



FROM THE WILDERNESS

*A Nonpartisan, Non-sectarian, MAP from the Here That Is,
Into the Tomorrow of Our Own Making*

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The Kennedys, Physical Evidence, and 9/11

November 26, 2003 0100 PDT (FTW) -- To those with long-suffering sacrifice in the field of assassination research, the fortieth anniversary of the death of JFK must seem like a bad dream that has finally ended. There are many lessons from the barrage of JFK anniversary programming, from JFK's death itself, and from the murder of his brother Robert, which show that physical evidence - as obvious and as glaring as it might be - has never before succeeded in overturning an established government lie in the minds of the people. That awareness was with me on 9/11 and it remains validated by experience in the post-9/11 world.

I write this article in part to share the practical teaching experience offered by these events, to make amends, and to offer an apology.

It was not possible to watch every program on every network that gave the American people and the world a dose of conditioning reinforcement about how it couldn't be definitively proven that Lee Harvey Oswald did not kill JFK, or that others did. At the end of a week of this confusing deluge, one was left with a message -- it was still likely Oswald, a long-dead progenitor of crazed, lone, twentieth century-gunmen, who did it. And if all the "experts" paraded; the scientific tests conducted; the computer simulations and photographic enhancements offered could not answer the questions: How could mere lay people find an answer? All talk. No justice. No change.

It made me sick.

There is a reason why I opened my video *The Truth and Lies of 9/11* with a single segment from the Zapruder film, shot on November 22, 1963. It shows that with the fatal head shot, JFK's body was pushed backwards and not forwards. In the simplest laws of physics this means one thing and one thing only; the shot was fired from JFK's front and hence, not by Oswald. The media conditioning - the "Mighty Wurlitzer" described by the CIA's legendary Frank Wisner - has done its job again. Anything that simple couldn't be true.

But it is.

We also have the magic bullet, that infamous concoction of Arlen Specter, then a junior counsel to the Warren Commission and now the Senior Senator from Pennsylvania. Go to *Google*. Type in "Magic Bullet JFK" and hit Search. More than 10,000 entries arrive for evaluation. Instantly, any clarity about what this magic bullet that inflicted seven wounds and - according to the Warren Commission report - performed physically impossible maneuvers, vaporizes into mind-numbing
(continued on page 17)

This Holiday Season Give the Gift of Truth!

SPECIAL #1:

Let us send your friends a holiday season gift...a video of our best seller, "The Truth and Lies of 9-11," plus a 2-CD audio set of, "CIA, Drugs, Wall Street and the 9-11 Connection."

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— **From The Wilderness** —

Michael C. Ruppert

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Drawing Lessons from Experience; The Agricultural Crises in North Korea and Cuba -- Part 1

Why Changing the Way Money Works is the Key to Resolving Peak Oil Challenges

by Dale Allen Pfeiffer
FTW Contributing Editor for Energy

November 17, 2003, 1100 PDT, (FTW) -- So what happens to an industrialized country practicing modern agriculture when it loses its fossil fuel energy base? There are two countries where it has already happened: North Korea and Cuba. Both countries have little or no oil resources of their own, both relied upon the Soviet Union for their oil imports, and both experienced a swift and severe drop in their oil imports following the demise of the Soviet empire. While showing proper respect for the suffering of people in both countries, perhaps we can benefit from studying their examples.

DPRK (North Korea)—A Warning to the US

North Korea has always held less than half the population of South Korea. Prior to the Korean War, South Korea was a largely agrarian society, while the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK, North Korea) was largely an industrial society. Following the war, the DPRK turned to fossil fuel subsidized agriculture to increase the production of their poor soils.

By 1990, DPRK estimated per capita energy use was 71 gigajoules per person,¹ the equivalent of 12.3 barrels of crude oil. This was more than twice the per capita usage of China at that same time, or half the usage of Japan. DPRK has coal reserves estimated at from 1 billion to 10 billion tons, and developable hydroelectric potential estimated at 10-14 Gigawatts.² But North Korea must depend on imports for all of their oil and natural gas. In 1990, DPRK imported 18.3 million barrels of oil from Russia, China and Iran.³

An Energy Crisis

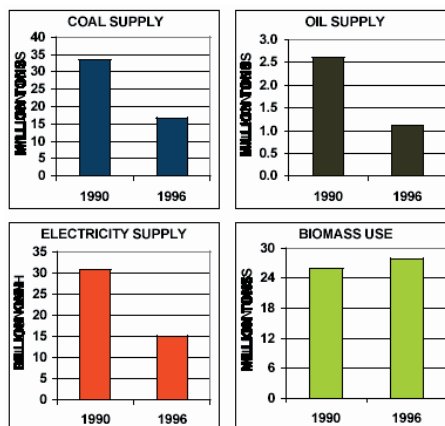
Following the collapse of the Soviet Union, Russian imports fell by 90%. By 1996, oil imports amounted to only 40 percent of the 1990 level.⁴ DPRK tried to look to China for the bulk of its oil needs. However, China sought to distance itself economically from DPRK by announcing that all commerce with DPRK would be settled in hard currency beginning in 1993. China also cut its shipments of "friendship grain" from 800,000 tons in 1993 to 300,000 tons in 1994.⁵

On top of the loss of oil and natural gas imports, DPRK

suffered a series of natural disasters in the mid-1990s that acted to further debilitate an already crippled system. The years 1995 and 1996 saw severe flooding that washed away vital topsoil, destroyed infrastructure, damaged and silted hydroelectric dams, and flooded coal mine shafts rendering them unproductive. In 1997, this flooding was followed by severe drought and a massive tsunami. Lack of energy resources prevented them from preparing for these disasters and hampered recovery.

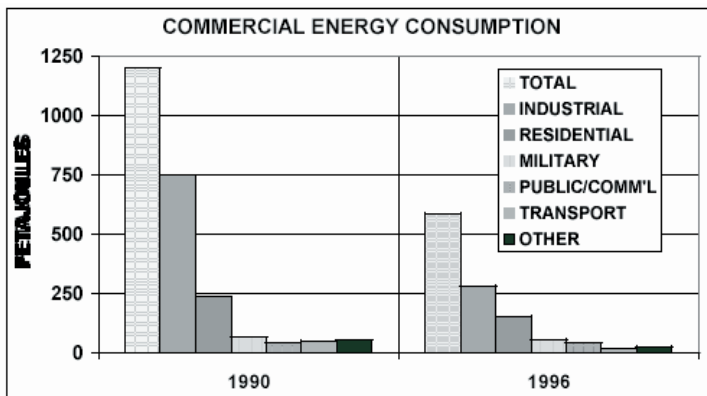
DPRK also suffered from aging infrastructure. Much of their machinery and many of their industrial plants were ready for retirement by the 1990s. Because DPRK had defaulted on an enormous debt some years earlier, they had grave difficulty attracting the necessary foreign investment. The dissolution of the Soviet Union meant that DPRK could no longer obtain the spare parts and expertise to refurbish their infrastructure, leading to the failure of machinery, generators, turbines, transformers and transmission lines. DPRK entered into a vicious positive feedback loop, as failing infrastructure cut coal and hydroelectric production and diminished their ability to transport energy via power lines, truck and rail.

The following graphs illustrate the decline in all sectors of commercial energy between the years 1990 and 1996. As a result of this, North Koreans turned to burning biomass, thus impacting their remaining forests. Deforestation led, in turn, to more flooding and increasing levels of soil erosion. Likewise, soils were depleted as plant matter was burned for heat, rather than being mulched and composted.



from Fuel and Famine:
Rural Energy Crisis in the
Democratic People's
Republic of Korea,
<http://repositories.cdlib.org/cgi/viewcontent.cgi/article=1028&context=igcc>

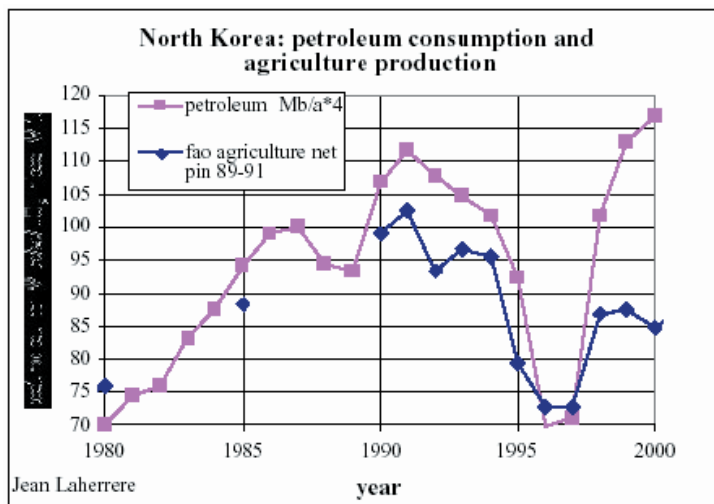
By 1996, road and freight transport were reduced to 40% of their 1990 levels. Iron and steel production were reduced to 36% of 1990 levels, and cement was reduced to 32%.⁶ This effect rippled out through the automotive, building and agricultural industries. The energy shortage also affected residential and commercial lighting, heating and cooking. This, in turn, led to loss of productivity and reduced quality of life, and adversely impacted public health. To this day, hospitals remain unheated in the winter, and lack electricity to run medical equipment. There is even insufficient energy to boil water for human consumption. By 1996, total commercial energy consumption throughout society fell by 51%.⁷



from Fuel and Famine: Rural Energy Crisis in the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, <http://repositories.cdlib.org/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1028&context=igcc>

Perhaps in no other sector was the crisis felt more acutely than in agriculture. The energy crisis quickly spawned a food crisis that proved to be fatal. Modern, industrialized agriculture collapsed without fossil fuel inputs. It is estimated that over 3 million people have died as a result.⁸

The Collapse of Agriculture



from Modeling future oil production, population and the economy, <http://www.oilcrisis.com/laherrere/aspoParis.pdf>

The above graph, produced by Jean Laherrère, illustrates the relationship between petroleum consumption and

agricultural collapse in DPRK.⁹ Note that the decline of agricultural production follows very closely the decline of petroleum consumption. Also, note that the rise in petroleum consumption after 1997 is not mirrored by the rise of agricultural production. Agriculture begins to make a comeback, but appears to enter another decline sometime around 1999. We do not have enough data at present to state conclusively the reasons why agricultural recovery has faltered. It is likely a combination of other factors, such as failure of farm equipment and infrastructure, adverse weather, and—quite likely—the failure of soils that have been depleted of minerals over the past decade. In any case, the above graph sums up the agricultural collapse of DPRK and hints at the suffering that collapse has entailed.

Fertilizer

Agriculture in DPRK requires approximately 700,000 tons of fertilizer per year.¹⁰ North Korea used to manufacture 80 to 90% of its own fertilizer, somewhere from 600,000 to 800,000 tons per year. Since 1995, DPRK has had difficulty producing even 100,000 tons per year. Aid and foreign purchases brought the total for 1999 to 160,000 tons, less than one quarter of the required amount.¹¹

The DPRK fertilizer industry relies on coal as both an energy source and a feedstock. They require 1.5 to 2.0 million tons of coal per year to produce 700,000 tons of fertilizer.¹² To obtain this coal, the fertilizer industry must compete with the steel industry, electricity generation, home heating and cooking needs, and a host of other consumers. Flooded mine shafts and broken down mining equipment have severely cut the coal supply. Likewise, delivery of this coal has been curtailed by the breakdown of railway infrastructure. Furthermore, transporting 2 million tons of coal by rail requires 5 billion kilowatt hours of electricity,¹³ while electricity supply is diminished because of lack of coal, silting of dams and infrastructure failure. So once again, we have another vicious positive feedback loop. Finally, infrastructure failure limits the ability to ship the fertilizer—1.5 to 2.5 million tons in bulk—from factories to farms.¹⁴

The result of this systemic failure is that agriculture in DPRK is operating with only 20 to 30% of the normal soil nutrient inputs.¹⁵ The reduction in fertilizer is the largest single contributor to reduced crop yields in DPRK. Tony Boys has pointed out that to run DPRK's fertilizer factories at capacity would require the energy equivalent of at least 5 million barrels of oil, which represents one quarter of the oil imported into DPRK in recent years.¹⁶ However, even capacity production at this point would be inadequate. For the past decade, soils in the DPRK have been depleted of nutrients to the point that it would now require a massive soil building and soil conservation program to reverse the damage.

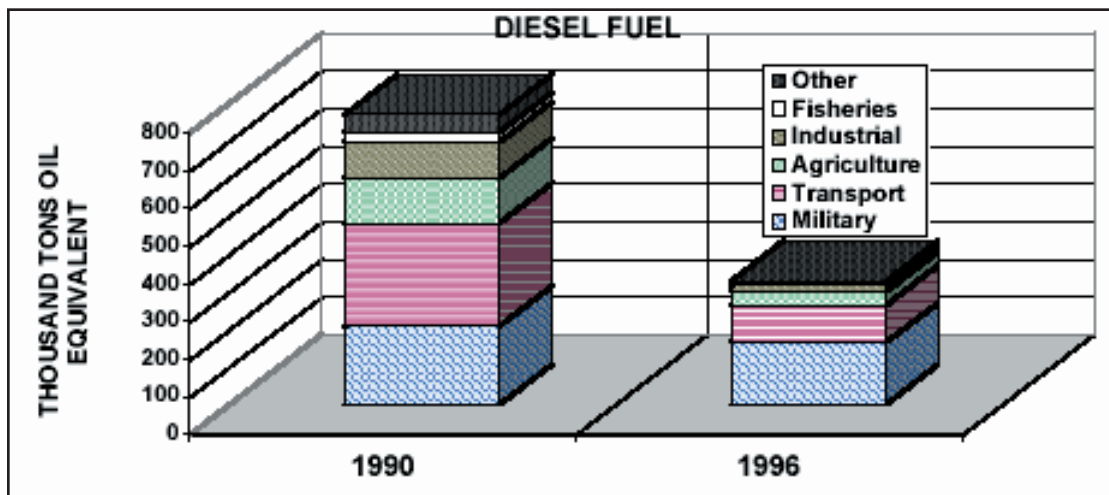
Diesel Fuel

Agriculture has been further impacted by the limited availability of diesel fuel. Diesel fuel is required to run the fleet of approximately 70,000 tractors, 8,000 tractor crawlers, and 60,000 small motors used on farms in DPRK.^{16B} Diesel

is also required for transporting produce to market, and for food processing equipment. It is estimated that in 1990, North Korean agriculture used 120,000 tons of diesel fuel. Since then, agricultural consumption has declined to 25,000 to 35,000 tons per year.¹⁷

Compounding the problem of diesel supply is the military allocation, which has not been cut proportionally with the drop in production. Only after the military takes its allocation can the other sectors of society—including agriculture, transportation and industry—divide the remainder. So, while total supplies of diesel have dropped by 60%, the agricultural share of the remainder has fallen from 15% in 1990 to 10% currently.¹⁸ In other words, agriculture must make due with 10% of 40%, or 4% of the total diesel supply of 1990.

DPRK Diesel Fuel Consumption in 1990 & 1996



from Fuel and Famine: Rural Energy Crisis in the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, <http://repositories.cdlib.org/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1028&context=igcc>

The result is an 80% reduction in the use of farm equipment.¹⁹ There is neither the fuel nor the spare parts available to keep farm machinery running. Observers in 1998 reported seeing tractors and other farm equipment lying unused and unusable while farmers struggled to work their fields by hand. The observers also reported seeing piles of harvested grain left on the fields for weeks, leading to post-harvest crop losses.²⁰

Loss of mechanized power has required the substitution of human labor and draft animals. In turn, due to their greater workload, human laborers and draft animals require more food, putting more strain on an already insufficient diet. And, although a greater percentage of the population is engaged in farm labor, they have found it impossible to perform all of the operations previously carried out by machinery.²¹

Irrigation

Finally, the agricultural system has also been impacted by the decreased availability of electricity to power water pumps for irrigation and drainage. The annual amount of electricity

necessary for irrigation throughout the nation stands at around 1.2 billion kilowatt hours (kWh). Adding to this another 460 million kWh to operate threshing and milling machines and other farm equipment brings the total up to 1.7 billion kWh per year.²² This is not including the electrical demand for lighting in homes and barns, or any other rural residential uses.

Currently, electricity for irrigation has declined by 300 million kWh, and electricity for other agricultural uses has declined by 110 million kWh. This brings the total electrical output currently available for agriculture down to 1.3 billion kWh; a shortfall of 400 million kWh from what is needed.

In reality, the situation for irrigation is worse than that hinted at by these figures. Irrigation is time sensitive—especially in the case of rice, which is DPRK's major grain crop. Rice production is dependent upon carefully-timed flooding and draining. Rice is transplanted in May and harvested in late

August and early September. After planting, the rice paddies must be flooded and remain in water until they are drained at harvest time. In DPRK, virtually all rice irrigation is managed with electrical pumps. Over half of the irrigational pumping for all agriculture takes place in May. Peak pumping power demand at this time is at least 900 MW. This represents over one-third of DPRK's generating capacity.²³

On top of this, the national power grid is fragmented, so that at some isolated points

along the grid, irrigation demand can overtax generating capacity. This overtaxed system is also dilapidated, suffering the same disrepair as other energy infrastructure, both due to weather disasters, the age of the power stations and transmitters, and the lack of spare parts.

The records of three major pumping stations in DPRK showed that they suffered an average of 600 power outages per year, spending an average of 2300 hours per year without power. These power failures resulted in an enormous waste of water, translating into an irrigation shortfall of about one-quarter of the required amount of water.²⁴

Home Energy Usage

Home energy usage is also severely impacted by the energy crisis, and—particularly in rural areas—home energy demand is in turn impacting agriculture. Rural residential areas have experienced a 50% drop in electricity consumption, resulting in a decline in basic services and quality of life. Homes in rural villages rarely have electrical power during the winter months.²⁵ As has already been mentioned, hospitals and clinics are not excluded from this lack of power.

Rural households use coal for heating and cooking. The average rural household is estimated to require 2.6 tons of

coal per year. The total rural coal requirement is 3.9 million tons annually. Currently, rural areas receive a little more than half of this requirement.²⁶ On the average, rural coal use for cooking, heating and preparing animal feed has declined by 40%, down to 1.6 tons per year.²⁷ Even public buildings such as schools and hospitals have limited coal supplies. Lacking enough coal even for the purpose of boiling water, the result is a reported increase in waterborne diseases.

To make up for the shortfall in coal, rural populations are increasingly turning to biomass for their heating and cooking energy needs. Herbage has been taken from competing uses such as animal fodder and compost, leading to further decreased food supplies. Biomass scavenging is also stressing all rural ecosystems from forests to croplands. Biomass harvesting reduces ground cover, disrupts habitats, and leads to increasing soil erosion and siltation.

Moreover, biomass foraging requires time and effort when other labor requirements are high and nutritional availability is low. This contributes to the positive feedback loop of calorie requirements versus food availability. It is estimated that 25% of the civilian workforce was employed in agriculture in the 1980s. By the mid-1990s, the ratio had grown to 36%.²⁸ Furthermore, agricultural work has grown much more labor intensive. Farm labor is conservatively estimated at a minimum of 300 million person-hours per year. However, researchers point out that this number could easily be a factor of two or more higher.²⁹ Workers are burning more calories, and so require more food. This is further complicated by greater reliance upon draft animals with their own food requirements. So necessary caloric intake has actually increased as food production has decreased, leading to less food availability per demand and increasing malnutrition.

Impacts to Health and Society

U.S. congressmen and others who have visited North Korea tell stories of people eating grass and bark. Other reports talk of soldiers who are nothing more than skin and bones. Throughout the country, there is starvation to rival the worst found in Africa. Chronic malnutrition has reached the point where many of the effects are irreversible.³⁰

A study of children aged 6 months to 7 years found that 16% suffered from acute malnutrition—this is one of the highest rates of wasting in the world. 3% of the children suffered edema. 62% of the children suffered from chronic malnutrition. 61% were moderately or severely underweight. Chronic malnutrition can lead to irreversible stunting.³¹

Furthermore, malnutrition weakens the immune system, leaving the population even more vulnerable to contagions. And the lack of fuel for boiling water has led to a rise in water-borne diseases. Without electricity and coal, hospitals and clinics have become harbors of despair, where only the hopeless go for treatment.³²

The situation in DPRK has rendered the country even more vulnerable to natural disasters. The country lacks the energy reserves to recover from the natural disasters of 1995-1997, much less withstand future ones. The infrastructure is fragmented and in disrepair. There is a very real threat that portions of the infrastructure, such as the electrical grid, may

fail altogether. Complete electrical grid failure would result in a near-complete crop loss.³³

So far, the people of DPRK have faced this crisis together. But continued deprivation may very well lead to rivalry, regional fragmentation, social breakdown and internecine fighting. Rural society is currently faring better than the urban population, and it is actually absorbing urban workers to help meet the rising labor demands of agriculture. But worsening conditions and widespread flight from the cities could lead to violent confrontations. It is even possible that rural instability could eventually result in civil war.

A Model for Disaster

The history of DPRK through the 1990s demonstrates how an energy crisis in an industrialized nation can lead to complete systemic breakdown. Of particular note is how the energy crisis sends ripples throughout the entire structure of society, and how various problems act to reinforce each other and drag the system further down. The most serious consequence for the people is found in the failure of modern agriculture and the resulting malnutrition. The collapse of infrastructure not only makes it more difficult to deal with the decline of agriculture and other immediate disasters, but also acts to amplify the crisis and leads to further social disintegration.

The various far-flung impacts and the numerous interlinking problems render the crisis nearly impossible to remedy. Even with a healthy economy, it is doubtful that North Korea could repair its degenerated society. Though the original problem may have been a lack of fuel, it cannot be corrected now by a simple increase in fuel supply. At this time, it will take an international effort to save the people of North Korea. And given the current political animosity between DPRK and the U.S., it is doubtful that this effort will take place.

The painful experiences of DPRK point out that dealing with an energy crisis is not just a matter of finding an alternative mode of transportation, an alternative energy source, or a return to organic agriculture. We are talking about the collapse of a complex system, in this case a social system that evolved gradually from a labor-intensive agrarian society to a fossil fuel-supported industrial/ technological society. It simply is not possible to step back to an agrarian society all at once, or to take a leap forward into some unknown high-tech society. Complex systems change gradually, bit by bit. Faced with immediate change, a complex system tends to collapse.

For a world facing the end of growing energy production, this means that the changes should have begun decades ago, giving time for a gradual transition. We had our warning back in the 1970s, when there might have been time to make a transition to a society independent of fossil fuels. Now it is simply too late. It is a waste of our time talking about a hydrogen future, or zero point energy, or a breakthrough in fusion. Even if we could find a technological quick fix, there is no time left to make the transition.

This is not to say that our future has to be bleak. We might be able to make a transition into a simpler society. In fact, if we can concentrate our efforts on easing the decline and on building an equitable and democratic social system, we might

manage to provide a comfortable existence for ourselves and for the generations to come.

In part two of this article, the author will look at how Cuba has handled its own energy crisis, and will use this positive example to list some ways in which industrial civilization could handle the transition from fossil fuel dependent agriculture.

- 1 *Fuel and Famine: Rural Energy Crisis in the Democratic People's Republic of Korea*, William, James H., Von Hippel, David, Hayes, Peter. Institute on Global Conflict and Cooperation, Policy Paper 46, 2000. <http://repositories.cdlib.org/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1028&context=igcc>
- 2 *Demand and Supply of Electricity and Other Fuels in the Democratic People's Republic of Korea*, Von Hippel, D.F., and Hayes, Peter. Nautilus Institute, 1997.
- 3 Op. Cit. See note 1.
- 4 Ibid.
- 5 *Causes and Lessons of the "North Korean Food Crisis,"* Boys, Tony. Ibaraka Christian University Junior College, 2000. <http://www9.ocn.ne.jp/%7Easlan/dprke.pdf>
- 6 Op. Cit. See note 1.
- 7 Ibid.
- 8 Op. Cit. See note 5.
- 9 Modelling future oil production, population and the economy, Laherrère, Jean. ASPO Second international workshop on oil & gas, Paris, May 26-27 2003. <http://www.oilcrisis.com/laherrere/aspoParis.pdf>
- 10 *DPR Korea: Agricultural Recovery and Environmental Protection (AREP) Program, Identification of Investment Opportunities*, Vol. 2: Working Papers 1-3. United Nations Development Programme And the UN Food and Agriculture Organization, 1998.
- 11 Ibid.
- 12 Op. Cit. See note 2.
- 13 Op. Cit. See note 1.
- 14 Ibid.
- 15 Ibid.

- 16 "...the energy cost of ammonia synthesis even in large modern plants averages over 40 GJ/tN, of which 60 percent is feedstock and 40 percent is process energy. It is unlikely that the DPRK fertilizer factories can produce ammonia for less than 50GJ/tN. Further, because ammonia requires special storage and application, most of it is converted to liquid or solid fertilizer (e.g. urea) for easy shipping and application. The conversion of ammonia to urea requires an additional 25 GJ/tN. Since one barrel of oil represents approximately 6GJ of energy, and one ton of nitrogen in urea requires 75 GJ (or more) to produce, to run the DPRK's (three) fertilizer factories at capacity for a year would require: $(75 \div 6 = 12.5) \times 400,000 = 5,000,000$...or at least 5 million barrels of oil, roughly a quarter of the amount of oil imported annually into the DPRK in recent years." Op. Cit. See note 5.
- 16B Op. Cit. See note 10.
- 17 Op. Cit. See note 2.
- 18 Op. Cit. See note 1.
- 19 Ibid.
- 20 *Special Report: FAO/WFP Crop and Food Supply Assessment Mission to the Democratic People's Republic of Korea*. FAO, Global Information and Early Warning System on Food and Agriculture, World Food Programme, November 12, 1998. <http://www.fao.org/waicent/faoinfo/economic/giews/english/alertes/1998/srdrk981.htm>
- 21 Ibid.
- 22 Op. Cit. See note 2.
- 23 Op. Cit. See note 1.
- 24 Op. Cit. See note 10.
- 25 Op. Cit. See note 1.
- 26 Ibid.
- 27 Ibid.
- 28 Op Cit. See note 20.
- 29 Op. Cit. See note 1.
- 30 Op. Cit. See note 5.
- 31 Ibid.
- 32 Op. Cit. See note 1.
- 33 Ibid.



“FLESHING OUT SKULL & BONES: Investigations Into America’s Most Powerful Society”

by
**Antony Sutton, Kris Millegan, Anton Chaitkin,
Ralph Bunch, Howard Altman, Jedidiah McClure**

EXPOSED - the Secret Societies the Whitehouse and other Government Officials belong to and why. Know the names of the people Behind The Curtain. Fleshing Out Skull and Bones takes up where Antony Sutton left off. Millegan does a great job of answering the questions raised by Sutton in his book, “America’s Secret Establishment”... questions Sutton didn’t answer before his death.

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NEW!!

Drawing Lessons from Experience; The Agricultural Crises in North Korea and Cuba -- Part 2

Cuba - A Hope

by Dale Allen Pfeiffer
FTW Contributing Editor for Energy

[The day *FTW* published Part I of this important series we began to receive many messages deriding what was described as our propaganda on behalf of Fidel Castro. Patiently, I replied that this series had nothing to do with Castro or with "Communism". Both Korea and Cuba are "Communist" countries yet the Cubans are eating while the North Koreans are starving. That, I said, was the point - the only point.

As the effects of Peak Oil and Gas are making themselves felt, even sooner than anticipated, the world stands on the brink of unimaginable global famine. Please see http://fromthewilderness.com/free/ww3/112103_china_food.html, and http://fromthewilderness.com/free/ww3/100303_eating_oil_summary.html.

These issues are coming to center stage about a decade before "experts" had predicted they would and the problems they pose are being exacerbated by a global economic system which has found that "it may not be profitable to slow decline."

Into this mix, we find that "Cuba has disproved the myth that organic agriculture cannot support a modern nation." And in terms of locally privatized agriculture we find a pure form of capitalism advocated by Catherine Austin Fitts (www.solari.com) that centers around neighborhood ownership, place-based financing and decentralized control. Further, the Cuban data shows that privately owned co-op farms are outproducing state-owned ventures. "The CCSs, made up of small, independent farmers, have outperformed the CPAs, the UBPC cooperatives and the state farms."

I have been approached about going personally to Cuba next spring to view these developments for myself. I pray that this opportunity becomes realized. When I go, I will take with me all the protestations I have heard about how the Cuban people suffer under Castro, how unhappy they reportedly are, and how much they live without and I will balance these charges against the fact that the Cuban people are, healthy, educated, eating and surviving in a world we may all soon have to face. Recently *CNN's* Lou Dobbs broadcast a series showing that American food production is shrinking, while our population is increasing. Soon to end is the ability of the US and Canada (the only two nations to do so) to continue exporting grain to a hungry world.

Happiness, in human terms, is a relative condition. The Cuban people may indeed be in despair because they lack TVs, "good" clothing, new cars and consumer goods. There

may be, by comparison, conditions unthinkable to a present-day American or Brit. But I submit that, as global famine caused by Peak Oil and Gas becomes a reality, the possibility exists that what Cubans have today might - in a decade or less--look to much of the world like undreamed of abundance. - MCR]

December 1, 2003, 1600 PDT, (FTW) --The story of Cuba begins in much the same vein as the story of North Korea. The collapse of the Soviet Union brought the loss of oil imports as well as the loss of their major trading partner. And U.S. sanctions kept the country isolated from the rest of the world.

However, there are some very important differences between Cuba and DPRK. For one thing, Cuba has a much warmer climate, with a longer growing season. Cuba also has a better ratio of population to arable land, though most of the arable land is not of the best quality.¹ Cuba has a large percentage of scientists, engineers and doctors in its population. With only 2% of the population of Latin America, Cuba holds 11% of the scientists in all of Latin America.² Even before the crisis provoked by the collapse of the Soviet Union, Cuban scientists had begun exploring alternatives to fossil fuel-based agriculture. Research into ecological agriculture began back in the 1980s. By the time of the crisis, a system of regional research institutes, training centers and extension services was in place to quickly disseminate information to farmers.³ And finally, the Cuban government had social programs in place to support farmers and the population through the crisis and the transition into ecological agriculture.

Before looking at the crisis and the Cuban response, it is necessary to look briefly at Cuban society before the crisis, particularly rural society and the agrarian reforms of past decades. It is here that the groundwork was laid for a successful transition.

A Short History

Prior to the 1959 revolution, there was one word to describe Cuba: inequity. Only 8% of the farmers controlled 70% of the land. U.S. interests controlled most of the Cuban economy, including most of the large plantations, a controlling interest in the sugar production, the mining industry, oil

refineries, electrical utilities, the communications system, and many of the banks.⁴

The majority of the rural labor force consisted of landless, seasonal workers without schooling, healthcare, electricity or running water. They earned their living during only three months of the year, at planting time and at harvest. Rural workers were lucky to earn one-quarter of the national income.⁵

At the time of the revolution, most of the wealthy landowners fled to the United States. Their former holdings were expropriated and given over to the laborers. Minor Sinclair and Martha Thompson provide a vivid illustration of this transformation in their portrait of Ciego de Avila.⁶

The province of Ciego de Avila encompasses what was formerly the Las Navajas estate. The estate had been owned by Alfredo and Horacia Arbutio, two brothers who ran their holdings with an iron fist. The brothers ruled over the local peasantry, and meted out a very harsh justice that included beatings and punishment for those who collected firewood on the estate. The peasantry had no schools, no healthcare, and no electricity. There weren't even roads to bring them these amenities. They were starved and sick.

The Arbutio brothers fled to the U.S. at the time of the revolution. Alfredo became a founding member of the Cuban-American National Foundation. The former sharecroppers, 62 families, expropriated the land. They formed the Jose Marti Cooperative, and the new government provided them with technical training, supplies, guaranteed markets, and crop insurance.⁷

Members of the cooperative--sons and daughters of former sharecroppers--have university degrees in agriculture, computers, teaching, engineering and other subjects. The cooperative now supports a school, a clinic and a pharmacy. In the next generation, many children have plans to become doctors and nurses. And, considering that Cuba's medical training program is among the best in the world, it is highly likely that these plans will come to fruition.

The Cuban revolution has been followed by three periods of agrarian reform, first in 1959, secondly in 1963, and finally the current land reform of the 1990s. The first reform limited private land owning to 1,000 acres. This resulted in a tripling of the number of small farmers and in the establishment of state farms to replace the large plantations. The second agrarian reform further limited private land ownership to 165 acres per person.⁸ The land reform of the 1990s would be more properly called a controlled privatization. We will discuss that later.

By 1965, state farms controlled 63% of the arable land, and over 160,000 small farmers owned and worked an additional 20% of the arable land.⁹ The small farmers joined farmer associations, Credit and Service Cooperatives (CCSs) and Agricultural Production Cooperatives (CPAs), which together controlled 22% of the arable land. The CCSs and CPAs are, in turn, confederated in the National Association of Small Producers (ANAP), which provides training and a number of services to its members, and negotiates with the government for prices and credit. ANAP members produce 52% of the vegetables grown in Cuba, 67% of the corn, and 85% of the tobacco.¹⁰ Another 20,000 small farmers own their

land independently of cooperatives. These unaffiliated private farmers own about 1% of the arable land.¹¹

The agrarian reforms succeeded because the government was truly intent on a redistribution of the wealth and a more equitable society. Farmers and cooperatives were supported with low-interest credit, stabilized prices, a guaranteed market, technological assistance, transport and insurance. The government also enacted laws that prevented the reconcentration of land, effectively preventing former plantation owners from slowly buying back their estates. The revolution took back control of Cuba from the U.S.; laws were enacted to ban foreign ownership of property. Cuba's isolation did, in fact, have some positive benefits in that it allowed them to affect their social transformation without outside intervention. And finally, the population was educated and provided with decent health care.

By the 1980s, Cuba had surpassed most of Latin America in nutrition, life expectancy, education and per capita GNP. The literacy rate was an astonishing 96%, and 95% of the population had access to safe water.¹² Cubans achieved a large degree of equity and industrialization through a trade regime that was highly import-dependent.

From the time of the revolution to the 1980s, Cuban agriculture became more mechanized than any other Latin American country. Despite the fact that Cuba was a highly industrialized country which manufactured everything from pharmaceuticals to computers, sugar was their major export. By the end of the 1980s, state-owned sugar plantations covered three times more farmland than did food crops. Sugar and its derivatives constituted 75% of Cuba's exports, sold almost exclusively to the Soviet Union, Eastern and Central Europe and China.¹³

However, because Cuban agriculture was overwhelming dedicated to sugar, tobacco and citrus, the country had to import 60% of its food, all from the Soviet bloc. Cuba also imported most of its oil, 48% of its fertilizer, 82% of its pesticides, 36% of its animal feed for livestock, and most of the fuel used to produce sugar.¹⁴ Although this system of imports and exports had allowed Cuba to modernize and raise the standard of living and the quality of life for all residents, its dependence upon the Soviet Union and the agricultural focus on sugar production left the country extremely vulnerable should anything happen to its major trading partner.

Crisis

The first few years after the Soviet Union collapsed had a severe impact upon Cuba. The crisis was compounded by the U.S., which tightened its already stringent economic blockade. The U.S. economic sanctions increased the suffering of the Cuban people. Throughout the worst years of the crisis, 7,500 excess deaths per year can be directly attributed to the U.S. sanctions.¹⁵

Almost overnight, Cuba lost 85% of its trade. Fertilizer, pesticide and animal feed imports were reduced by 80%.¹⁶ Imports of fertilizer dropped from 1.3 million tons per year to 160,000 tons in 2001. Herbicide and pesticide imports dropped from a combined 27,000 tons to 1,900 tons in 2001.¹⁷ And petroleum supplies for agriculture were halved.¹⁸

Cuba's Dependence on Imported Food, pre-1990

Imported foods accounted for 57 percent of Cubans' total caloric intake.

Food	Percentage of Food Imported
Beans	99
Oil and lard	94
Cereals	79
Rice	50
Milk and dairy	38
Animal feed	36
Meat	21
Fruit and vegetables	1-2
Roots and tubers	0
Sugar	0

Source: Rosset and Benjamin 1993:10.

Cuba's Access to Selected Imports in 1989 and 1992

Item	1989	1992	Percentage Decrease
Animal feeds	1,600,000 MT	475,000 MT	70
Fertilizer	1,300,000 MT	300,000 MT	77
Petroleum	13,000,000 MT	6,100,000 MT	53
Pesticides	US\$80,000,000	>US\$30,000,000	63

Source: Rosset and Benjamin 1993:17.

from World Resources 2000-2001--People and Ecosystems: The fraying web of life. http://www.wri.org/wr2000/pdf_final/wr2000.zip

Food imports (which had once accounted for 60% of the food consumed in Cuba) were also halved.¹⁹ And by 1994, agricultural production had dropped to 55% of the 1990 level.²⁰ Per capita daily caloric intake dropped from 2,908 calories in 1989 to 1,863

calories in 1995, a decrease of 36%. Protein intake decreased by 40%,²¹ and dietary fats dropped 65%.²² There are estimates that the average Cuban lost 20 pounds by 1994.²³ Undernourishment jumped from less than 5% to over 20%, the largest increase in undernourished people in all of Latin America during the 1990s.²⁴

Two government policies are credited with preventing the crisis from reaching emergency levels: food programs targeting particularly vulnerable populations (the elderly, children, and pregnant and lactating mothers), and the food distribution ration card which guaranteed a minimum food provision for every citizen (albeit greatly reduced from former levels). This government-maintained safety net kept the crisis from reaching depths comparable to North Korea, while giving the country breathing space to redesign its agricultural sector to meet the challenge.

The agrarian reforms of the mid-1990s were the key to recovering from the food crisis, but they could not have worked without the earlier agrarian reforms and without an educated and modernized peasantry unique in Latin America. The Cuban miracle is the product of a people with vision and solidarity.

The Cuban Miracle

The Cuban economy had to recover from the loss of its closest trading partner, the Soviet Union.

Cuban GNP has grown every year since 1995. There have been solid gains in employment, productivity and exports. Fruit

production has returned to its 1989 level (and even surpassed it in the case of plantains). Vegetables and tubers for domestic consumption have seen a prodigious increase in production. Food intake has climbed to 2,473 calories and 51.6 grams per person, a 33% increase over caloric intake in 1994.²⁵ Observers the world over have pronounced the Cuban efforts a success. Single handedly, without help from either the World Bank or the IMF (and in total contrast to the normal World Bank and IMF reform policy), Cuba has disproved the myth that organic

agriculture cannot support a modern nation. Agrarian reform in the 1990s centered on a new system of sustainable agriculture, the development of healthy markets, and the privatization and cooperatization of the unwieldy state farms.

For decades, scientists had been aware of the negative effects of industrialized agriculture. Soil erosion and mineral depletion had been a marked problem in Cuba. Before the crisis of the 1990s took place, scientists had already developed organic and ecological methods of farming. Following the crisis, the Cuban government embraced these new methods and promoted them with new agrarian policies.

The task was to convert the nation's agriculture from high input, fossil fuel-dependent farming, to low input, self-reliant farming. Farmers did this by first remembering the techniques that their ancestors had used before the advent of industrial agriculture--techniques like intercropping and manuring. Secondly, farmers used new environmental technologies offered as the result of scientific development--technologies such as biopesticides and biofertilizers. Biopesticides developed the use of microbes and natural enemies to combat pests, along with resistant plant varieties, crop rotation, and cover cropping to suppress weeds. Biofertilizers were developed using earthworms, compost, natural rock phosphate, animal manure and green manures, and the integration of grazing animals. To replace tractors, there was a return to animal traction.²⁶

Basic Units of Cooperative Production (UBPCs)

The large state farms were incompatible with this new paradigm. Agroecological farming simply does not work on a large farm. In industrial farming, a single technician can manage thousands of acres without intimate knowledge of the land he is overseeing. A few random observations will provide him with all the input he needs to write out instructions for the application of a particular fertilizer formula or pesticide to be applied with machinery over the entire area. However, in agroecological farming, the farmer must be intimately familiar with every patch of soil. The farmer must know where to add fertilizer, and where pests are harboring or entering the field. Smaller farms were easier to manage, and more compatible with sustainable agriculture.

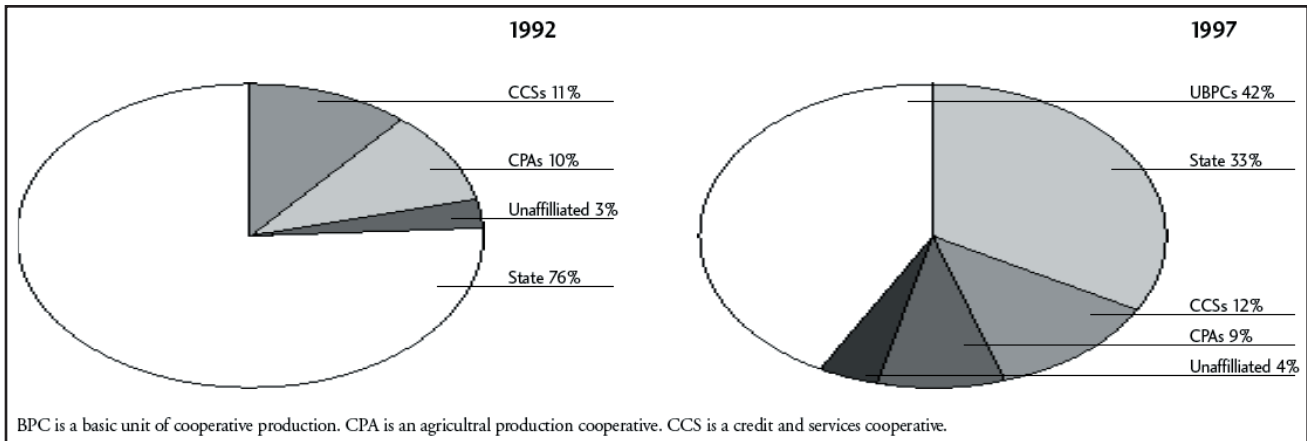
In September 1993, the government instituted a new

program to restructure state farms as private cooperatives owned and managed by the workers. These new cooperatives were called Basic Units of Cooperative Production (UBPCs). The new program transferred 41.2% of the arable land--most of the state farms in the country--into 2,007 new cooperatives with a membership totaling 122,000 people.²⁷ To link the workers to the land, the cooperative owned the production and a member's earnings were based on his or her share of the cooperative's income. Members are compensated based on their productivity, not their timesheet. This provides a greater incentive within the cooperative, yet allows the larger economies of scale, mechanization and collectivist spirit which the cooperatives offer.²⁸

farms. And this achievement has come despite limited credit. As a result, the ANAP began a program in 1998 to strengthen the business side of the CCSs. CCS cooperatives are now allowed to open bank accounts, hire market representatives, and plan collectively. Once qualified as strengthened, a CCS gains the ownership of machinery and the ability to collectively market the goods of its members.³¹

Urban Agriculture

Another bright spot in the reforms is urban agriculture, though this originated as a spontaneous development that



Landholding in Rural Cuba in 1992 and 1997 from *Cuba, Going Against the Grain: Agricultural Crisis and Transformation*; Chapter 3, Reforming Cuban Agriculture. <http://www.oxfamamerica.org/pdfs/cuba/reformingag.pdf>

Although the government retains ownership of the land, the UBPCs are granted a free lease to the land. The government then contracts with the UBPCs on which crops to grow and the amounts. On the basis of these contracts, the government sells the necessary agricultural inputs to the UBPCs.

The new system has not been enacted without problems. Most notably, there is friction between the UBPCs and the local officials of the Ministry of Agriculture, who still behave as though they are in control of the cooperatives. However, the trend is clearly heading toward greater autonomy for the cooperatives.

Private Farming

The holdings of private farmers have also grown in the last decade. Since 1989, the government has turned over nearly 170,000 hectares of land to private farmers.²⁹ Although the government retains title to the land, private farmers and CPAs can farm the land rent-free for an indefinite period of time. Many Cubans now view farming as an opportunity. Many families have left the cities to become farmers. The ANAP claims that its membership expanded by 35,000 from 1997 to 2000.³⁰ The new farmers tend to be young families (many of them college educated), early retirees, or workers with a farming background.

The CCSs, made up of small, independent farmers, have outperformed the CPAs, the UBPC cooperatives and the state

was later backed by official policy. Today, half of the produce consumed in Havana is grown in urban gardens. And urban gardens produce 60% of the vegetables consumed in all of Cuba. Urban gardens provide 215 grams of vegetables per day per person for the entire population.³²

Neighborhood gardens and community horticultural groups not only produce food for their members, they donate produce to schools, clinics and senior centers, and still have enough excess produce to sell in the neighborhood. Neighborhood markets sell produce at well below the cost of the larger community markets, providing fresh vegetables for those who cannot afford the higher prices. By the beginning of the year 2000, there were 505 vegetable stands functioning, with prices from 30% to 50% of the prices at farmers' markets.

Recognizing the potential of urban agriculture, in 1994 the government created an urban department in the ministry of Agriculture. The Urban Agriculture department formalized growers' claims upon vacant lots and legalized the growers' rights to sell their produce. The department has acted to support and promote urban agriculture without attempting to impose its authority upon the movement. Laws require that urban produce be completely organic, and ban the raising of livestock in urban areas. Resolution 527/97 provides all residents with up to one-third of an acre of vacant land on the edge of the major cities. By the beginning of the year 2000, more than 190,000 people had applied for and received these personal lots.³³ The government has also opened a number of neighborhood agricultural stores to supply organic inputs and extension services.

Gardeners are empowered by their efforts while working to provide food for themselves and their neighbors. As one

urban gardener said, "We don't have to wait for a paternalistic state to do things for us. We can do it for ourselves."³⁴

There are many diverse forms of gardening, referred to collectively as urban gardening. The most common are organóponicos, which farm raised beds of organic material, utilizing biological pest control and organic fertilizer. Some organóponicos even have micro-jet irrigation and mesh shading. Organóponicos are highly productive, yielding anywhere from 6 to 30 kilograms of produce per square meter.³⁵

Agricultural Markets

In the month of October, 1994, the Cuban government opened 121 agricultural markets throughout the country.³⁶ An immediate consequence was that the black market in basic food items virtually disappeared. Food prices in the open market were a good deal less than the black market. The free markets also quickly demonstrated that they led to increased production and spurred higher quality and greater diversity in produce.

However, over time, supply and demand pricing did result in rising food prices. By the year 2000, food purchases could take up as much as 60% of the average Cuban salary. The poor and the elderly turned to urban vegetable stands offering produce from urban gardens.

Studies have shown that the major culprits in rising market prices were the distributors. The lack of fuel in Cuba has resulted in severe transportation shortages. The few people who did own trucks colluded to pay little to the farmers, and then charge high prices to the vendors. Some distributors have gained profits of as much as 75%.³⁷

To combat this problem, the Ministry of Agriculture is giving used trucks to private cooperatives to allow them to bypass the distributors and ship their goods directly to market. The remaining state farms are also selling their produce at low prices in state agricultural markets, in an effort to drive down prices. The experiment in free agricultural markets has shown that there must be some government controls on price gouging and collusion.

Results

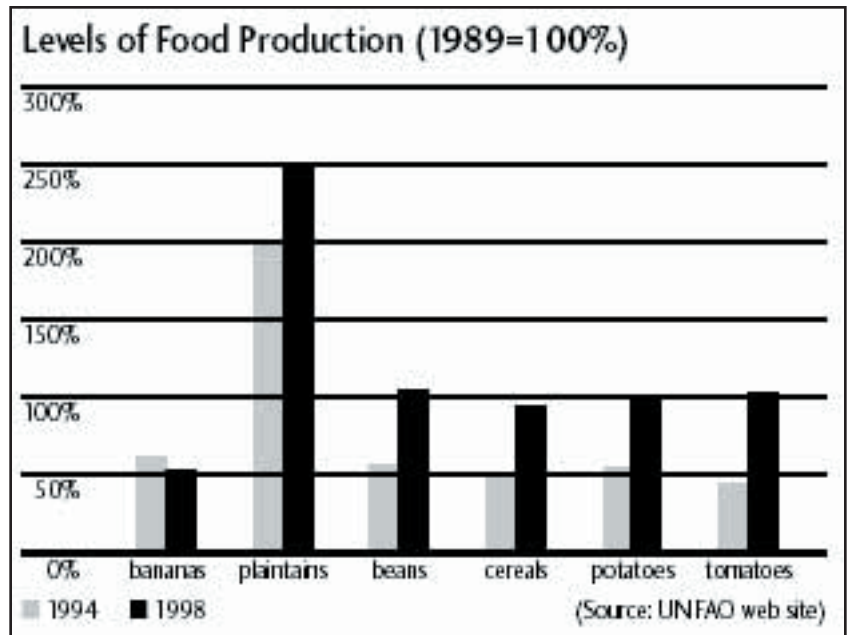
Though caloric intake has not yet reached the levels of the 1980s, few would dispute that domestic food production in Cuba has made a remarkable recovery. During the 1996-1997 growing season, Cuba attained its highest ever production level for ten of the thirteen basic items in the Cuban diet.³⁸ And in 1999, agriculture production increased by 21% over the previous year.³⁹

- Production of tubers and plantains more than tripled from 1994 to 1999.
- Vegetable production doubled from 1994 to 1998, and then doubled again in 1999.
- Potato production increased 175% from 1994 to

1998.

- Cereal production rose 183% from 1994 to 1998.
- Bean yields increased 60% from 1994 to 1999.
- Citrus production increased 110% from 1994 to 1999.⁴⁰

Comparing food production to 1989 levels is not quite so favorable, but still impressive.



from Cuba, *Going Against the Grain: Agricultural Crisis and Transformation*, <http://www.oxfamamerica.org/pdfs/cuba/newmodel.pdf>

Animal protein production still remains close to depressed 1994 levels. This is partially because the market reforms do not apply to meat, eggs and milk, which are not easily sold in farmers' markets. Likewise, the agroecological model is not so easily applied to animal production. But the biggest factor keeping animal protein production down is the fact that the transition from industrial animal breeding to sustainable, ecologically feasible animal breeding must proceed at a much slower pace than the similar transition in agriculture.

Exports are still considerably lower than 1989 levels. Only citrus exports have reached the 1989 level. Coffee and tobacco exports still lag behind, and sugar exports are only a fraction of 1989 levels.⁴¹ In the case of sugar production, U.S. embargoes and the low price of sugar on the world market are acting to keep sugar production depressed. But the Cuban government is formulating plans to increase sugar exports in the effort of bringing in much needed foreign revenue and investment.

Aside from restoring export levels and animal protein production, the future of the new Cuban agricultural model faces three challenges: reconciling price distortions between the U.S. dollar and the Cuban peso, reconciling state control

and private initiatives, and overcoming limits to the ecological model. Concerning this latter challenge, agroecological farming requires more land and more labor than industrial farming. While Cuba does have the land base to continue agricultural expansion, rural areas have experienced a labor shortage. Only 15% of the Cuban population lives in the countryside.⁴² The agricultural sector has been able to reverse the rural-to-urban migration and attract the necessary workforce, but nobody is certain how long this reversal will continue. And then there is the uncertain balance between farm labor requirements, the higher caloric intake necessary for busy farmhands, and agricultural production.

The new Cuban model of agriculture faces many challenges, both internally and externally, but that does not diminish its current success. And there are many analysts who feel that the Cuban experiment may hold many of the keys to the future survival of civilization.

Conclusion

The World Bank has reported that Cuba is leading nearly every other developing nation in human development performance. Because Cuba's agricultural model goes against the grain of orthodox economic thought, the World Bank has called Cuba the "anti-model." Senior World Bank officials have even suggested that other developing countries should take a closer look at Cuba.⁴³ This despite that fact that the Cuban model flies in the face of the neoliberal reforms prescribed by both the World Bank and the IMF.

Indeed, currently the fastest growing Cuban export is that of ideas. Cuba now hosts a number of visiting farmers and agricultural technicians from throughout the Americas (excluding the U.S.), and elsewhere. Cuban agriculture experts are currently teaching agroecological farming methods to Haitian farmers. Ecologists as well as agricultural specialists are finding great promise in the idea that biodiversity is not just a conservation strategy, but production strategy.

As declining fossil fuel production impacts civilization, Cuba may find itself in a position to help lead the world into sustainable agriculture. Currently, few countries are willing to invest in human capital and infrastructure the way that Cuba has, but hopefully this will change in the years ahead.

Resistance to Cuban-style agricultural reform would be particularly stiff in the United States. Agribusiness will not allow all of its holdings and power to be expropriated. Nor is the U.S. government interested in small farms and organic agriculture. The direction of U.S. agriculture is currently towards more advanced technology, greater fossil fuel dependency, and less sustainability. The ability of small farmers and urban gardens to turn a profit is effectively drowned out by the overproduction of agribusiness.

However, now is the time for people to study agroecology (and permaculture as well), with an eye towards implementing this technology, once declining fossil fuel production sparks a crisis in industrial agriculture. Our survival will depend upon our ability to implement these ideas once the current technology has failed. The North Korean example shows that the alternative is unthinkable.

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FITTS FIGHTS BACK

by Michael C. Ruppert

November 6, 2003, 1100 PDT, (FTW) --For more than seven years former Assistant Secretary of Housing Catherine Austin Fitts has fought a defensive battle against orchestrated attempts to silence her, and keep her revelations of fraud and how money works in the federal government a secret from the American public. She has beaten every attempt to destroy her reputation and she has, in that fight, established conclusively that a "qui tam" whistleblower lawsuit filed against her company, along with government seizures of property, records, money and equity were complete fabrications woven from a whole cloth of no substance other than a desire to conceal crimes. No one, not even her closest friends, believed that Fitts would survive the ordeal and fight the government to a standstill. Yet she did. Fitts and her firm, The Hamilton Securities Group, had almost become an object lesson for the axiom that "no good deed goes unpunished".

A qui tam is a lawsuit that citizens, also referred to as "relators" or "whistleblowers," bring on behalf of the federal government against companies or persons whom they allege use government funds fraudulently. Such lawsuits are authorized by the Federal False Claims Acts. Those who file qui tams are allowed to receive a percentage of the money that the government makes on the lawsuit.

Fitts is now preparing to take the field as an attacker rather than a defender, and the private company that started the whole mess in 1996, Ervin & Associates, has reason to be concerned. Fitts and her lawyers have been able to document repeated wrongdoing by the government that Fitts argues was carried out in collaboration with Ervin. This includes efforts to falsify evidence against Hamilton after investigators seized Hamilton's offices and destroyed software tools and databases allowing communities -- through the Internet -- to conform to HUD and government data on mortgage and mortgage-backed securities with street level data in their community. <http://www.metroactive.com/papers/sonoma/09.05.02/fitts-0236.html>

FTW readers have long been familiar with Fitts who served as Assistant Secretary of Housing in the Bush I administration and previously as a Managing Director of the Wall Street investment bank Dillon Read. She is, in our

opinion, an economic Michelangelo whose gift is demystifying the way money works, and allowing ordinary people to see just how corrupt the financial system is. In fact, aside from uncovering massive financial fraud when Hamilton served as a HUD consultant in the mid-nineties, perhaps Fitts' greatest offense was to develop software tools using single black mothers -- judged unemployable and untrainable by Washington and New York elites -- to bring transparency to the ways that government credit programs worked in local communities.

All government-initiated investigations and actions against Fitts and Hamilton, including criminal investigations by HUD and the Department of Justice, have been dropped resulting in complete exoneration. No criminal or civil charges were ever filed. HUD's decision to end its continuing investigation of Hamilton occurred in 2001 after the unexpected resignation of the HUD Inspector General, Susan Gaffney, following an expose of the targeting of Fitts by Paul Rodriguez of *Insight Magazine*.

<http://insightmag.com/main.cfm/include/detail/storyid/210955.html>

<http://www.freerepublic.com/forum/a3b4618db37fe.htm>

On October 29, a suit brought by Fitts against Ervin, a HUD contractor that filed the initial civil suit, begins trial in US district court in Washington, DC. In a move considered advantageous to Fitts and her legal team, the original whistleblower suit (which has already been discredited) has been combined into one case with her suit. Early next year, in the US Court of Claims in Washington, a separate legal action filed by Fitts will begin, to secure the return of \$2.5 million in cash, proprietary software and property, and the restoration of as much as \$200 million in equity and lost work. Then-HUD Secretary Andrew Cuomo cancelled all HUD contracts with Hamilton following Ervin's unfounded allegations.

Fitts has compiled evidence, and intends to demonstrate in court, that Ervin -- a longtime player in unprofitable (for the taxpayers) servicing of defaulted mortgages -- has engaged in an unfounded legal persecution of Fitts. While the HUD mortgage sales conducted by Hamilton were widely considered an award-winning example of government

reengineering, those who had previously made money on the transfer and servicing of mortgages and properties at below market prices were upset with the more transparent and competitive way of doing business. It seems that Hamilton's work uncovered some huge slush-fund operations.

Hamilton (http://www.solari.com/about/ca_fitts.html) was widely credited for saving \$2.2 billion for the FHA Fund at HUD. Hamilton was also praised for helping HUD generate savings by raising recovery rates on HUD-defaulted mortgages from 35% to 70-90% through innovative and highly successful sales of HUD mortgages. Hamilton had been chosen by competitive contract under Secretary Henry Cisneros during the Clinton Administration.

Instead of being rewarding, Fitts' work and commitment to transparency made her the target of one of the most insidious and unfounded legal persecutions ever known. She has also endured physical harassment, endless audits, surveillance and intimidation of her staff, and was nearly forced into bankruptcy.

The original presiding judge on Ervin's qui tam suit during the period when a 60 day investigation period was extended under seal for four years, despite no evidence of any wrongdoing, was Judge Stanley Sporkin, former head of the SEC enforcement division and general counsel of the CIA under William Casey in the Reagan Administration. This allowed the government to keep Fitts records and data under absolute control. <http://www.solari.com/media/SporkinBio.html>

The compelling history of Fitts' work is located at: <http://www.scoop.co.nz/mason/stories/HL0207/S00101.htm>

Even after complete exoneration Hamilton still has not been paid the monies it is owed, Fitts has sold most of her personal property and still she continues to fight.

Ervin & Associates

Ervin fought hard to keep its unfounded accusations alive after each new exoneration of Fitts and Hamilton, spinning one allegation after another, evolving and adopting numerous conspiracy theories. Still it was unable to produce any evidence of, or witnesses to, any wrongdoing even as the federal government spent hundreds of thousands of dollars to investigate anything Ervin could think of to allege. Ervin also paid substantial legal bills to keep its prosecution alive with ever-diminishing chances of success.

The source of Ervin's financing for such significant litigation and lobbying effort remains a mystery. In 1998, Secretary Cuomo awarded two Ginnie Mae contracts to Ervin & Associates that, according to HUD generated \$825,000 revenues. Secretary Cuomo also approved a \$2MM settlement with Ervin in 2000 on parallel litigation despite Ervin's failure to produce any evidence of wrongdoing. It appears that these contracts and awards effectively subsidized Ervin's futile efforts to make something stick against Hamilton.

Recent Developments – Follow The Lawyers!

Recent decisions in pre-trial motions denied Ervin's efforts to bring the qui tam against Catherine Austin Fitts personally, and to claim a portion of the monies owed to Hamilton by

the government. Ervin's qui tam attorney since 2000, Mark Polston, is a former member of the Department of Justice where he worked on qui tam suits. Polston recently withdrew from the case to accept a job in the enforcement area in the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS). He has been replaced by Joseph Hornyak of Sonnenschein, Nath & Rosenthal's Washington Office. <http://www.sonnenschein.com/website/attorney.nsf/AllByDocID/D850BBBA9686BA808625680F005279B9>

Sonnenschein's website markets significant qui tam experience, including one Washington partner who is a former attorney with the Department of Justice specializing in health care fraud claiming 10% of the recoveries for his cases of the "\$6 billion in recoveries collected by the Department of Justice under the qui tam provisions of the False Claims Act in the seventeen years since the 1986 amendments to the statute."

Ervin & Associates was initially represented by Dan Hawke and Wayne Travell of Tucker, Flyer and Lewis. Mr. Hawke is the son of Jerry Hawke, then the Undersecretary of Domestic Finance at the US Treasury, the official responsible for the integrity of the federal credit and accounts. The FHA and Ginnie Mae mortgage finance programs at HUD represent approximately 30% of federal credit programs. Jerry Hawke currently serves as Comptroller of the Currency at the US Treasury where he recently promulgated regulations that would allow national banks to override efforts by state regulators to stop predatory lending practices.

<http://www.ffiec.gov/exam/hawke.htm>

<http://www.commondreams.org/views03/1011-07.htm>

Dan Hawke resigned from the case in 1999 to join SEC enforcement and Travell moved to Venable http://www.venable.com/attorney.cfm?attorney_id=363, where he continued to represent Ervin & Associates until the qui tam was dropped. Ervin & Associates then filed it independently, represented by Neil Gettnick of Gettnick & Gettnick in NY. Gettnick then withdrew and was replaced by Mr. Polston. It seems even some lawyers don't want to be involved with a questionable case.

Ervin & Associates and John Ervin are currently represented by Aaron Handelman and Micheal Freije of Eccleston & Wolf. <http://www.ecclestonwolf.com/>

Hamilton Securities is represented by Michael McManus and Ken Ryan of Drinker Biddle & Reath and Claude Goddard of Wickwire Gavin.

Litigation Documentation: <http://www.solari.com/gideon>



MYSTERY SURROUNDS DEATH OF STATE DEPT. OFFICIAL

by Wayne Madsen
(special to *From The Wilderness*)

November 20, 2003 (FTW), WASHINGTON -- In a case eerily reminiscent of the death of British Ministry of Defense bio-weapons expert, Dr. David Kelly, an official of the State Department's Bureau of Intelligence and Research Near East and South Asian division (INR/NESA), John J. Kokal, 58, was found dead in the late afternoon of November 7. Police indicated he may have jumped from the roof of the State Department. Kokal's body was found at the bottom of a 20 foot window well, 8 floors below the roof of the State Department headquarters near the 23rd and D Street location. Kokal's death was briefly mentioned in a *FOX News* website story on November 8 but has been virtually overlooked by the major media.

Interestingly, the *FOX* report states that State Department officials confirmed Kokal's death to *The Washington Post* yet the *Post* - according to an archive search - has published nothing at all about Kokal's death. A subsequent search revealed that the *Post* had made a short three-paragraph entry the death in the Metro section on November 7, 2003. However, the *Post* entry stated that Kokal did not work in intelligence and the story does not show up in the archives.

Kokal's INR bureau was at the forefront of confronting claims that Iraq possessed weapons of mass destruction. Washington police have not ruled out homicide as the cause of his death. Kokal was not wearing either a jacket or shoes when his body was found. He lived in Arlington, Virginia.

However, a colleague of Kokal's told this writer that the Iraq analyst was despondent over "problems" with his security clearance. Kokal reportedly climbed out of a window and threw himself out in such a manner so that he would "land on his head." At the time Kokal fell from either the roof or a window, his wife Pamela, a public affairs specialist in the Bureau of Western Hemisphere Affairs, was waiting for him in the parking garage. Mrs. Kokal had previously worked in Consular Affairs where she was involved in the stricter vetting of visa applicants from mainly Muslim countries after the Sept. 11 attacks.

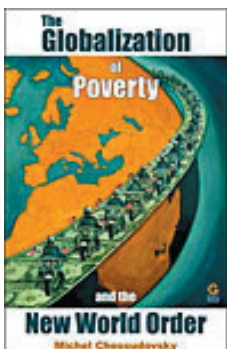
State Department officials dispute official State Department communiqués that said Kokal was not an analyst at INR. People who know Kokal told the French publication *Geopolitique* that Kokal was involved in the analysis of intelligence about Iraq prior to and during the war against Saddam Hussein.

Another INR official, weapons expert Greg Thielmann, said he and INR were largely ignored by Under Secretary for Arms Control and International Security John Bolton and his deputy, David Wurmser, a pro-Likud neo-conservative who recently became Vice President Dick Cheney's Middle East adviser. Kokal's former boss, the recently retired chief of INR, Carl W. Ford, recently said that Bolton often exaggerated information to steer people in the wrong directions.

A former INR employee revealed that some one-third to one-half of INR officials are either former intelligence agents with the CIA or are detailed from the agency. He also revealed it would have been impossible for Kokal to have gained entry to the roof on his own. INR occupies both a Sensitive Compartmented Information Facility (SCIF) on the sixth floor that has no windows and a windowless structure on the roof that has neither windows nor access to the roof, according to the former official. The other windows at the State Department have been engineered to be shatter proof from terrorist bomb attacks and cannot be opened.

INR and other State Department officials report that a "chill" has set in at the State Department following Kokal's defenestration. A number of employees are afraid to talk about the suspicious death. It also unusual that *The Northern Virginia Journal*, a local Arlington newspaper, has not published an obituary notice on Kokal.

(Wayne Madsen, a frequent *FTW* contributor, is a former US Naval officer and intelligence analyst who is currently an author, freelance writer and commentator in Washington, D.C.)



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(continued from page 1, The Kennedys)

gridlock. Only by taking the actual text of the Warren Commission report, the photographs and medical records that have been released over the decades, and then comparing them, can a lone, crazed citizen arrive at any conclusions. Then, faced with 10,000 entries and the conventional wisdom created by a media machine that trades its stock on Wall Street, is dependent upon war profits (not to mention the laundering of \$600 billion a year in drug money) and which cooks its books, the citizen must choose a painful road less traveled, or the path of political and social correctness.

There's a big difference between JFK's front-to-back motion and the magic bullet. One cannot be nullified by a multitude of experts, and one has been. One was ignored (as far as I could tell) on the fortieth anniversary of JFK's assassination, and one was addressed ad nauseum and in often conflicting ways. The key is the experts and the amount of money, time and resources that can and will be brought to bear to gridlock the issue in the mind of the public.

Now go to *Google* and enter "World Trade Center Collapse". One finds 497,000 entries to read. Granted, not all of these discuss how the towers came down, but most of them do. No, I did not read each one of them. It took 40 years for the world to produce 10,000 entries on the magic bullet and just two years to produce 497,000 on the World Trade Center. If one enters "WTC Tower Collapse" -- a bit more specific -- one finds 22,900 entries in just two years; more than twice as many as for the magic bullet in one-twentieth the time. Almost all of these described *Google* entries are private web sites and not those of the major media.

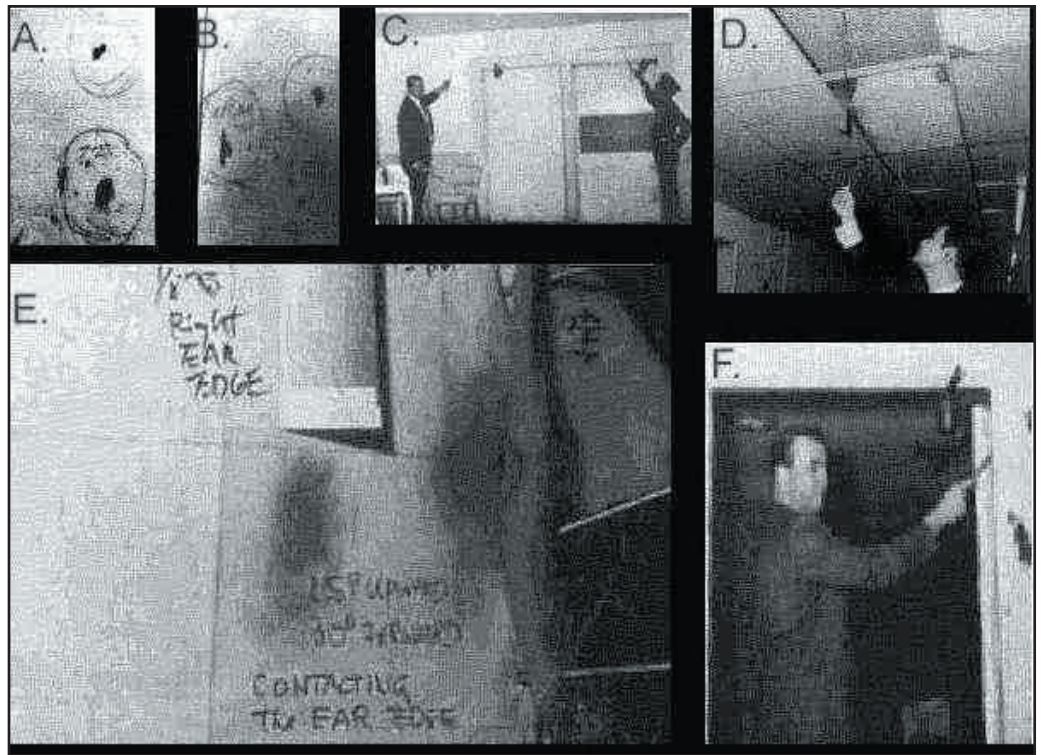
As I have always said it would be, achieving definitive results to prove by using scientific research material that the WTC was brought down by something other than the air crashes, is a journalistic suicide mission if one measures success only as change accomplished in the political landscape.

The historical corollary to JFK's front-to-back motion is the collapse of WTC Building 7, which was not struck by an aircraft at all, and yet it collapsed faster than gravity would permit-- and perfectly within its own footprint. Inside that building were choice bits of history and evidence. Its tenants included the Internal Revenue Service, the Secret Service, the Securities and Exchange Commission, the Mayor's office of Emergency Management and the CIA's New York Station. (Source: <http://www.serendipity.li/wot/7wtc.html>) Nothing makes sense to explain the collapse of this building except controlled demolition. Yet go to *Google* again and enter WTC 7 and one finds more than 1,800 entries. In my opinion watching one film of the WTC 7 collapse says as much as JFK's front-to-back

movement. Please see <http://www.wtc7.net/videos.html>. It is inconceivable that this building was brought down by planes that hit buildings approximately a hundred yards away.

But are there common citizens who believe it?

I have painful and personal connections to the June 1968 assassination of John Kennedy's brother Robert. I have recorded those connections for all to see at <http://www.fromthewilderness.com/free/pandora/rfk.html>. Having known several of the great RFK researchers like Jonn Christian, Bill Turner, Jim Di Eugenio and Lisa Pease, as well as the brother of RFK's alleged assassin Sirhan Sirhan, and Sirhan's lawyer, Robert Teeter, I still shudder inside when I think of the fact that it was absolutely proved that more than one gun was fired on the evening of June 5, 1968. The proof of that is as irrefutable as JFK's front-to-back motion. It consisted of photographs and sworn statements by eyewitnesses, LAPD and FBI personnel that there were bullet holes all over the place, many more than could be explained by Sirhan's eight-shot .22 revolver. Wounds in the various victims accounted for at least six shots alone



(source - <http://www.impiousdigest.com/lbj/coup.htm>)

What happened when the LAPD - the primary investigative agency in the assassination -- couldn't make the number of bullet holes and wounds match Sirhan's gun? They simply destroyed the evidence by removing and incinerating all the wood framing and tiles. (Special thanks to Christian, Turner and *Probe Magazine* for decades of diligent - if fruitless - work, as measured in terms of changing the political system.)

9/11 physical evidence advocates will scream, "Hey, that's what they did with the debris from the World Trade Center! They took away all the evidence and destroyed it."

That's right. That's exactly what they did.

And in Bobby's case, an experienced and incorruptible

scientist, then-L.A. County Coroner Thomas Noguchi steadfastly stood by his analysis of powder burns on RFK's head, which showed that the fatal wound was fired from "more than one and no more than three inches behind Bobby's right ear." Interesting, in light of the fact that none of the witnesses in the pantry that night placed Sirhan any closer than three feet directly in front of the man who had just secured his party's presidential nomination by winning the California primary.

So, with all of this brilliant and unassailable physical evidence; evidence that any person on the street can look at and say, "That's just amazing. The official version can't be true," which of these conspiracies has been exposed, and how has the machinery of the US government changed, as a result of all the work done?

In 1993 and 1994, I had my last foray into the activist world where I sought to oppose government corruption by using physical evidence. I became involved with a group of families (eventually reaching 109) of members of the US military who had committed "suicide" or died under mysterious circumstances. They came to call themselves "Until We Have Answers". Some victims had been shot in the back. Some shot with two different weapons. Some had allegedly committed suicide by hanging themselves with chords from pay telephones. Some were beaten. Others had been killed by bullets that could not possibly have been fired from guns they were holding. The medical reports from the Pentagon were beneath the level of a third grader trying to explain what had happened to his homework. The families were crestfallen, horribly offended, and full of rage.

I sponsored an Indiana conference for some of those families. Notes were compared, strategies reviewed. New approaches were made to Congress. In the end, more than fifty members of the House and Senate signed a resolution tied to the appropriations bill calling for the Pentagon to reopen the cases. What happened? During summer recess, the DoD did reopen the cases and, in a matter of weeks, closed them all again with the exact same findings. When a new Congress arrived on Capitol Hill to read the "new" investigations, the deaths were "old business". All told, some of the families had spent as many as ten years and hundreds of thousands of dollars to achieve zero results. I still weep when I think of the hope I brought to some of those families that the undeniable physical evidence would secure them justice.

I could cite a half dozen more cases where the physical evidence was overwhelming---and achieved nothing. But if the point is not made now it will never be made.

MAKING AMENDS - OFFERING AN APOLOGY

More than thirty-five times now, and in nine countries, I have lectured on 9/11. The average attendance at the lectures has been between 400 and 500 people. In an estimated sixty-five per cent of those lectures, in question and answer sessions lasting sometimes up to three hours I have been asked why I don't pursue the physical evidence inconsistencies of 9/11. At least 9,100 people have heard me say something like:

"I don't for a minute believe that an airliner hit the Pentagon. And no one has ever seen a video of an airliner

hitting the Pentagon because there isn't one. It doesn't look like the WTC towers collapsed because of the impacts and the way that they collapsed doesn't make sense. But if I, with some measure of journalistic credibility, and my readers on Capitol Hill and in universities start writing stories about these things, I wind up in either a journalistic suicide mission, or in the improbable place of having to explain where the airliner that didn't hit the Pentagon went or how the towers were brought down. There is a mountain of physical evidence that blows the government story in my mind, but my experience says that it will never penetrate the consciousness of the American people in a way that will bring about change. What will penetrate, from my experience, is taking non-scientific reports that most people instantly accept as credible, whether news reports or government statements or documents, and merely showing that they are lies. That opens the wedge, and removes any reliance upon expert or scientific testimony which is typically used to confuse simple facts. From there, you can begin to show people all the other documentary evidence of foreknowledge, planning and participation."

On September 13, 2001, I hurriedly published a 241-word story on the *FTW* web site wherein I reached the early conclusion that explosives had not been placed in the World Trade Center. At the time, I based my conclusion upon several things. They included a detailed *BBC* report citing scientific sources and architectural experts saying that jet fuel running down the elevator shafts had been sufficient to cause the collapse; a detailed statement by New York architect John Young (still on the web) supporting these conclusions, and statements from my ex-wife Mary, an eyewitness who had seen the carnage from her Battery Park apartment nearby. Neither she, nor anyone she knew had heard any secondary explosions that might have indicated demolition charges inside the building.

As the world was turning inside out, we all scrambled for reliable information in a place where nothing was to be trusted. It was like trying to stand still in an earthquake. The *BBC*, because it was not American and held prestige, seemed like something that could be trusted - a straw in a windstorm. Whether accurate or not, I recognized that - much like the newspaper accounts appearing in Australia and New Zealand within hours of the Kennedy assassination that impossibly included Oswald's picture with statements that he was the assassin - for most of the world this avenue had already been closed off.

I wish I would have said that then.

That story is at: http://www.fromthewilderness.com/free/ww3/09_13_01_No_Explosives.html

As I published the brief bulletin, the entire weight of all of my experience with physical evidence was clearly in mind. I then promised my readers that I would follow up with more reports on the collapse. I never did, and I apologize. It has obviously created some confusion about what I really believe.

Some advocates who want to push the physical evidence arguments have construed my failure to make additional reports as evidence of the fact that I am somehow a co-conspirator with the government in the 9/11 attacks and their cover-up. This is merely misplaced rage at something that

is visible and accessible -- me. Some, quite correctly, have produced voluminous research showing that the melting point of steel - as originally reported by the *BBC* on September 12th, changed over the course of the next several days. It officially rose from 800 degrees centigrade to almost 2000 degrees centigrade and explanations about jet fuel being the cause of the collapse became harder to accept. I never read these stories, and was unaware of them until last week. I had already chosen my course of action and was devoting all my energies to that research.

I concede now that the melting point of steel is not 800 degrees centigrade, as the *BBC* told us. It is much higher. And it is indeed questionable whether the fuel from flights 11 and 175 could have caused the collapse. This has never been a point of contention with me, although I can see how some might have thought it was.

Even within those first few days I, and many other researchers who have tried to make a difference since, abandoned the physical evidence approach because collectively, we knew that it would be a much harder uphill struggle than the one we chose to pursue. In an avalanche of data, we all were picking and choosing what to focus on, knowing that it was impossible to focus on everything. Experience does teach those who have it.

For the record - and I am certain that this will trigger a whole new round of media attacks against me for being a "conspiracy theorist" - I don't buy any part of the government's story. I speak here now as Michael Ruppert, the human being, rather than as the publisher and editor of an international newsletter with readers in congress and universities.

What I believe is that on September 11th, many of the alleged hijackers were likely not even aboard the planes, and that it is possible that they were flown via (existing and well-documented) remote control technology. I believe that none of the alleged hijackers had acquired the proficiency required to perform the complicated maneuvers used. I do not accept the government's version of the collapses of the towers and WTC 7, and I believe that those collapses were caused by artificial means other than the aircraft collisions. The fact that there are credible mainstream reports showing that many of the 19 hijackers are still alive leads me to question the government's account further. But with the hijackers, one confronts what is called in the intelligence trade a "legend" of immense complexity that has not been definitively unraveled. I do believe that some of the 19 hijackers were aboard the four flights as tokens, and I am absolutely convinced that Flight 93 was shot down as some attacks were allowed to take place successfully, and others were prevented.

An excellent analysis of this legend by Chaim Kupferberg is located at: "Truth, Lies, and The Legend of 9/11", by Chaim Kupferberg. <http://www.globalresearch.ca/articles/KUP310A.html>

This brings me to an artificial "straw" argument that has evolved from the controversy over physical evidence: Let it happen on purpose (LIHOP) vs. Make it happen on purpose (MIHOP). Again, for the record, as I have stated clearly on many occasions, I am absolutely convinced that the US government was a deliberate facilitator of the attacks before they occurred. I believe that the US government and its intelligence agencies

- in cooperation with other intelligence agencies, especially the Israeli Mossad, Pakistan's ISI and Britain's MI6 - actively protected some of the 19 hijackers before the attacks, and made sure that they were free and allowed to circulate unmolested in order to fulfill the requirements of the "legend". One might include Russia's DFS and Germany's BND in this list, but the evidence here is inconclusive.

I believe that in its desperation to secure an attack "on the order of Pearl Harbor" (that would, as Zbigniew Brzezinski wrote in 1997, cause the American people to support "the imperial mobilization necessary" to control 60% of the world's known energy resources), controlling elements of the US government, using highly compartmentalized procedures, saw to it that the attacks were carried out. I believe that those attacks were brought together using elements of plans already in place within Al Qaeda (Project Bojinka), the above named intelligence services, and some cooperation from Saudi "assets" operating outside the Saudi government, and that they were "enhanced" and refined by US intelligence agencies using existing assets and covert manipulation of command and control capabilities to ensure that fighter aircraft were not scrambled in a normal fashion as they had been 67 times in the year before 9/11.

I believe that much of Al Qaeda and many of the so-called hijackers were either witting or completely unwitting US assets who were either ordered, pushed or manipulated into fulfilling their roles on 9/11. I do not believe that it is established that Khalid Sheikh Muhammad was captured, or that he delivered the confessions which have been attributed to him. Multiple credible mainstream press reports indicate that he was either killed or still remains at large. The only thing we have to go on here is the government's questionable word and no appearance of KSM to back it up.

My error, my failing, with regard to my story of September 13, 2001 was that I never went back to it and enhanced, explained or elaborated. I was already too absorbed in the task of exposing government lies via a different strategy in what I viewed - and still do - as a race against time. For this I apologize. My past experience with physical evidence was too painful and there had already emerged a group of wonderful researchers who had begun the fight that really mattered, the one that has made a difference, even if a small one.

What has *FTW's* strategy accomplished? More than I would have thought. By focusing on documentary, non-scientific lies and using as a starting point only official statements of the US government, hard records and reports from the government and established mainstream sources we have seen our arguments (i.e. the arguments of all who decided to follow this strategy) appear as a continuing controversy in major papers all over the world, including right here at home. My strategy put me in media venues as divergent as the opening segment on the Canadian Broadcasting Company's *Fifth Estate* (their equivalent of *60 MINUTES*) and in the pages of the current issue of *HUSTLER* Magazine.

Go to *Google* and search for warnings about 9/11. Of the 179,000 entries the first three are *CNN* and the *Christian Science Monitor*. One also finds entries from *The New York Times*, *The Washington Post*, *Newsweek*, *TIME* and many other publications. That's a big difference from the

magic bullet.

I have always stated that the "independent" 9/11 commission would be a failure, and that it was intended to be a whitewash. But thanks to diligent efforts to slam the documentary (and unscientific) record in their faces by victim families, 9/11 Citizen's Watch and other groups and individuals, that commission has been forced to subpoena the FAA to find out why fighters were not scrambled on 9/11. It has been embarrassed to the point of threatening to subpoena the White House on foreknowledge, and it has now engaged in an inexcusable compromise to protect the incriminating secrets we know are there. We have forced admissions that Bush and his cabinet knew damn well that airplanes could be used as weapons, and we have seen damning revelations about how much the FBI, the CIA and the White House knew before the attacks. We have kept the government lying in ways that are self-evident. As long as we do that, we have a chance to make some real changes.

The 9/11 commission will ultimately seek to conceal the truth, as its Executive Director Philip Zelikow tries to hide his massive conflicts of interest with Condoleezza Rice and the National Security establishment, but it must operate to some degree in public, or else its charade is wasted. And each time it compromises, waffles or lies, there are those like investigative journalist Tom Flocco who are right in its face asking why. So are many of the victim families of 9/11, who apparently have learned something from past experience - especially that of the families of Vietnam-era POWs and MIAs.

We have kept the issue alive in the only place it matters, the public consciousness, and in the media that is used to shape public consciousness. The cards have been stacked against the truth from the beginning. We have taken the lemons handed us and we continue to make a bitter lemonade which we make the government drink each time they tell a new lie or add a new degree of spin to an old one. This is the methodical work of a trained detective, cross-examining a witness, and waiting for each new lie. This is the work of the seasoned journalist who digs and digs and digs to find the facts that some hired scientist can't explain away or dismiss. This is the work of the meticulous academic who seeks to reconcile fact after fact from obscure and hidden records. It is hard, backbreaking work.

I had forgotten that I did once try to influence those advocating the use of physical and scientific evidence to unravel the lies of 9/11. In the fall of 2002 I wrote:

It is the past experience issue that is so diligently ignored by those newly awakened voices of opposition who expend needless energy debating whether explosives were placed in the towers, whether the planes were remote controlled, whether an airliner really hit the Pentagon, or whether maybe Congress will actually do something about any of it. These debates are worse than rearranging the deck chairs on the Titanic. They are expediting the demise of people who could otherwise be constructing life rafts. The proof already exists that the government lied.

It may disappoint many to read now that I still hold that belief. In the same 2003 *CBC* program in which I was featured, the program's producers also interviewed French journalist Thierry Meyssan explaining his views that a Boeing 757 could not have hit the Pentagon. They immediately followed by stating that they had interviewed an "expert" who had satisfied them that a 757 did, in fact, strike the Pentagon. Without even naming the expert, they then dismissed Meyssan as a conspiracy theorist.

What's past is future. *Google* entry number 17,301.

We may not have the luxury of waiting forty years to see if the physical evidence advocates will have made a difference in the way the world works. Hell, we may not even have twenty. They are absolutely free to pursue any course of action they want and to listen - or not - to the people who have walked down that road before and found it unproductive. The fact is that the world is starting to run out of hydrocarbon energy, right now. Wars, famines, economic failure and plagues are upon us today. The children of the Bull Market are dying in Iraq and Afghanistan.

The truth is that the real story - the only story -- is Peak Oil and Gas, and that 9/11 was its first visible manifestation. I fight to expose Peak Oil in part by exposing 9/11 in a way that registers in the public consciousness. That is my obligation to my readers and - as I see it - to my fellow man.

