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sive super power?

When will it ever be safe for us to travel again, and how safe will it be here at home? Living in the South Bay, sandwiched between the airport and the Port of LA, and compounded by the plethora of oil refineries, we are all extremely vulnerable.

I am among the many millions of people around the world who have marched for peace, who have prayed for peace, and who will not give up on peace.

We all know that Saddam Hussein is a terrible tyrant, and the world agrees that it may be necessary to take action against him if the UN concludes that he has refused to disarm. But Bush made up his mind a long time ago and is unwilling to give the inspections a chance to succeed at this objective.

If you are frustrated about what is happening in our name, and want to make a difference, turn off the cheerleaders for war on TV news and come to our next meeting.

Every month new people have joined with us, wanting to do some-

thing positive, unable to sit idly by a moment longer.

Contrary to the Manhattan Beach City Council, who voted 3-2 that the war is not a local issue, I believe that we should think globally and act locally. So start today by making plans to attend our March 25 meeting. We must build on these numbers and be ready for 2004, because regime change begins at home and America and the world will not be safe until W is permanently back on the ranch.

Bobbi Buescher

Heartfelt Thanks

We need to acknowledge a heartfelt debt of gratitude and thanks to Mary Lou Elsner. You may not be aware, but she is one of our local unsung heroines, who quietly & diligently has been a most dedicated Democrat. For many years she was responsible for our mailings, collected our mail, served refreshments at our meeting & was generally our "maitre d' service." We say HATS OFF TO MARY LOU...

Monroe Weinstock

(Monroe, continued from page 3)

through an understated, quiet, reactionary revolution! I do not even need to strongly mention privacy, church-state separation, abortion rights, environment abuse & destruction. The new proposed tax system plan is in effect a vehicle to revise economic policy, shift the tax burden, re-adjust family social welfare & change much else in our free democratic society! We are being sweet talked into giving up rights & privileges that created this free society we now enjoy. For a while, we were improving, but now the light at the end of the tunnel is getting dim. It may not be too long before we cannot even find the tunnel!!!

There is a Haiku that goes like this...
Insiders get rich; Other investors didn't; So what else is new?

To add insult to injury & irreparable harm, Dubya has said, "We are being challenged. We're meeting those challenges because of our faith." And I say to you, that those whom the Gods would destroy, he first makes mad!!!

Monroe Weinstock

Next Meeting

Tuesday, March 25, 7:30 PM
David K. Hayward Center
2000 Artesia Boulevard, R.B.

"Face-to-Face with the Women of Iraq"

Kelly Hayes-Raitt, a long-time Democratic activist, has just returned from 10 days in Iraq where she met with women who lived through the 1991 Gulf War.

She will speak about her experiences: touring the neighborhood bomb shelter where over 400 children, women and men were incinerated by a U.S. bomb in 1991, visiting with children dying of leukemia because they can't get the medicines they need under the U.N. sanctions, playing with children at an orphanage, and meeting and talking with dozens of people on the streets of Baghdad. She has compelling photos and vivid stories that humanize our opposition to this war.

Festival for the Earth

An Earth Day Festival for the Entire Family

The Earth Institute is holding its annual Earth Day festival. The event will feature environmental exhibits, children's play and art area, exhibits, non-stop live musical entertainment, and more.

Grand Marshal Don Knabe

Chairman Pro-Tem,
Board of Supervisors
Supervisor, Fourth District
County of Los Angeles

Saturday, April 26, 11:00 to 5:00
Sunday, April 27, 11:00 to 4:00

El Dorado East Regional Park
7550 East Spring Street
Long Beach, California

More Information:
Thompson Event Productions Inc.
at (818) 242-9108
E-mail: info@yourgreatevent.com

Congressman Waxman Responds to Cheney-Enron Letter

Some of you will recall that I sent a letter to Congressman Henry Waxman and others involved in trying to get Vice-President Dick Cheney to disclose the attendees and content of his secret meetings with energy companies including Enron.

I wanted to know about the resulting public energy policies formulated in that exclusive club. A few weeks after I sent the letter, I received a packet from Waxman informing me of the progress of the investigation.

"I am deeply disappointed," he wrote, "that on December 9, a federal judge—who previously served as one of Ken Starr's lawyers in the investigations of President Clinton—dismissed the GAO's lawsuit, and the Comptroller General decided not to appeal the decision.

"Meanwhile, environmental and other watchdog groups have filed separate lawsuits against the Administration seeking similar information about the task force. A judge hearing one of the cases has criticized the Administration for seeking "an aggrandizement of Executive Power" and has ordered it to turn over task force records or explain why each record should be kept secret."

Moirra Zucker

BCDC Congratulates Citizen Dilip

At our February meeting, we learned that Dilip Adarkar has recently become an American citizen. Dilip's journey began in 1959 when he first came to this country from India after attending high school in England.

As a child, Dilip formed his strongest impressions of the U.S. from the Saturday Evening Post, which instilled in him a dreamy and idyllic vision of America. Yet he still feels a sense of connectedness to India and remembers meeting Ghandi when he was a boy.

Dilip met his wife Chitra in California, where he also received his Ph.D. The Adarkars' children have grown up

in the U.S.

In the wake of 9/11, Dilip has felt strongly that he is "one of us." The club congratulated Dilip on his citizenship and celebrated with a cake following the meeting.



BCDC member Dilip Adarkar is congratulated on becoming a citizen. He spoke at the February meeting about his personal journey.

From the President's Pen

Everyone who attended the February meeting was riveted by Asad Farhad, who spoke on the history of U.S. involvement in Afghanistan.



We made decades of wrong choices, never understanding the nature of the place or its people. In the year since we fought the Taliban, it is once again in a precarious position. The old warlords who wreaked havoc on the population before the Taliban took over are back and in control of their old fiefdoms. Under our post-war supervision, these corrupt warlords are called "local commanders" and are operating with millions of dollars of taxpayer aid.

This does not bode well for our adventure into Iraq.

No one has said what we plan to do after the bombs have stopped falling, how long will we be there, or how much it will cost. As with his refusal to quantify the real effects of his disastrous 2001 tax cut, Bush has steadfastly refused to offer any realistic projected cost of his war fiasco. Now that he has squandered our once trillion-dollar surplus, he plans to saddle our grandchildren and their children's generation with the cost of this latest ill-conceived and disastrous folly.

Americans know full well that if we go there without UN approval, the heaviest toll will be our loss of integrity within the world community. Our ability to lead by example will be completely eroded after half a century of painstaking world leadership.

Having spent many years flying to Europe and the Middle East, it makes me heartsick and ashamed to see America become a rogue nation. Did you ever think that Russia and China would be the voices of reason in the world assembly against an over-aggres-

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February Recap

A Personal Look at Afghanistan

This month, we got an in-depth historical view of the situation in Afghanistan. Asad Farhad, a native Afghan, presented a fascinating perspective on the country of his birth. He said, "I can't promise to stop the war, but I will set out to describe the anatomy of politics that lead to war."

Mr. Farhad divided his presentation by important dates in history, beginning with 1958. That was the year the United States and Europe created NATO in response to Russian Communism; but a lesser-known organization called CENTO—the Central Treaty Organization—was also born. Members of CENTO included Turkey, Iran, Iraq, and Pakistan.

When Iraq toppled its monarchy, it was dropped from the organization, but the other nations remain. Its charter, along with that of NATO, is to surround and "contain" Russia.

Going much further back: when the British advanced through India, they slowly encroached upon Afghan territory and in 1898 imposed a new international border with the country that would later become Pakistan. That line crossed through villages and divided families the same way as later happened with the Berlin Wall.

When Pakistan was founded in 1948, the British gave them half of Afghanistan, forming what is now known as the Semi-Autonomous Northwest Frontier Province, whose capital is Peshawar. Because of its CENTO charter to contain communism, Pakistan turned a deaf ear to the wishes of Afghanistan to reunite.

The next important date was 1958, when President Nixon visited Kabul. During that meeting, the Afghans pleaded their cause, asking for American help to modernize their army. Nixon's response—Afghanistan didn't

deserve America's attention.

The country then turned to Russia for help, and found the Russians all too willing to send them outdated World War II weaponry. Russia took thousands of Afghan youth into their military, then sent them back home as ardent communists. Thus was the Afghan Communist Party formed. When the Party staged a successful coup in 1978, the West didn't even take notice.

However, under Afghan Communism, a strong resistance army began forming, which came to be called the mujahideen.

The rest is well known. Russia sent in troops to bolster the communist government, and the U.S. came to the aid of the mujahideen with expertise and modern weaponry, including Stinger missiles. The Islamic warriors eventually defeated the Russians in 1989, but not before Afghanistan's protracted civil war had turned the country to rubble.

America's involvement in Afghanistan has been divisive all throughout our mutual history. We have supported and continue to support all seven of the mujahideen groups and encouraged competition among them. Tremendous

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February speaker Asad Farhad with President Bobbi Buescher

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disorder has been the result.

After the end of the Cold War and the normalization of relations with Russia, the U.S. again turned a blind eye to Afghanistan's plight and stood by while the capital city was divided up by the feudal rulers into sixteen different zones of control. The resulting dangerous streets, lack of electricity, school closures, and general state of chaos have remained the norm throughout the country.

But Afghanistan's strategic location between Pakistan and the oil-rich countries of South Asia meant it had to be brought under control. Pakistan joined with the U.S. in the 1990s to build a new force for law and order called the Taliban. This group was provided with cars, gasoline from Iran, and \$200 per month per person from the United States treasury. Farhad claimed that as recently as 1996, Osama bin Laden was still receiving money from Washington. As for the citizens of Afghanistan, they welcomed the Taliban because, despite strict enforcement of Sharia law, they were at last enjoying a measure of order and safety.

Within five years, the fundamentalist student militia had taken over 90 percent of Afghanistan. Their rule was repressive in the extreme. Once again, Afghan schools were closed. Women were forced out of the workplace, and the Taliban forbade western clothing, music, and most other forms of

entertainment. They burned libraries and destroyed precious religious relics.

All the while, the U.S. continued sending aid; we sent \$124 million to help the Taliban eradicate opium. Until 2001, Afghanistan served as a private training ground for Al Qaeda and trainee soldiers from neighboring countries.

Then came September 11, after which the U.S. turned upon their former Taliban proteges. After bombing the country to ruins, the American victors placed the original seven warlords back in power. Each of them was given control over one province, and each now receives large payouts to maintain order and protect access to the oil fields.

Farhad, who travels to Afghanistan at least once a year, said that before 9/11, there was only one car dealer in the capital city, with perhaps three or four cars for sale on consignment. Now you can find two hundred dealers with hundreds of cars each. Where did they come from?

In closing, Farhad said it is critical to encourage free and safe elections in Afghanistan just as we do in other countries. Let the people choose their own government, and stop supporting the warlords.

Now an American citizen, Mr. Farhad has also lived in Turkey and in Beirut, Lebanon. He took his Masters in political science and public administration at State University of New York.

Club News

- Our esteemed ex-president Lori Geittmann was back among us after undergoing quadruple bypass surgery. She thanked everyone for the profusion of cards, calls, and help during her convalescence. She is recovering well and has quit smoking. Hats off to her!
- Membership Chair Bob Barnwell reported that plans are coming to-

gether for our booth at the Riviera Fair in April. We are trying not to be located right next to the Republican booth.

- Mustapha and Vi are both planning to attend the CDC Convention.
- BCDC needs a hospitality chair. The job involves bringing coffee and refreshments to the club meetings, setup and cleanup. Please volunteer!



Monroe's Corner

There is an old adage that says...figures never lie, but liars figure. And so do Presidents & their

administrations. Does the Vietnam War resonate? Do you also remember the quote, "I am not a crook," made by the late ex-President Nixon? Our boy genius President Dubya told us recently that the average tax cut to all taxpayers under his latest plan would be about \$1083. What he neglected to mention is this...

1. Half of all taxpayers will get reductions of less than \$100
2. 78% of all taxpayers will get reductions of less than \$1000
3. Up-scale households earning over \$200,000 will get reductions of \$12,496
4. Upper up-scale households earning over one million will get reductions of \$90,222
5. Earners of \$40,000 to \$50,000 will get cuts of \$380
6. Earners of \$50,000 to \$75,000 will get cuts of \$553.

And now, let me quote Paul Krugman of the New York Times who wrote of a conservative & liberal sitting at a bar. Bill Gates walks in & the conservative shouts, "The average person at this bar is now worth a Billion dollars." The liberal quickly replies, "That's silly! Bill Gates raises the average, but it doesn't make you or me any richer!" And the conservative then says, "I see you're still practicing the discredited politics of class warfare!"

Since there is no free lunch, Gen X & Gen Y (our) progeny will pay the bills. This tax cut is a tax transfer to be paid by our children & their children. The Italians put it nicely when they say that you cannot talk with one long arm & one short arm.

As I've written before, we are going

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