

Foreign Policy Forum Focuses on Real Security



Roger Morris

scheduled to participate but had to attend a UN meeting. The event was moderated by Sam Smith, editor of the *Progressive Review*.

Working from the premise of the Green Institute paper "Strategic Demands of the 21st Century: A New Vision for a New World," Morris focused on ways that American foreign policy has frequently undermined security at home and abroad over many decades and on the recurring incompetence of the so-called foreign policy experts. His forthcoming book, *Shadows of the Eagle*, is a history of

opinions first. Mueller-Kraenner noted that it would make no more sense to ignore European opinions in leaving Iraq than it did prior to our going to war.

Peña took a strong position that the United States cannot fix the damage it has caused in Iraq; only Iraqis can fix it. Therefore, the sooner we leave, the sooner they can begin that process, a position with which Morris and Wheeler agreed.

Both Morris and Wheeler brought extensive insider experience to the exchange. Morris was a senior staff member in the National Security Agency under Henry Kissinger prior to resigning

On September 20, the Green Institute and the Böll Foundation co-sponsored a panel discussion on "Surviving Victory: A New Definition of National Security." The title refers to the quagmire the United States finds itself embroiled in years after President Bush declared victory in the Iraq war. It was held at the prestigious Washington Club on Dupont Circle in Washington, DC.

The panel featured four speakers: Roger Morris, Green Institute Senior Fellow; Sascha Mueller-Kraenner, Böll Foundation Director of Europe and North American programs, Berlin; Charles Peña, Independent Institute Senior Fellow; and Winslow Wheeler, Director of the Straus Military Reform Project, Center for Defense Information. Julia Sweig, from the Council on Foreign Relations, had also been

covert policy in the Middle East since World War II. The problem, Morris asserted, was not any one set of policy- or decision-makers but a broken system that has been continually undermining real security.

Wheeler may have had the best one-line response of the event when, in response to the question of how the United States might get out of Iraq, he replied, "By plane, train, bus, or boat." Mueller-Kraenner, in contrast, argued that the United States broke Iraq, so now it has to fix it — and should not leave precipitously. He also suggested that complaints about the Bush administration's ignoring foreign opinion prior to our invading Iraq — ignoring the strongly held views of our European allies, in particular — should be heeded now in any discussion about leaving Iraq: ask for



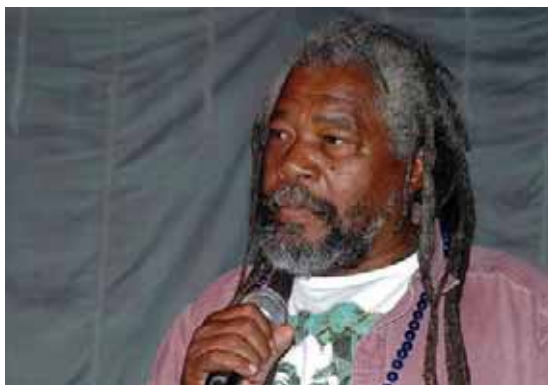
Sascha Mueller-Kraenner

in protest of U.S. policies. Wheeler was a Senate analyst and a staff member at the Government Accountability Office (GAO); he helped to draft the War Powers Act.

The panelists' statements were followed by a

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Green Institute welcomes new Board Member



Malik Rahim

We are pleased to announce that Malik Rahim has agreed to join the Board. Rahim lives in New Orleans and has run for office on the Green Party ticket a number of times. Rahim was a founding organizer of the Black Panther Party in New Orleans and has worked extensively on housing rights, affordable housing, and prisoner rights issues.

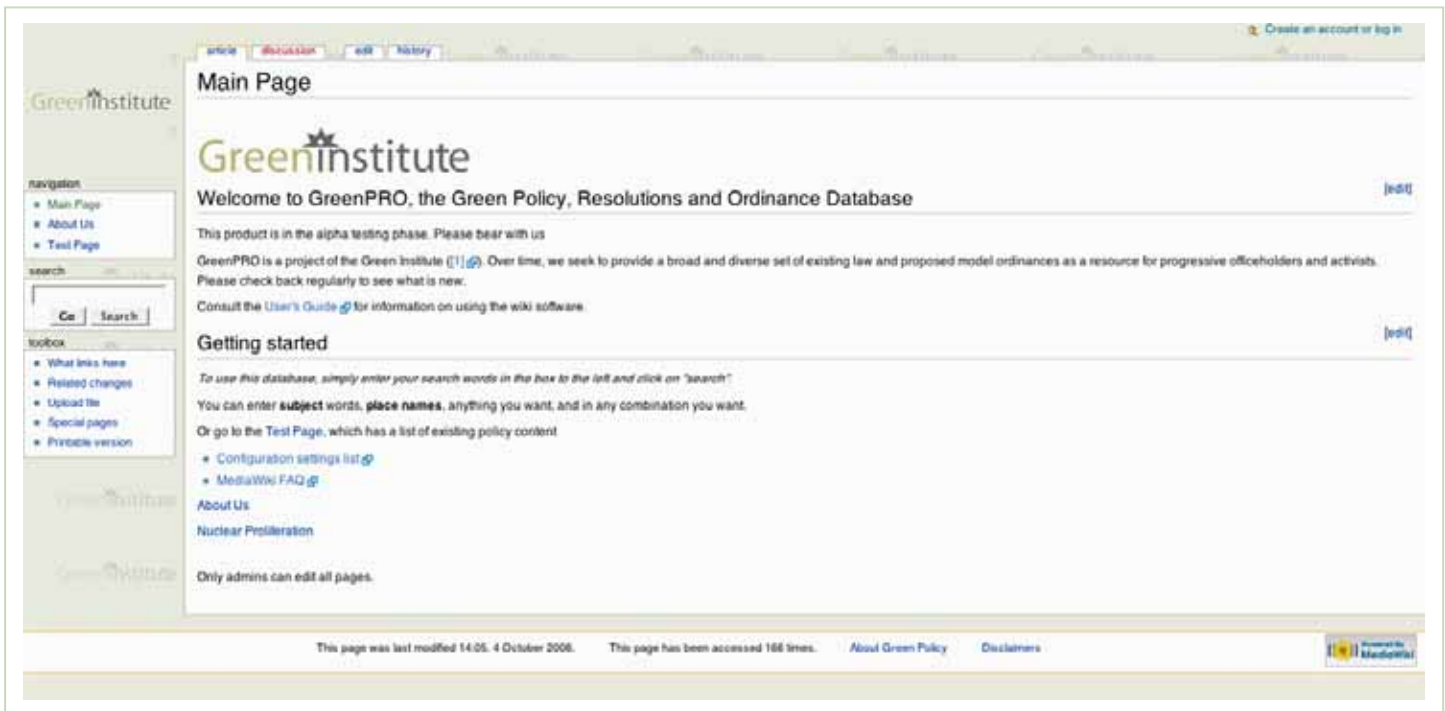
After Katrina struck New Orleans last year, Malik helped to found

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State-of-the-Art Policy Database



Early this year, the Green Institute contracted with a software developer for the multi-phase design and development of a state-of-the-art policy database system using the effective and popular “wiki” technology. It is called GreenPRO - Green Policy, Resolutions, and Ordinances. The database will be searchable and will provide text, links, and basic information on progressive policy, both proposed and implemented, around the country. Inclusion in the database will not indicate that the Green Institute endorses the specific ordinance or resolution, merely that it is a progressive policy that might well be of interest to policy-makers and activists

Policy advocacy of this type has been a successful tool of right-wing activists in recent years. The best known example is ALEC, the American Legislative Exchange Council. The left responded with ALECWATCH and others but never gained much momentum with these projects. ALEC focuses on state-level legislation and uses a generous budget to bring state legislators to conferences in attractive vacation spots, where they are “educated” on proposals that are preferred by ALEC.

By contrast, GreenPRO will focus almost exclusively on local-level policy and will not involve any lobbying of legislators. State policy will be included only when its primary focus affects the local level, for example, state laws that enable or encourage local ordinances.

While most other policy databases consist of lists of links on a website, our wiki system will be state-of-the-art. Wiki technology, popularized by the

wikipedia encyclopedia, is an open source software system, meaning that no corporation owns it; it is in the public domain. It provides a system by which users can contribute content. Eventually, users will be able to add their own entries into GreenPRO, but each submitted entry will need to be accepted by an administrator before it can be posted for public viewing. The use of wiki in this database will make it one of the most advanced policy databases available, both for its user-friendly design and for the opportunities it affords people to contribute.

For this database to meet the expectations we have for it, it must be comprehensive. There are many single-issue organizations that present details on the policies they focus on, including model legislation, yet people who do not know about those organizations need a broad and comprehensive place to start their search. In order to meet this need, the GreenPRO project will also encompass advanced software to find policy content. We are designing a web robot, sometimes referred to as a “bot” or “spider bot,” to find the content. The term “spider bot” comes from the ability of the program to “crawl around” the worldwide web to look for something of interest. They are advanced variations of search engines, which most web users are familiar with. Our spider bot will be used only by Green Institute staff, but it will find a large array of relevant policy for the database.

The Green Institute also plans to recruit occasional expert commentary in which an expert on a particular issue or policy will contribute an analysis or

commentary on a specific entry. Initial expert commentaries are expected to focus on instant runoff voting, local sustainability, and public campaign financing.

At this time, GreenPRO is in Phase II of its software development. Users cannot add entries, but can search for and display policy entries. If you are interested in contributing policy, please contact us. The completed Phase I consists of a simple version of the database. We are now working on the spider bot; when it is done, the database will be finalized as well. You can try out the database by going to our website and clicking on the link for the GreenPRO database.

Initial policies in GreenPRO

Instant Runoff Voting

San Francisco
Oakland

Proportional Representation

Cambridge

Corporate Personhood

Measure T in Humboldt County
Community home rule in rural Pennsylvania

Local sustainability policies in many communities

Public campaign finance in Boulder, Colo

Iraqi withdrawal resolutions in Wisconsin

Foreign Policy Forum

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discussion of questions submitted by the audience to the moderator. The event was recorded; a DVD

with supporting interviews will be made available by the Green Institute in a few months. The event was covered by UPI; a link to their report can be found on the Green Institute website.



Foreign policy panel: Roger Morris, Winslow Wheeler, Charles, Peña, Sascha Mueller-Kraenner, moderator Sam Smith

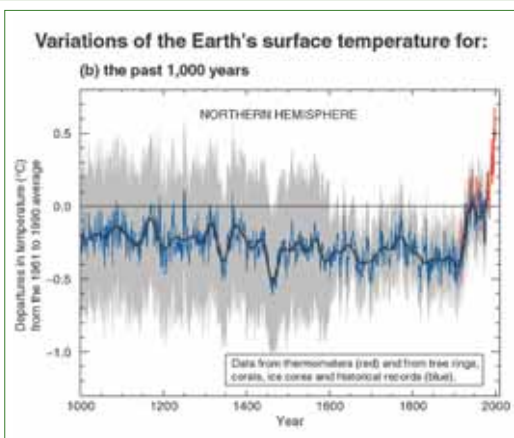
New Board Member

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the Common Ground Collective (www.commongroundrelief.org). Common Ground helps victims of hurricane disasters on the Gulf Coast with short-term relief and long-term rebuilding support. It is a volunteer-based organization that welcomes visiting volunteers to New Orleans.

On August 16, after years of service, founding Board member Thomas Linzey resigned from our Board. Linzey is Executive Director of the Community Environmental Legal Defense Fund (www.celdef.org) whose successful Daniel Pennock Democracy Schools have been consuming more of his time. The schools convey the story of the development of the legal doctrine of corporate personhood in the United States and examine some case histories opposing it. The Green Institute community thanks Linzey for his efforts in founding and growing the Green Institute and wishes him the best in his valuable work.

The Climate Cost of Travel



Temperature record, known as the "hockey stick," showing recent spike caused mostly by industrial activity.

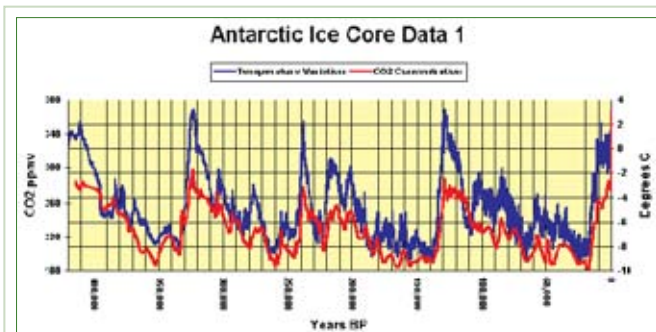
More and more people are becoming aware of how much air travel contributes to global warming. Mile for mile, the carbon dioxide emission resulting from travel by every airline traveler is similar to that of a single passenger automobile. And given the much greater distances that people fly than they drive, it really adds up. One cross-country air trip can emit as much greenhouse gas *per passenger* as a full year of commuting five times per week to a job alone in a car, assuming a 25-mile round-trip commute.

European Greens, who have chosen to focus on a climate change campaign (see the web link at www.europeangreens.org), decided to make their recent Helsinki European Green Council meeting their first climate-neutral meeting. This involves buying carbon offsets, by which you pay for proj-

ects that prevent the release of an amount of carbon that is roughly equal to the amount you have calculated that you emitted. Examples range from planting forests to building alternative energy production facilities. For the European Greens meeting with about 200 attendees, the cost of the carbon offsets was about \$800, hardly prohibitive at \$4 per person.

There are many carbon offset companies and nonprofit organizations; the exact cost varies, depending on the kind of projects they fund. The cost for a carbon offset for the transcontinental flight mentioned above might range from \$5 to \$15, for example. One carbon offset company, Native Energy, builds wind and other alternative energy on Native American land; it is owned by a group of Native nations.

While the preferable choice would be to avoid some travel and thereby refrain from adding greenhouse emissions to the planetary crisis, using car-



Data demonstrating today's historic high level of carbon dioxide in the atmosphere. Note the red spike on the right showing industrial CO2 emissions.

bon offset purchases to create a more realistic cost for unavoidable travel is a good first step. The Green Institute is looking into instituting a carbon neutral policy for all of its travel.

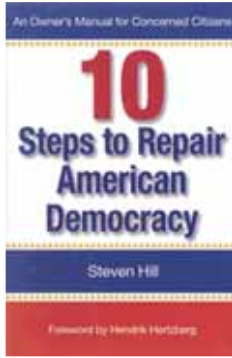
UPDATES

The Science Policy Project now maintains a bibliography of articles and selected book reviews; both are updated monthly. You can find the links to these at http://www.greeninstitute.net/subpages/GS_Intro.asp.

A two-part production of the June 24 "People's Rights before Corporate Rights" with David Cobb and Ben Manski is now available on DVD. It is intended for use by individuals and on local cable access television. Contact us if you would like to buy a copy. We are also interested in developing a network of people who work with cable access to help distribute materials for broadcast. Contact us if you are interested.

The Green Institute in conjunction with the Law and Government Program of Washington College of Law, at American University, will host a panel discussion on October 25 titled "Corporate Power and Political Democracy - Do We Need a Wall of Separation?" Featured panelists will include WCL professor Jamin Raskin and Democracy Unlimited's Kaitlin Sopoci-Belknap.

BOOK REVIEW



10 Steps to Repair American Democracy

by Steven Hill

PoliPoint Press, 2006, \$11

Steven Hill was a longtime campaigner for proportional representation and election system reform with Fairvote, formerly the Center for Voting and Democracy. He now directs the Political Reform Project for the New America Foundation from San Francisco.

10 Steps to Repair American Democracy is structured around Hill's list of key reforms, each of which is discussed in a chapter:

- Secure the Vote
- Expand Voter Participation
- Increase Voter Choice with Instant Runoff Voting
- Scrap Winner-Take-All Elections
- Direct Election of the President
- Overhaul the U.S. Senate
- Reclaim the Airwaves
- Minimize Money's Role
- Reform the Supreme Court
- Restore Faith in Government

This is a list that anyone working in Green politics would strongly support. The proposed reforms range from standard calls for campaign finance reform to far-reaching proposals for proportional representation and for reining in the power of the Supreme Court. Hill favors giving the Supreme Court justices specific terms of appointment with no reappointment, though he does not go so far as calling for the abolishment of judicial review.

He also challenges a few commonly held beliefs. While Hill supports reforms to prevent district gerrymandering as well as reforms to bring about public campaign financing, for example, he does not believe that these changes would result in more competitive races or the defeat of many more incumbents. He claims that voters today live increasingly among like-minded people, resulting in a sort of political ghetto that makes it harder to create competitive districts. In other words, conservatives and liberals do not live among each other as much as the past. He points out, for example, that in Iowa, which creates Congressional districts

using a non-partisan commission, races are no more competitive than before that system was implemented. Hill asserts that the only way to achieve more competition in legislative races is to create multi-member districts along with instituting proportional representation.

There is one significant omission in the book. In its focus on the conduct of elections, no attention is paid to the process of getting onto the ballot. In some states, there are virtually no candidates outside of the two major parties. The rules making it difficult for minority-party candidates to gain ballot access are controlled by state legislatures and by judges who are appointed by partisan politicians. It is demonstrably clear that many states create barriers designed to limit competition and new ideas. Beyond these rules, legal challenges and dirty tricks go even further in undermining democratic choice. For example this year in Pennsylvania, Democrats found a judge who would agree that candidates attempting to have their names added to the ballot via the means of filing a petition are liable for the legal costs of a challenge to the validity of the signatures on the petition if that challenge succeeds (by proving that too many of the signatures were invalid). On any petition some signatures turn out to be invalid, but the candidate would have no way of knowing whether only a few or considerably more than a few signatures were invalid. Consequently, some candidates abandoned their petitioning efforts for fear of bankruptcy should a legal challenge by the Democrats, or anyone else, be successful.

However, no single book can cover all the current problems in American democracy. With content ranging from electronic voting and recounts to biased media coverage, Hill covers a lot of significant ground in a readable and inexpensive format. *10 Steps to Repair American Democracy* is recommended reading. Newcomers to the problems in American democracy will find much to learn, while experienced activists may find a few of their conventions challenged.

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