been crushed. Wal-Mart refuses to reveal its Chinese contractors and will not allow independent, unannounced inspections of its contractors' facilities.

Who's working on it: ** Wal-Mart Watch ** ACORN ** Business Ethics International ** Sierra Club ** Wake-Up Wal-Mart ** International Labor Rights Fund ** United Students Against Sweatshops

{1} <http://www.globalexchange.org/>

{2} <http://www.globalexchange.org/about/newhumanrights.html>

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URL:
http://www.precaution.org/lib/05/great_lakes_restoration_funding_in_doubt.051213.htm

From: The Detroit News, Dec. 12, 2005

\$20B IN DOUBT FOR GREAT LAKES FIX

'Initiative of the decade' to clean the lakes lacks fed cash

[DHN introduction: Scientists say the Great Lakes ecosystem is stressed almost to the point of no return{1}. As we reported in Rachel's #826{2}, a Presidential Task Force has recommended a 15-year program to restore the lakes -- but now the money is in doubt. Cynics are suggesting that perhaps President Bush just appointed his Great Lakes Task Force so he could win Michigan in the last election. Holding 95% of all the fresh water in North America, the Great Lakes are going to become increasingly important as time passes and water becomes scarcer. This is one problem the U.S. and Canadian governments dare not walk away from -- but they're going to need citizens to keep reminding them, and reminding them, and reminding them. It's not so much a question of financial deficits as it is attention deficits. -- Editors]

WASHINGTON-- A presidential task force Monday released a historic \$20 billion, 15-year blueprint{3} to restore the ailing Great Lakes -- but without promises from the White House or Congress to fund it.

If implemented, it would be among the most ambitious environmental projects in U.S. history. And it was to be followed today by another historic measure to protect the world's largest freshwater resource. Great Lakes political leaders were ready to sign an agreement banning diversion of Great Lakes water.

After representatives of the Great Lakes basin -- eight U.S. governors and two Canadian premiers -- sign the compact, it must be approved by the eight state legislatures and the U.S. Congress.

"Either one of these two would be the initiative of the decade and an incredible accomplishment," said Andy Buchsbaum, director of the Great Lakes office at the National Wildlife Federation. "This is an incredible time for the Great Lakes."

While the \$20 billion plan spells out in minute detail what it would take to protect the lakes, there was great skepticism that it could be funded at anywhere near that level in an era of massive federal budget deficits requiring widespread cuts in federal spending.

The sum of \$20 billion would be a huge increase in what Congress has so far been willing to commit: Between 1992 and 2004, the federal government pumped just \$1.7 billion into Great Lakes restoration efforts, according to a congressional report.

At a news conference in Chicago unveiling the restoration plan, Great Lakes state and local officials vowed to come up with \$140 million in state and local money to launch the project if the federal government agrees to \$300 million in additional funding in fiscal year 2007.

The federal government says the dozens of programs it operates that have an impact, such as cleaning up highly

contaminated sites, amount to about \$500 million a year. But the task force report calls mostly for new funding initiatives.

U.S. Rep. Vern Ehlers, R-Grand Rapids, said he would author legislation to implement the plan and hold hearings to try to build support for boosting the federal commitment to cleaning up the lakes. But he acknowledged there will be funding challenges.

"Before Katrina and the other hurricanes, I think there was real hope that we could finally tackle this," said Ehlers, who chairs a House Science subcommittee. "There are a lot of demands on the budget. But there is a substantial part of the Congress that wants to get this project going."

About two-thirds of the \$20 billion proposal would go to fix and upgrade old sewer systems in the Great Lakes region, which in wet weather sometimes dump inadequately treated sewage into the waterways, leading to fish kills and beach closings. In addition, the plan calls for combatting invasive species, restoring wetlands and other wildlife habitats and accelerating the cleanup of highly contaminated areas.

The plan proposes fighting invasive species by building barriers at several points of entry to the lakes, as well as by passing the National Aquatic Invasive Species Act to prohibit releasing untreated ballast water from oceangoing ships.

The plan also calls for restoring and increasing the amount of wetlands around the lakes by 550,000 acres by 2010, at a cost of \$188 million annually. Those provide crucial habitat for waterfowl and fish, as well as filter out contaminants. The document also calls for \$20 million to research dwindling fish populations and to boost stock of native fish populations.

It also urges the \$2.25 billion over 15 years to clean up 31 toxic sites in the United States. Nearly half of the 31 areas of concerns are in Michigan waters, including in the Detroit, Clinton, Rouge and St. Clair rivers.

The Great Lakes hold 95 percent of the nation's fresh surface water and are a huge economic engine, supporting 250,000 jobs in the region. Boating alone is a \$35 billion-a-year industry, while hunting, fishing and wildlife account for about \$18 billion in revenue.

"We pledge to work with Congress on legislative efforts to restore and protect the lakes," Stephen Johnson, the administrator of the Environmental Protection Agency, said at the news conference. "Today's blueprint is the next step in ensuring the Great Lakes remain an international treasure."

Johnson, while not committing to any funding levels, said the EPA is committed to reducing sewage overflows by 2020, making permanent a barrier to keep Asian carp from entering the Great Lakes, and speeding up cleanup of toxic areas.

But already Congress, responding to requests by the president, is trying to cut spending by as much as \$50 billion over the next five years for food stamps, Medicaid and other

safety-net programs. That, added to anticipated increases in the cost of Social Security and Medicare as the baby boom generation ages, raises concern that the Congress and White House won't commit to a large-scale environmental project.

U.S. Rep. John Dingell, D-Dearborn, after meeting with Johnson last week, said he believes there "won't be any new funds" for a massive Great Lakes cleanup project.

U.S. Rep. Bart Stupak, D-Menominee, called the report "just a big hype about nothing."

Stupak charges that President Bush created the task force during the 2004 presidential campaign to try to win Michigan and other swing Great Lakes states. He expects Bush in his State of the Union address to say he has to control spending, and that means additional funding won't be coming to back up the task force's recommendations.

"We've been through this a million times," said Stupak. "Nothing is going to happen with the Great Lakes until there is a commitment of money. I don't see that happening until we have a new president."

Environmentalists say they will push Congress to increase spending, warning that delay will simply add to the cost of restoration.

"The next steps are of paramount importance," said Tom Kiernan, president of the National Parks Conservation Association. "The follow-through and the funding will be the key tests."

The National Wildlife Federation's Buchsbaum added: "Tomorrow we roll up our sleeves and turn this excellent plan into action."

Tim Shelton, owner of Ausable Marina in Oscoda, said he is hopeful the plan will be enacted to boost fish populations.

"(Lake Huron) really needs some help," Shelton said.

John Rohe, an attorney in Petoskey who boats on the Great Lakes often, said he is worried about eating fish caught in the lakes.

"We live our life around the Great Lakes, not to mention it is the water we drink and bathe with and use," Rohe said in explaining why he hopes the plan goes forward. "If you want to rank my concern on a scale of 1 to 10, it is about an 8 or 9. That is a tremendous insult to generations to come."

Signaling one of the ways environmentalists hope to sell the plan to a Congress faced with competing big-ticket items, Emily Green, director of the Great Lakes program for the Sierra Club, said the rush of construction jobs in the short term and increased tourism and recreation in the long term will create "prosperity and growth" and turn the region from being known as the rust belt states to the water belt economy.

"The sooner we make the investment, the better," Green said. "Every day we wait means that this problem will only get bigger."

Chicago Mayor Richard Daley and the governors of the Great Lakes states have asked Bush to support the new funding.

"I am well aware that there are competing priorities and tight budgets," Daley said. "However, investments we make now will prevent the need for far larger expenditures in the future."

Ohio Gov. Bob Taft said states are prepared to contribute financially. "If we hesitate to spend money, we will lose time, and we do not have time to lose."

Detroit News Washington Bureau Chief Alison Bethel and the Associated Press contributed to this report. You can reach Deb Price at (202) 662-8736 or dprice@ detnews.com.

{1} http://www.precaution.org/lib/05/can_the_great_lakes_be_saved.051209.htm

{2} http://www.rachel.org/bulletin/index.cfm?issue_ID=2512

{3} <http://www.glr.us/strategy.html>

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URL:

http://www.precaution.org/lib/05/ecosystem_degradation_linked_to_declining_human_health.051209.htm

From: Environment News Service, Dec. 9, 2005

WORLD HEALTH BODY LINKS ECOSYSTEM INJURY TO HUMAN HEALTH PROBLEMS

GENEVA, Switzerland -- Sixty percent of the benefits that the global ecosystem provides to support life on Earth -- fresh water, clean air, abundant wildlife and a relatively stable climate -- are being degraded or used unsustainably with negative effects on human health, finds a new report{1} released today by the World Health Organization (WHO).

"Ecosystems and Human Well-being: Health Synthesis{2}," explores the complex links between the preservation of healthy and biodiverse natural ecosystems and human health.

"Over the past 50 years, humans have changed natural ecosystems more rapidly and extensively than in any comparable period in human history," said Dr. Lee Jong-wook, director-general of the World Health Organization.

"This transformation of the planet has contributed to substantial net gains in health, well-being and economic development," said Dr. Lee, adding that not all regions and groups of people have benefited equally from this process.

In the report, scientists warn that harmful consequences of ecosystem degradation to human health are already being felt and could grow worse over the next 50 years.

"The benefits should be acknowledged," said Dr. Carlos Corvalan of Purdue University, WHO's lead author on the report. "But these benefits are not enjoyed equally. And the risks we face now from ecosystem degradation, particularly among poor populations directly dependent on natural ecosystems for many basic needs, has to be addressed."

The Health Synthesis Report is WHO's contribution to the broader Millennium Ecosystem Assessment{3}, a four year series of studies and reports, involving over 1,300 scientists, considering impacts on human wellbeing, past, present and future.

Ecosystem services are absolutely vital to preventing disease and sustaining good health, the Health Synthesis report emphasizes.

"Nature's goods and services are the ultimate foundations of life and health, even though in modern societies this fundamental dependency may be indirect, displaced in space and time, and therefore poorly recognized," writes Dr. Lee in his Forward to the report.

Many serious human diseases have originated in animals, and so changes in the habitats of animal populations that are disease vectors or reservoirs, may affect human health, sometimes positively and sometimes negatively, the report explains.

Sometimes the environmental circumstances leading to disease transmission are complex. For example, the Nipah virus is believed to have emerged after forest clearance fires in Indonesia drove carrier bats to neighboring Malaysia, where the virus infected intensively farmed pigs, and then crossed to humans.

Intensive livestock production, while providing benefits to health in terms of improved nutrition, has also created environments favorable to the emergence of diseases, the report points out. Increased human contact with wild species and "bush meat" as a result of encroachment in forests and changes in diet also create opportunities for disease transmission.

Trends ranging from forest clearance to climate-induced habitat changes also appear to have impacted certain populations of mosquitoes, ticks and midges, altering transmission patterns for diseases like malaria and Lyme disease.

Deforestation also endangers health by intensifying the effects of natural disasters such as floods and landslides, resulting in reduced crop yields. This impairs the nutritional status of households and diet deficiencies harm children's physical and mental development. In turn, this can impair the

livelihoods of farmers and limit the options open to their children.

Pressures on ecosystems could have unpredictable and potentially severe future impacts on health, the report states. Regions facing the greatest risks include sub-Saharan Africa, Central Asia, parts of Latin America, and certain areas in South and Southeast Asia.

Harm to ecosystems needed for human nutrition and safe drinking water as well as dependence on solid fuels such as wood and charcoal are viewed as some of the most serious problem areas.

Degradation of fisheries and agro-ecosystems are factors in the malnutrition of some 800 million people around the world, the WHO report finds, echoing the findings of many other reports from United Nations and nongovernmental organizations. At least an additional billion people experience chronic micronutrient deficiency.

Infectious waterborne diseases claim 3.2 million lives, approximately six percent of all deaths globally. Over one billion people lack access to safe water supplies, the report finds, while 2.6 billion lack adequate sanitation.

Related problems of water scarcity are increasing, partly due to ecosystem depletion and contamination, WHO warns in the report.

After cutting down the trees, charcoal production is the next step in conversion of the Amazon rainforest to cattle ranching. Here a charcoal burner's hut in the Brazilian state of Amazonia produces solid cooking fuel. Burning it can lead to respiratory problems.

About three percent of the global burden of disease has been attributed to indoor air pollution, a major cause of respiratory diseases. Most of the world's population uses solid fuels to cook and heat, a factor in deforestation as well as indoor air pollution.

On the other hand, health benefits are derived from having a full complement of species, intact watersheds, climate regulation and genetic diversity, the authors say. Stresses on freshwater sources, food-producing systems and climate regulation could cause major adverse health impacts.

"Human health is strongly linked to the health of ecosystems, which meet many of our most critical needs," said Maria Neira, director of WHO's Department for the Protection of the Human Environment.

Neira says the report is a wake-up call for healthcare professions around the world. "We in the health sector need to take heed of this in our own planning, and together with other sectors, ensure that we obtain the greatest benefit from ecosystems for good health - now and in the future."

{1}<http://www.who.int/globalchange/ecosystems/ecosystems05/en/>

2}<http://www.who.int/globalchange/ecosystems/ecosystems05/en/>

{3}<http://www.millenniumassessment.org/en/index.aspx>

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URL:
http://www.precaution.org/lib/05/clean_coal_is_dirty.051214.htm

From: Charleston (W.V.) Gazette, Dec. 14, 2005

'CLEAN COAL' DIRTY, GROUPS SAY

By Ken Ward Jr.

[DHN introduction: We have added the links you find in this article. --Editors]

More than 70 grass-roots groups from around the U.S. and 12 other countries are launching a crusade to end the use of the term "clean coal."

Coal River Mountain Watch{1} and other West Virginia groups say the phrase is misleading and hides the true effects of mining and coal- related air pollution.

"Coal is dirty when you mine it, dirty when you transport it, dirty when you burn it and dirty when you dispose of the ash," said Vivian Stockman, project coordinator for the Ohio Valley Environmental Coalition{2}. "And it sure dirties up politics."

This morning, the coalition and the Coal River group will join the West Virginia Highlands Conservancy{3} and others to announce their campaign at a state Capitol press conference.

Over the last few months, local environmental groups have become increasingly concerned about calls from state and national politicians for renewed backing of various government "clean coal" programs{4}.

Earlier this week, Gov. Joe Manchin held the first meeting of his own such effort -- a plan to build a coal gasification plant somewhere in West Virginia.

Supporters say this can help make coal burn with less air pollution, and use an abundant domestic energy to make the nation less dependent on foreign oil.

"It's something that I think is very doable for the state of West Virginia," Manchin said during the Public Energy Authority meeting.

In a letter circulated internationally, Coal River Mountain Watch also calls for an end to "destructive coal mining practices."

The group cited a slurry spill over the weekend from a Massey Energy{5} preparation plant near the Boone-Raleigh County line.

The 10,000-gallon spill caused a five-mile long slug of black slurry, and forced the shutdown of the drinking water intake for the local water plant.

The incident Saturday morning occurred at Massey's Marfork Coal operation near Whitesville.

For more than four years, Massey has been fighting efforts by the DEP to suspend permits for part of the operation because of repeated spills. The case is back before the state Supreme Court.

Among those who signed the Coal River group letter was Robert F. Kennedy Jr.{6}, president of the Waterkeeper Alliance}.

"There is no such thing as clean coal," said Kennedy, whose book "Crimes Against Nature" contains a chapter critical of the coal industry and mountaintop removal mining.

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{1} <http://www.coalfieldsustainability.org/signon.php>

{2} <http://www.ohvec.org/>

{3} <http://www.wvhighlands.org/>

{4} <http://www.netl.doe.gov/cctc/>

{5} <http://www.umwa.org/massey/massey.shtml>

{6} <http://www.activistcash.com/biography.cfm/bid/2765>

{7} <http://www.waterkeeper.org/>

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