



Peace: All Together a New Focus.

By Renee Espeland

Monks and others in Myanmar formerly known as the Union of Burma, we thank you. You make us strong.

I'm Renee Espeland. I'm a co-coordinator with Iowa Peace Network, a faith-based group supported by Mennonite, Church of the Brethren, Quaker and Methodist people.

Between the North Atlantic slave trade and the Holocaust of the Native Americans, more than 46 million people died so that my Swedish and Norwegian kin could help steal Iowa, Minnesota and South Dakota.

What number comes to mind when I say, unilateral or monolithic policy? No never mind, Sigmund Freud answered that didn't he?

What number comes to mind when I mention the word dualism? Yes, two, but it is not a creative "two" is it? It is a way of thinking that thinks, good or bad, evil or anointed, either/or, Republican or Democrat, USA or Terrorist. It is like attempting to take a drive to Decorah, in northeast Iowa, to see fall leaves—on a teeter-totter. When we hop on that teeter-totter we are stuck in

a twilight zone of dualistic thinking.

By definition of the teeter-totter, there are some real limitations to movement. Is this good or bad? The question itself is another dualism just like the question: Is a recipe good or bad writing? Better questions are: Good, for what? And, in what ways or bad for what? And, in what ways? A recipe is good writing for the purpose of getting something created in the kitchen. Imagine attempting to make Crème Brulee by way of allegory.

So I ask, in what ways are U.S. policies successful? What are they good for?

On October 27, 2007, hundreds of peacemakers gathered in Des Moines, Iowa, as part of the International Day of Actions, one of thousands of demonstrations held around the world that day that called for an end to the war in Iraq.

Among the Iowa speakers was Renee Espeland of Des Moines. This is a full transcript of her speech.

U.S. policy is good for planning wars in Afghanistan, Iraq, Outer Space, Iran, Syria, Africa, Venezuela, and beyond. Information is readily available on government websites that indicates that there is very little about Iraq that is failed policy. This SNAFU is one component in an overarching plan that began after the Cold War. We are making great progress in achieving our objectives in this long-term plan. Our objectives include securing U.S. position for oil on a global scale and keeping trade of oil in U.S. dollars not Euros. Iran, Syria, Venezuela and Africa have not happened yet but by design they are supposed to come after Iraq.

Oil, not gold, is the naturally occurring precious substance that backs our dollar or should I say "Our Debt." It has been said that Fascism is Capitalism in decline [V.I. Lenin]; and, that Fascism should rightly be called Corporatism, as it is a merge of state and corporate power [Mussolini.] Oil is a corporate

endeavor, and the corporate consultants in Congress have designed policies that prioritize the personhood and rights of profit to U.S. and multinational corporations. The delineation between Government and Corporation cannot be distinguished. The current policies of the USA are great for the support of corporate power and profit.

There are no trade deficits in this paradigm. In this plan, the great American corporation sells weapons and the rest of the world supplies our every need. Our biggest export right now is weaponry, and business is booming. We sell billions of dollars of weapons to Iraqi nationals as well as Iraqi insurgents. In the last five years we have sold 15 billion dollars worth of weapons to Saudi Arabia alone (ironically, the ones with the box cutters.) There has been some restructuring by the State Department to oversee arms sales, but this is less and less the case.

Twenty-five nations formerly under the scrutiny of the Foreign Assistance Act are out from under Congressional oversight and into the never-never land of the corporate Department of Defense. When our biggest export is in selling weapons we must arm EVERYONE who is engaged in the fight, and its better for business if everyone is fighting. If you were an Iraqi civilian, almost every gun from every shooter is an American sold weapon. We are not stupid people! Extrapolate. What does this mean for our soldiers?

The frontier of the Wild, Wild West is now in outer space--which we claim as "Ours-or bust"--and in which we have little satellite, aka "Corporate Fort Des Moines" from which we can nuke anything on the planet with fewer than three hours notice [www.stratcom.mil].

We still have a congressionally approved policy that we can explode

them before they can scalp us that is now called the "Tactical use of nuclear weapons." Congress has authorized first-strike use of Nukes—we can bomb whomever we want, whenever we want. As we speak, there are more than 10,000 Gulf War I vets that have died since the end of Gulf War I, from illnesses related to Depleted Uranium poisoning [www.traprockpeace.org.] U.S. policy is good for recycling radioactive waste, colonizing outer space and using weapons of mass destruction.

There are those who define Democracy as "an invention by the people of history to protect themselves from the abuses of wealth." [Chomsky.] Democracies do not like to go to war. This is why we have the lies surrounding Pearl Harbor, NSC-68—that North Korea invaded South Korea, the Bay of Pigs, Gulf of Tonkin, Kuwait, 911 and Iraq. All these involved fabrication or some level of strategic opportunism [James Bamford, *The Puzzle Palace* and *Body of Secrets*.] Democracies can be manipulated by fear. Current U.S. policy is good for promoting fear and manipulating the populous into fear-based excuses for war.

Let me tell you a joke, "God might speak to the world through a burning Bush." In Sioux Falls, South Dakota, in March of 2001, a man was sentenced to 37 months in Federal Prison for "Threatening the life of the President" when he told this joke in a bar [Richard Humphreys of Portland Oregon in a bar in Watertown SD.]

"God might speak to the world through a burning Bush." Heaven help me that I don't indulge my penchant for double entendre! U.S. policy is not supportive of the constitution's protection of free speech or of dissent.

It has been said that “If we don’t learn that we are all connected, we are all related, that it’s all one living body, we won’t breathe.” [Barbara Marx Hubbard]

Let’s talk science. This is oversimplified--and so is plugging in the toaster--yet we don’t doubt the ability to make toast. Scientists put some energy particles into a vacuum jar. They then noticed a very random dispersal pattern. Some genetic material [DNA] was added to this and lo and behold, the photon particles were ordered into a wave pattern. The genetic material was removed; and the expectation was that the random order would be restored, but this did not happen. The energy particles remained ordered in the wave structure. Our DNA affects the smallest photon energy particles.

Most of us have heard of the quantum experiment investigating the probabilities for energy to manifest as either a wave or a particle. The probabilities end up having to do with the focus of the researcher.

Other scientists are researching the ways that our world is holographic. In much the same ways that our DNA can be found in every cell of our being, energy is connected everywhere in and in the course of this earth. Any change here on a small level can manifest throughout a sort of energy matrix instantaneously.

Darwin is notorious for the notion of the “survival of the fittest,” but a few years later he noted [*Descent of Man*] that, “Those communities which included the greatest number of the most sympathetic members would flourish best and rear the greatest number of offspring.” A Russian naturalist some years later [Kropotkin] noted that “Competition is always injurious to the species. Better

conditions are created by the elimination of competition by means of mutual aid and mutual support.”

What happens when we get something in our eye? Our focus changes, does it not? It is no longer on the horizon or in the intellect; it is right up close and immediate in our experience. Feeling the log in our own eye is the first step in getting off our teeter-totter.

Recognizing this log in my eye changes my focus. I must accept responsibility for the consequences of my country’s successful policies. I must know that it is I, who has affected girls and boys in Falujah and whose skin was chemically melted off from the use of white phosphorus; I must see that I bought the white phosphorus!

People in my country’s armed forces were ordered by me to utilize the white phosphorus. I see that every time I take a dollar bill out of my pocket I am involved in an ethical quandary and more often than not an unethical transaction. When I take myself or my children and grandchildren to the mall, I must let them know that most of what we will purchase has been made by children like them, and I do indeed support slavery and genocide in accordance with successful U.S. policies, just like my founding forefathers and mothers did. Tiger Woods makes almost as much to promote Nike as the entire Indonesian workforce is paid to make the product that he promotes. OUCH... I feel the log in my eye, and my focus changes.

Now, when I say “I,” I mean “I;” and I also mean “us.” Each and all of us. Our response is anemic, that is to say, lacking capacity to carry oxygen.

I am not talking about “shame.” Shame is like putting super-glue on our

butts and sitting on the teeter-totter as hard as we can. Shame is dualistic in nature—it keeps us stuck.

Some good healthy rigor is in order. Our current rigor is repulsive. This log is repulsive, and these successful U.S. policies are repulsive. As M Scott Peck said “You have to have it in order to give it up.” (I bet the Monks said this first.) I must be prompt. I must not attend even one more church service or memorial service or political event or election that fine tunes and tweaks these “successful U.S policies” without rigorous mindfulness to this log in my eye. When I am mindful of the log in my eye, it shows up in this energy matrix: my eye, my city, my state, my nation, my planet. When I am mindful, and you are mindful, the eyes become “We’s.”

I heard from Anne Lamott that her pastor Veronica said “Peace is Joy at rest, and Joy is Peace on its feet.” Peace is Joy at rest, and Joy is Peace on its feet. [*Plan B: Further Thoughts on Faith*]

“Joy is Peace on its feet,” is the next step in getting off the teeter totter. When “Joy is Peace on its feet,” my leg swings around to get off the teeter totter, and I catch a thermal, and: My candidate is not anointed. My Faith community is fully flawed. My status as a citizen is defined by direct action. And. I no longer need to believe everything that I think.

“Joy is Peace on its feet,” gets me to my feet, and my feet imagine U.S. policies that are good for mutual aid and support and a world that flourishes. Science gives us a new lexicon to speak of interconnectedness as the Monks have been saying all along. My feet design U.S. policies that are good for sustaining breathing; good for supporting global economies that benefit living beings. Our feet design U.S. policy that is healing to our planet.

The “Log in our eye” and “Joy is peace on its feet” get us off this dualism of a teeter totter so that we can move. Let’s Move!

The monks and others in Myanmar formerly known as the Union of Burma did! We thank you. You make us strong!

This transcript may be reprinted with permission from the author. As well as current co-coordinator of the Iowa Peace Network, Renee is also a friend and former member of the Des Moines Catholic Worker community. Renee can be reached at:

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