

Anthony Fenton returns from Haiti ¶ Dru Oja Jay on the arrest of Tre Arrow ¶ Yuill Herbert on bilateral trade agreements ¶ Linda Besner on learning a foreign language ¶ Mark Parker on the Liberal budget & more >>>

The Dominion

dominion, *n.* 1. Control or the exercise of control. 2. A territory or sphere of influence; a realm. 3. One of the self-governing nations within the British Commonwealth.

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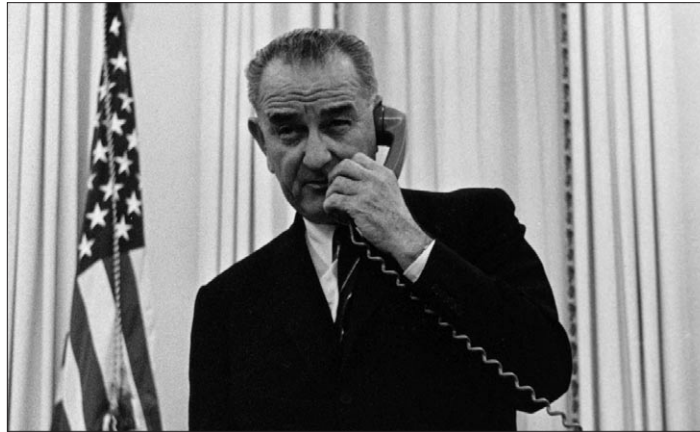
Accusations of US Interference in El Salvadoran Elections

When Tony Saca, a former sports commentator, faced the marxist ex-guerilla commander Schafik Handal in El Salvador's recent presidential election, the US took sides. White House special assistant Otto Reich held a press conference at the headquarter's of Saca's ARENA, a right-wing nationalist party, warning local reporters of the potential consequences if Handal won. Reich suggested that Salvadoran immigrants with temporary status could be deported in the event of a Handal victory. In an earlier visit to El Salvador, Assistant Secretary of State Roger Noriega asked Salvadorans to "consider what kind of a relationship they want a new administration to have with [the US]." Noriega met with all presidential candidates except Handal.

ARENA's principle campaign issue was the status of remittance payments from Salvadorans living in the US; campaign ads claimed that these could be compromised if the popular Marxist party was elected. More than a quarter of El Salvador's 6.5 million citizens live and work in the US, and remittance payments account for more than 16 per cent of the nation's economy. (*Christian Science Monitor, Financial Post*) «continues online»

40 Million Indians Strike to Protest Strike Ban

In response to a decision by



Declassified files reveal that Lyndon B. Johnson wanted the US to "take every step" to support a military coup in Brazil in 1964.

Lyndon B. Johnson Archive

India's Supreme Court denying public employees the right to strike, an estimated 40 to 50 million Indians went on strike. The strike shut down government offices, schools, and public transport.

The Supreme Court decision stated that those employed by the government have no right to strike, as it inconveniences citizens and costs the state money. "The right to strike is a fundamental right," said Hashubhai Dave, president of *Bharatiya Mazdoor Sangh*, or the Indian Workers' Union. "We were left with no choice because the government didn't give us a sympathetic hearing," he added. (*Reuters*)

Russia Limits Right to Protest

The initial approval of a bill that would prohibit protest outside most government buildings, foreign embassies and offices of international organizations in Russia sparked angry responses from opposition groups. Most support for

the bill came from representatives from Vladimir Putin's United Russia party, which controls well over two thirds of the seats in the State Duma. Proponents called the bill a step in the fight against terrorism, and said it was intended to protect citizens.

Opponents dismissed the justifications. "Every country that wants to crack down on democracy uses security as an excuse," said Vladimir Sliviyak, the co-chairman of the Eco Defense environment group. "This is a mockery of the rights and freedoms that are written into the Constitution," Communist Deputy Viktor Tyulkin added. (*Moscow Times*) «continues online»

Bush Asked Blair to Back Iraq War Nine Days After 9-11

According to a recent article by the former British Ambassador to Washington, George W. Bush asked Tony Blair to support an invasion of Iraq at a White House dinner

just nine days after the September 11 attacks. In the 25,000 word account published in *Vanity Fair*, Sir Christopher Meyer describes Tony Blair as agreeing, but expressing a desire to "concentrate on ousting the Taliban and restoring peace" in Afghanistan. Meyer adds that Blair also "said nothing to demur" when the prospect of an invasion was brought up. (*Independent*)

US Role in 1964 Brazilian Military Coup Revealed: National Security Archive

Recently declassified documents posted online by the Washington-based National Security Archive (NSA) revealed the full extent of US support for the 1964 ouster of Brazilian President Joao Goulart. On a declassified audio tape, President Lyndon Johnson said "I think we ought to take every step that we can, be prepared to do everything that we need to do," in reference to preparations for the coup.

Through the CIA, the US provided supplies and funding for the coup, and provided a naval task force to "intimidate Goulart's backers and be in position to intervene militarily if fighting became protracted," the NSA said in a news release. The support for the military coup was part of a broader program of anti-communist actions. According to the NSA's documents, Johnson feared Brazil becoming "the China of the 1960s." President Goulart

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Canada Prefers Independence from US: Poll

A recent Ipsos_Reid poll shows that a majority of Canadians want policies to be kept independent from the US, even if the result is more autonomy from the US, instead of the “mending relations” mode that the current Liberal government has chosen as a result of the highly publicized fallout from Canada not agreeing to send military support to Iraq.

The poll, asking over 1,000 people a variety of questions regarding how Canada should proceed with US relations, found the following: 69% do not want Canada to dedicate any spending or to lend land to Bush’s missile defence system; 77 % think that Canada’s limited military spending should be used for peacekeeping and conflict resolution rather than for helping the US with combat; 90 % think Canada should establish an independent energy policy even if the result is restrictions on exports and foreign ownership of Canadian supplies; and 91% believe that Canada should set its own environmental health safety standards and regulations, regardless of the impact on trade opportunities with the US.

Maude Barlow, Council of Canadians National Chairperson, calls the poll findings a “wake-up call to all politicians to listen to the values of Canadians and to reject the growing corporate lobby push for deeper integration with the US.” (*Council of Canadians*)

Vancouver Bus Rider Union Brings Back Night Buses

Vancouver grassroots activist group Bus Riders Union (BRU) recently enjoyed success of its 18 month “Night Owl buses, end the curfew now!”



Paul Martin’s budget has angered anti-poverty groups and student with loans. *Tooker Gomberg/Greenspiration.org*

campaign when the regional transit board Translink voted to reinstate the service. The all-night buses, which were pulled off the roads in 2001, will again operate seven nights a week.

Jennifer Efting, a BRU organizer, says that she was surprised of the decision, as the Translink board met all of the BRU’s demands. As happy as she is with the decision, she sees more work to be done. For example, the next major campaign is against fare increases.

Efting says the buses need to be seen as a public service, and that fare increases should be seen as a user fee on the public service. She points out that the 2001 strike had a severely negative effect on the working class and have-nots. “Everybody deserves to have access to the jobs, to have access to their family and friends,” she points out.

The BRU has about 280 members, and members ride the buses (with support of the drivers, Efting says) and talk to riders about the goals of the union, find out how the commuters would like to have themselves represented, and of course, try to sign people up. Efting sees it as taking the tradition of trade unionism and taking it into the community to people who are likely not aware that they may be able to have an influence on the very system

that they use every day. Or in the case of the recent Night Owl victory, every night. (*Seven Oaks Magazine*)

Disappointment and Outrage Over Federal Budget

Every federal budget has been attacked from opposition parties and other interest groups, and this will likely always be the case. However, the Liberals’ March budget seems to have especially outraged a wide range of groups who are trying to help the people who are becoming, due to events like this budget, more and more marginalized.

The NDP’s Jack Layton argues, for one thing, that by privatizing Petro-Canada shares, the government is squandering any chance it could have at shifting subsidies from polluting to clean energy. Layton also argues that the lack of attention to real health care reform by the budget will inevitably lead to hospital privatization.

The Canadian Housing and Renewal Association (CHRA) says that the budget needed to do something fast for affordable housing, but it did not happen. The CHRA says that Canada needs to start producing 25,000 affordable housing units a year in order, and the budget, while

paying lip service to the problem, does not come close to making affordable housing a reality.

The Canadian Federation of Students (CFA) says that the budget’s increase of student debt allowances (estimated at being approximately \$35,000 at the end of a four year degree compared to the current \$25,000) does nothing toward making post secondary more accessible to the disadvantaged. What is really needed, says the CFA, is a system that will lower tuitions, or at least freeze them; the higher debt allowance will only serve to raise tuitions, it claims.

Finally, the National Anti-Poverty Organization (NAPO) is upset that there is so much emphasis on debt reduction at the expense of the poor. Ignoring social housing, child poverty, and EI reform will simply accelerate the rich-poor divide, says NAPO. It also points out that the growing poverty issue that the budget does nothing to fix will end up costing otherwise avoidable billions in social spending (such as health care, the prison system, etc.).

—Mark Parker

PEI Carpenters Form Cooperative

Citing low pay and meager benefits offered by private contractors, a Prince Edward Island carpenter’s union has started a cooperative that will bid on home construction projects. According to the union, carpenters who work with the new company will receive \$5 to \$10 more per hour for their work, along with better benefits.

“We spent last few years trying to meet with residential contractors to work with us, paying living wage, pension health plan - we did not have success,” Martin Kenny, a representative of the PEI Carpenter’s Union. “That’s why we chose to form our own company.” ☛



Haitians at a post-coup Lavalas protest signify their support for Aristide's completion of his five year term as president. Later on at the same demonstration, several attendees were shot. *Haiti Information Project*

Impressions From Haiti

by Anthony Fenton

PORT-AU-PRINCE—It has only been a month since Jean Bertrand Aristide was overthrown by US and French forces, but Haiti has been quickly disappearing from news headlines. This, despite widespread reports of human rights abuses at the hands of a “militarized police force” and an illegal occupying force made up primarily of American, French and Canadian soldiers.

I recently met with dozens of people in Haiti who are currently hiding from the police or the occupying forces, fearing for their lives. These people are predominantly Aristide supporters or former elected officials of Aristide's governing party, Famni Lavalas. Roughly forty such people are having their names read daily on elite-owned radio stations, as part of a “hit-list” that calls for the “arrest” of these people. The well-understood implication is that arrest is a euphemism for “execution” or “disappearance”.

Meanwhile, in the mainstream media it has been reported that the Bush Administration has recently “expressed optimism about the situation in Haiti” where the atmosphere is apparently

“calming down” as the new Haitian government seems to be “getting up and running.” This is the same Haitian government - flown into Gonaives on March 20th in US Blackhawk and Chinook helicopters - that praised the convicted murderers in Gonaives as “freedom fighters” in front of Canadian representative to the OAS David Lee and numerous members of the foreign military occupation as well as mainstream journalists.

On of the most striking experiences of my recent trip to Haiti was observing the willingness of Haitian “civil society” (the US-funded Democratic Convergence and Group of 184), the US and Canadian Embassies, and the interim Haitian government, to look foreign observers in the eye, and lie. And lie they do, denying that a coup took place, denying that Aristide was anything but a corrupt dictator, and denying that human rights abuses are taking place on a wide scale in the aftermath of the events of February 29th.

OAS and CARICOM employees I spoke to (who wished to remain anonymous) wryly asked: “if the US has nothing to hide, why don't they just allow an investigation to take place” into the departure

of President Aristide? CARICOM, the African Union, along with the Congressional Black Caucus and the NDP of Canada are calling for just such an investigation. The Department of State, the Bush Administration, Paul Martin's Liberals, the US, and the UN's Kofi Annan all refuse to agree to an investigation, despite the mountain of evidence that demonstrates the case of Haiti as the latest in a long line of imperial destabilization and counterinsurgency campaigns on the part of the US. Indeed, simple observation of the public record shows a systematic campaign on the part of the US to destabilize the country by blocking aid, while channelling funding to a wealthy but unpopular opposition.

From my recent trip to Haiti, every indication suggests that the scene there is very similar to Latin America and the Caribbean during the 1980s, under Reagan. At the heart of US-funded campaigns of terror in the region was a contempt for those who dared to pursue genuinely democratic policies in the region. This racist contempt runs deep, and the attitude has naturally carried itself forward into the 21st century. Commensurate policies are being rigorously

pursued by the inheritors of Cold-war policy - John Negroponte, Roger Noriega, Otto Reich, Colin Powell, George Bush and many others in Haiti most recently, but also in Cuba, El Salvador and Venezuela.

Ironically, the strongest confirmation of my impressions has been from anti-Aristide individuals and groups, who, in my meetings with them, consistently failed to substantiate their claims when given the opportunity. Inflamed rhetoric, along with the rote repetition of familiar lies about Aristide's ties to drug trafficking, his funding of *chimeres*, his human rights abuses, and outright theft from public coffers, is the natural product of a complete lack of evidence.

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Divide and Conquer: Bilateral Trade Agreements

The US is using a new approach to sidestep developing countries' unified demands

by Yuill Herbert

CARACAS, BOLIVIA — Last September saw the spectacular collapse of World Trade Organization treaty talks in Cancun, Mexico. Joseph Stiglitz, former Chair of Clinton's council of economic advisors and Nobel Prize winner described the talks as "the usual: hard bargaining, extreme positions, last-minute concessions, arm twisting, peer pressure, tacit threats of cutting off development assistance and other benefits, and secret meetings among a small number of participants are all designed to extract concessions from the weakest".

Negotiators from the "Group of 21" developing nations walked out of the summit, vowing not to return to the table until the US and Europe reversed their stance on agricultural subsidies. Walden Bello, a long-time trade analyst from the Philippines, argued that the walkout was the result of the developing countries' frustration at the lack of transparency in the negotiations, and more importantly, their ability to translate that frustration into action on a united front. "Here we are with 70 or more developing countries speaking up clearly in the consultations, having a consensus document clearly expressed, and the revised Text just ignores their position and takes the opposite position," said a negotiator from one Caribbean country. "What kind of organization is this? Who does it belong to? Who does the drafting? Who appointed them? Why waste our time engaging seriously in consultations only to find our views not there at all in the draft?"

The collapse of the Cancun WTO meeting resulted in heightened political pressure on the US to achieve a result in Miami at the ministerial of the Free Trade Agreement of the

Americas (FTAA). Faced with strong opposition to a NAFTA-style trade accord by both Brazil's Lula and Venezuela's Chavez due to their concerns about potential wide-ranging impacts, the United States was forced to accept either an 'a la carte' agreement or nothing at all. In his March 11 speech to the US House of Representatives Committee on Ways and Means, Trade Representative Robert Zoellick described the result; "we developed a pragmatic approach to match the different circumstances of the 34 nations of the hemisphere". But the new 'pick and choose' FTAA does not meet the needs of the American business, because it allows countries to protect various sectors. In response to the prospect of a limited FTAA, Franklin J. Vargo of the National Association of Manufacturers remarked to the Washington Post, "We want full benefits out of Brazil."

It is in this context that the US has been vigorously pursuing trade agreements bi-laterally, or one country at a time, an approach that is proving more successful. Lori Wallach, Director of Public Citizen's Global Trade Watch, bluntly describes US efforts with the recently concluded, but as yet unratified, Central American Free Trade Agreement (CAFTA). "After ten years of terrible real life effects, the NAFTA model is in such ill repute that its Bush Administration boosters struck out at the WTO in Cancun, were forced to shrink the FTAA in Miami and now have to rely on bullying a few relatively weak Central American countries into accepting the NAFTA poison through the proposed CAFTA."

In the past two years, the US has initiated comprehensive free trade negotiations with 19 countries, a market representing an estimated US \$2.5 trillion worth of oppor-



"Americans: we are no longer your back patio." In many countries, social movements are the only thing checking the overwhelming bargaining power of the United States in bilateral trade agreements.

Venezuela National Radio

tunities to American business. Simultaneously, however, these agreements open the American market, exposing, in particular, US industries dependent on sweat labour that cannot compete with low labour costs in poorer countries around the world. The difference is that the US has the resources to diffuse the pain of the transition, amounting to support of US\$1.8 billion in 2003, while developing countries simply suffer.

Each of these trade agreements is based on the NAFTA model, further refined in more recent bi-lateral agreements with Chile and Singapore. These agreements are binding and contain enforcement mechanisms. According to Zoellick, "[foreign countries] keep our products out, they illegally copy our technology, and they block us from providing services. We want to make sure our products and services get a fair chance to compete, and to be vigilant and active in enforcing our trade agreements so that American workers have a level playing field".

In reality, bilateral agreements give US companies and

investors un-equalled access to foreign markets. They open up service sectors, including health and education, to US companies. And they give corporations the right to sue for damages if past, present or future investments are jeopardised by legislation. Presently, this new corporate-national relationship is playing out in Costa Rica at this moment. In 1994, as part of a structural adjustment program sponsored by the International Monetary Fund, Costa Rica granted concessions for oil exploration. Harken Energy, an oil company that is reported to have close ties to President Bush, acquired exploration rights to pristine sections of the Caribbean coast. When Costa Rican environmental impact legislation prevented Harken's drilling plans, the company sued the country for US\$57 billion, more than three times Costa Rica's GDP, through the World Bank's International Center for the Settlement of Investment Disputes. On March 11, the government announced that it does not have to pay Harken anything as it has the jurisdiction to protect its natural resources. However, that may

all change if CAFTA is ratified by government, as it includes the investor state mechanism. In a similar case, the Canadian government backed away from a health regulation and paid US\$13 million, rather than paying US \$251 million in damages after being sued by Ethyl Corporation using the same clause in NAFTA.

Further, governments
“Solidarity between developing nations is not possible in the bilateral negotiations that are currently the focus of US efforts”

at all levels lose the ability to give preferential treatment to companies in order to boost local employment or meet other qualitative objectives. Governments cannot support specific sectors such as agriculture or industry in order to meet social objectives. And protection of intellectual property rights is guaranteed for up to 30 years, an increase over the period of 20 years outlined in the World Trade Organisation, minimising options for low cost drugs and protecting companies who patent biological resources. In summary, bilateral trade agreements significantly constrain decision-making in what has traditionally been considered the realm of public, democratically-elected governments.

In Cancun, a core group of developing nations, centred around Brazil, demonstrated that they would not accept the neo-liberal agenda of the economic superpowers, effectively halting the WTO negotiations. However, such solidarity is not possible in the bilateral negotiations that are currently the focus of US efforts. Faced with the overwhelming resources and sheer economic might of the US, the agreements are driven by the US agenda. In a speech in 2001, Zoellick remarked, “economic strength—

at home and abroad—is the foundation of America’s hard and soft power...Trade is about more than economic efficiency. It promotes the values at the heart of this protracted struggle.” Exactly what ‘protracted struggle’ Zoellick is referring to is not clear, but to developing countries, his words are ominous.

Take Bolivia, which is likely to begin negotiations with the US sometime this year as part of the Andean Free Trade Agreement (AFTA). Bolivia will be bargaining from an impossible position. Each year, Bolivia receives US\$107 million in social and economic aid from the US, as well as US\$59 million for the police and military. Its GDP is US\$7 billion and its debt is US\$4.5 billion. At US\$800 million, external assistance from governments, the International Monetary Fund and World Bank equals ten percent of the GDP—one third of public expenditure. The US strategy of negotiating the AFTA one country at a time means two things—a previous treaty with Chile, and most likely one with Columbia, will set the standard for the scope

of the agreement and secondly, there is no opportunity for solidarity in the negotiations. Combine Bolivia’s economic desperation with technical and legal inexperience and the impoverished country is in no position to negotiate favourable terms. The only card left to play is the strength of the social movements within Bolivia, battle-hardened from recent upheavals over water privatization, which are certain to resist new trade agreements.

Further, the negotiations surrounding CAFTA illustrate the manner in which these agreements are being concluded. The entire process took less than a year, making the possibility of meaningful analysis by government or civil society groups extremely limited. At the beginning of negotiations the US demanded that all parties sign a confidentiality agreement, classifying the texts as national security. According to the agreement, negotiators could not reveal even the agenda of meetings without the unanimous consent of all negotiating teams—giving any one country a veto over what information was released.

So what is the agenda? Is it “a vision of a world in which hundreds of millions of people are lifted from poverty through economic growth fueled by trade”, as Zoellick claims?

There is increasing evidence that the trade and investment theories are not delivering for the poor countries. United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD)’s 2002 Trade and Development Report stated that developing countries have not garnered rapid and sustainable income gains from trade and investment. “With the exception of a few East Asian first-tier newly industrializing economies (NIEs), with a significant industrial base already closely integrated into the world trading system, developing-country exports are still concentrated on products derived essentially from the exploitation of natural resources and the use of unskilled labour which have limited prospects for productivity growth and lack dynamism in world markets. The statistics showing a considerable expansion of technology-intensive, supply-dynamic, high-value-

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Bilateral Trade Agreements with the United States

World Trade Organisation (WTO)	146 countries	Stalled, Sept 2003
North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA)	Canada, Mexico	Announced Dec 1992
Free Trade Agreement of the Americas (FTAA)	North, Central and South Americas	Framework Agreement Announced, Nov 2003
Central America Free Trade Agreement (CAFTA)	Costa Rica, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Nicaragua, Dominican Republic (negotiations initiated 2004)	Announced, Jan 2003 Concluded, Feb 2004
Andean Free Trade Agreement (AFTA)	Chile (2003), Peru (negotiations initiated 2004), Colombia (negotiations initiated 2004), Bolivia, Ecuador	Announced, Nov 2003
Middle East Free Trade Area (MEFTA)	Jordan (2001), Israel, Morocco (2004), Bahrain (negotiations started 2004)	Announced, May 2003
Enterprise for ASEAN nations	Singapore (2003), Thailand (negotiations initiated 2004)	Announced, Oct 2002
South African Customs Union (SACU)	Botswana, Lesotho, Namibia, South Africa, Swaziland	Announced, June 2003
Manufacturing FTA	Australia	Concluded, Feb 2004

Direct Action: Tre Arrow Arrested

FBI labels prominent anti-logging activist as “eco-terrorist”

by Dru Oja Jay

On March 10th, a man calling himself Joshua Murray was arrested for shoplifting in a Victoria Canadian Tire outlet. According to police, fingerprints identified him as Tre Arrow, an Oregon environmental activist listed on the FBI's most wanted list with a reward of \$25 000 for information leading to his arrest. FBI spokespeople and news headlines have labelled Arrow an “eco-terrorist”, but many have taken issue with this label, describing him as a principled and inspiring activist.

Arrow, who is referred to by the FBI and many media outlets as Michael Scarpitti—his name before it was legally changed—was wanted for his alleged involvement in an arson that resulted in the destruction of two logging trucks in June of 2001, and an April arson that damaged three cement trucks.

According to Portland Attorney Stu Sugarman, who has been in contact with Arrow, he disappeared approximately two months before charges were laid associating him with the burning of logging trucks. He lived for the following two years in Canada under the name Joshua Murray and continued his activist work. Writing on Indymedia sites and in conversation, acquaintances describe his love of nature and unwavering commitment to the protection of the environment. One acquaintance recalled an incident when Arrow suffered a head injury, but refused to allow his friends to call a cab, preferring to walk several blocks to the hospital.

By most accounts, Tre Arrow is best known for “turning around the campaign to save Eagle Creek” in Oregon. To prevent the logging of this wilderness area, Arrow camped on the seven-inch ledge of



Tre Arrow on a ledge at the US Forest Service building in Portland, Oregon. Arrow's eleven day stay on the ledge is credited as the turning point in a battle for the preservation of Eagle Creek. ONRC

the US Forest Service Building in downtown Portland for eleven days with a megaphone. The Forest Service eventually backed down and Eagle Creek was spared. Arrow has also taken part in several tree sits in old growth forests and ran for Congress as a Green Party candidate in 2000, where he received over 15 000 votes.

While Arrow's ultimate innocence or guilt will be decided by a jury in the distant future, the battle over the symbolism of his capture is already pitched. FBI missives, “Wanted” posters, and headlines from the Associated Press, Reuters, MSNBC, and numerous other outlets have painted him as an “eco-terrorist”. Groups such as Stop Eco-Violence and Property Rights Foundation of America have cited his arrest as a decisive blow in the fight against domestic terrorism.

Not surprisingly, Arrow disagrees. “My involvement in peaceful, non-violent activism is well documented. Any attempt to label or brand me as the ‘T’ word is only an effort to discredit my reputation and detract from the effective cam-

paigns I've been involved with.”

Arrow is not the only one taking issue with the use of the word terrorism. In trying three other suspects charged with participating in the same arsons as Arrow, U.S. District Court Judge James A. Redden has ordered lawyers and prosecutors not to use the word “terrorism” or “terrorist”. Redden said that the defendants were charged with arson, not terrorism, and warned, “the use of that term may [result in] the imposition of sanctions.”

The FBI has continued to use the term “eco-terrorist” to describe Tre Arrow, leading some critics to claim that “terrorism” is a political construction used in the court of public opinion, rather than a legal term used in front of a jury.

FBI materials state that Tre Arrow has “been known to be affiliated with” the Earth Liberation Front (ELF), which the FBI considers the number one domestic terrorist organization in the United States. The ELF consists of a number of small cells operating individually, under a set of three general principles. These

include educating the public about the “atrocities committed against the earth,” taking “all necessary precautions against harming any animal, human and non-human” and “inflicting economic damage” on those who profit from environmental destruction or exploitation.

“Is it a greater evil to destroy the property of this corporation or to choose to allow these corporations to continue to destroy the environment? What the activists are saying is that it's a lesser evil to stop these corporations from destroying the planet,” explains ELF spokesperson Craig Rosenbaum.

The FBI operates by the US Code of Federal Regulations, which defines domestic terrorism as “the unlawful use of force and violence against persons or property to intimidate or coerce a government, the civilian population, or any segment thereof, in furtherance of political or social objectives.” Depending on the definition of “force”, a street protest, graffiti, or sit-ins might also be considered terrorism. The FBI maintains that the definition—and its application—are straightforward.

Many environmental activists claim that Arrow is being framed as a “terrorist” because of his success as a political activist, not because of evidence of his involvement in the arsons. By most accounts, proof of Arrow's involvement rests on the testimony of Jake Sherman, a man who admitted to the arsons and agreed to testify against Arrow in order to receive a reduced sentence of three years. Arrow could face life in prison if convicted.

Tre Arrow has been on hunger strike since his arrest and as of this writing, he is in solitary confinement in a Victoria, BC prison. His extradition is being contested. **♻**

The Art of Second Language Conversation

by Linda Besner

When I talk to my new friend Tom, we're not just talking—we're metatalking. When I ask him how he's enjoying the weather, he tells me he is not enjoying it at all because it has too many future tenses. "Will it rain?" he asks me. Then answers himself, "In the afternoon it may begin to rain." "It will soon be raining."

Tom and I meet once a week to practice the most self-reflexive art on earth—the art of second language conversation. It is simultaneously speech and the dissection of speech, a use of form which constantly queries the form. It's as though an actor, in the middle of a soliloquy, were to stop and earnestly ask the audience, "If I said 'jealous,' would you understand me more like a person whose girlfriend is cheating on him, or as someone who is careful about their possessions?" And the audience were to answer, "I don't know, what's the rest of the sentence?" And then the actor and the audience would go on to toss around ideas about whether the actor has jealousy in his/her nature or sometimes behaves in a jealous way, and whether this quality is good or bad.

It makes for a unique kind of performance. It combines elements of logical flow with questions of semantics, word association, and indeed outright mistake. Set free of its particular contextual meaning, every word expands, and becomes important in its own right.

My favourite aspect of the second language conversation, however, is the way it forces the listener into that position so dearly beloved of poetry teachers everywhere—the active interpretative stance. Because of the sometimes agonizingly slow pace of the conversation, as well as the listener's awareness that the speaker may actually lack the words to say what

he/she means, expectation and anticipation are heightened, and there is a greater sense of surprise and discovery when a sentence is completed in an unanticipated fashion. The listener rarely sits passively and allows the speaker to flounder, casting about for a word he/she may not even know. Instead, the listener is constantly making suggestions, chasing various trains of thought, trying to divine which linguistic alleyway the speaker is wandering in. My most creative audience experience, in talking to Tom, was when he was telling me something about a flower, and was getting frustrated that I didn't seem to be following him properly.

"A flower," I repeated.

"No," he insisted, "the best part of the flower."

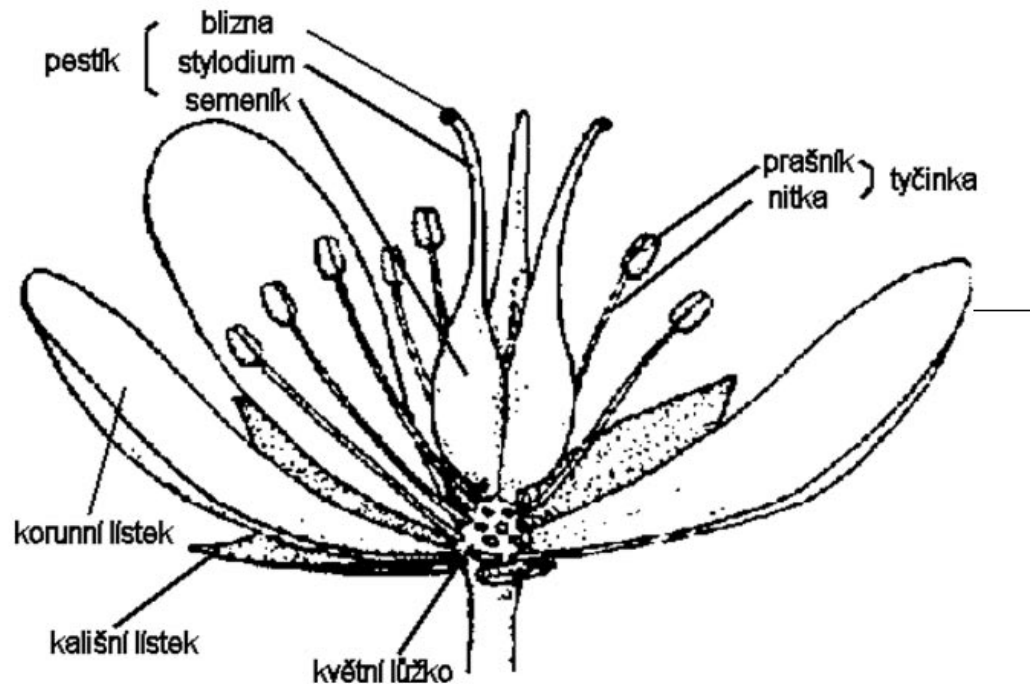
"The petals?" I asked stupidly. "The stamen?" What's the best part of a flower?

Eventually, it turned out that in Czech, *kvetina* is a word that refers to a cut flower, but

with the stem and the leaves as part of the package. Giving someone "flowers" is giving them *kvetina*. But the word for the actual blossom is *květ*, so Tom was looking for something like *flow*, or maybe *flo*, that would relate to "flower" in the same way. Easily sorted out; but the confusion provided me with an interesting opportunity. For a tantalizing moment I was considering our conversation from the unexpected vantage point of a bee. My attitude towards flowers as a human was not generating any information by which I could determine what Tom meant by "the best part" of a flower. Maybe, I thought, the assumptions that I'm using for this conversation are wrong. Because there is generally less context in second language talk, I am quicker to jump in an array of directions to try to fill in the missing pieces. If Tom's first language was English, I would expect him to fill in the information for me. My position as listener or audience member

would be lazier.

Finally, in conversation with Tom, we both end up questioning how important the form really needs to be. Is it enough if I understand what he means? Or does his grammar and word choice have to be worthy of an Oxford don? In other words, is the function of conversation to communicate ideas? Or is part of it a display of linguistic virtuosity for its own sake? As a conversationalist, Tom is able to be innovative in a way that might take me considerable thought. It wouldn't have occurred to me that Labrador dogs "have rich emotions," or to say that "the rain is falling in ropes." In some ways, learning "correct" English is a plot to turn Tom's conversation conventional, to strip it of the poetic effects that unusual words or sentences structures can have. Paradoxically, once his English is more consciously artful, it may lose its current gaps and spaces that allow the listener to interact with it as art. \emptyset





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was known to be friendly to labour unions, limited the profits multinational corporations could remove from Brazil, and had plans to trade with communist countries.

High-ranking US officials had previously denied involvement in the coup.
«continues online»

Mercenaries Make Up Third Largest Military Force in Iraq

Facing a shortage of rested and trained soldiers, the US military is increasingly relying on mercenaries to provide security for key areas of Iraq. An estimated 15,000 “private security contractors” are paid as much as USD \$1000 per day, making up a force that is exceeded in size only by British and American contingents. The mercenaries come from varied backgrounds: former secret service agents and former soldiers come from the US, UK, Chile, Nepal, South Africa, and Iraq itself. «continues online» ∂

‘Impressions from Haiti,’
continued from page 3 »

On the other side, there are countless people whom I saw and heard who are able to concretely refute virtually every one of these claims. Aristide was not a perfect leader, and many argue that he was a poor politician. He was indeed surrounded by corruption, some of which was undertaken by members of his party.

According to numerous credible sources, most of whom had nothing to benefit from supporting Aristide, the President did not steal money, he did not “arm chimeres,” he did not approve of wide scale human rights abuses, and he did not traffic drugs. He was—and, legally speaking, still is—the democratically elected President of Haiti.

The Haitian people have a simple collective desire: to determine their own future. The governments of Canada, the United States, and France are the authors of the ongoing violation of this right, and will continue to be until their citizens force them to act otherwise. ∂

‘Bilateral Trade Agreements,’
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added exports from developing countries are misleading,” observes UNCTAD.

UNDP’s Human Development Report in 2003 indicated that 54 developing countries suffered average income declines over the course of the decade. “Reversals in Human Development Index are highly unusual as these indicators generally tend to edge up slowly over time,” said Mark Malloch Brown, UNDP Administrator. But perhaps the most staggering indicator is 2004 Forbes magazine report that lists a record 587 individuals and family units worth \$1 billion or more, an increase from 476 in 2003. The combined wealth of this year’s billionaires also reached record levels—a staggering \$1.9 trillion, an increase of \$500 billion in just one year. The wealth of these few hundred people exceeds the gross domestic product of the world’s 170 poorest countries combined. Such data makes it clear who is gaining and who is losing from these powerful trade agreements. ∂

There are clearly many holes in the argument that such trade agreements will alleviate poverty. And to propose that the US trade representatives are acting on the interest of the American people by negotiating these agreements is clearly only part of the story. The US recently used trade agreements to force Chinese regulatory approval of biotech soybeans, cotton and corn and is attempting to do the same with the European Union through the World Trade Organisation. Six multinational companies, Aventis, Dow, DuPont, Mitsui, Monsanto and Syngenta, control nearly 70 percent of the patents on five essential food crops—rice, wheat, corn, soybean and sorghum. Friends of the Earth Policy and Campaigns Director Liana Stupples said: “The Bush White House and American business interests should not have the right to make decisions about what people in Europe get to eat. But the current WTO system means that this could be the case”.

The Free Trade Agreements that are being vigorously negotiated by the US are empowering corporations in a manner that places them at the top of a global hierarchy, matching their economic might with political rights that bypass processes of democratic decision making.

In the preface to the landmark report released February of this year by the World Commission of Globalisation, co-chairs Tarja Halonen, President of Finland and Benjamin William Mkapa, President of Tanzania, wrote words that could be directly aimed at US trade policy “We believe the dominant perspective on globalization must shift more from a narrow preoccupation with markets to a broader preoccupation with people. Globalization must be brought from the high pedestal of corporate board rooms and cabinet meetings to meet the needs of people in the communities in which they live”. ∂