

## Strategic Injudiciousness

**“The battle of peace must be fought on two fronts. The first is the security front where victory spell freedom from fear. The second is the economic and social front where victory means freedom from want. Only victory on both fronts can assure the world of an enduring peace.”**

--- U.S. Secretary of State Edward R. Stettinius, 1945

We Americans today are preoccupied with our global assault on terrorism and our sidebar excursion into occupying Iraq, spending hundreds of billions of dollars on these problems. Accompanying our fear, anger and propaganda-inspired obsession, the U.S.-led War on Terrorism has produced the most sustained attack on human rights and international law in 50 years, according to the organization Amnesty International.

**Meanwhile, far more serious problems are festering. There are almost 6.4 billion people living in 192 countries on the planet today. Of these, 2.8 billion people live in poverty, earning less than \$2 per day; 2.4 billion people live without proper sanitation, which is degrading to them and to their surrounding environment; and 1.1 billion people do not have “reasonable access” to safe drinking water. Hundreds of millions live in urban slums and squatter settlements. (These facts are according to WorldRevolution.org).**

Most of the 50 Least Developed Countries in the world are becoming more vulnerable than ever before, due to rising debts, declining development aid, low commodity prices, and increased Western tariff barriers for Third World products. Poor countries with 80% of the world's people pay the rich countries about 9 times more in debt repayments than they receive in aid. This poverty and instability represent a dangerous powder keg, which will get much worse as the human population grows, since most of the population growth will occur in the already overpopulated urban areas of the developing world. Poverty and injustice contribute to terrorism and social strife, so our continued failure to seriously deal with these enormous issues is extremely unwise. In fact, eighty percent of the world's poorest countries have suffered a major civil war in the past 15 years.

**The world has great concentrations of wealth --- the 300 richest people on the planet earn more each year than the poorest 2.5 billion people! Do we imagine that we can be either morally complacent, or truly secure under these circumstances?**

We rely in the U.S. on gated communities, security services, tough laws, and lots of police and prisons to protect the rich and regular citizens here in our country. Similarly, we expect militant border protections and strong anti-terrorism measures to protect us indefinitely from animosities from abroad about the great injustices and inequities in the world today.

**I strongly believe that we must begin to truly address these enormous inequities around the world in order to make everyone more secure. Diverting resources and attention from them is counterproductive, and ultimately more dangerous. Our leaders' messianic convictions and use of swaggering certitude may play well at the Republican National Convention, but the use of hyped-up fears and bullying macho-dude attitudes to maintain political support for record military expenditures in the face of staggering international problems is beyond irresponsible. It is an anathema to good planning, proper focus, and wise prioritization.**

# Observation and Theory

Thomas Malthus was an English economist who observed the society he lived in around 1800 A.D., and theorized that humanity faced eventual and inevitable disaster unless population growth could be checked. At that time, there were about 1 billion people on Earth. By 1930, there were 2 billion. In 1999, human numbers reached 6 billion. This is an ominous increase, particularly in light of the growing per capita consumption of food, energy and raw materials in China and the developed world.

**The valiant race to produce more and more food for an ever-expanding population, for inexorably growing human numbers, can arguably never be won by continuing to advance Industrial Agricultural practices. It can only be won by dramatically slowing human population growth. Judging from our current environmental problems in the year 2004, and considering the distinctly limited and increasingly fragile condition of planetary resources, Tiffany Twain challenges the world to set a goal of never exceeding a population of 9 billion people on Earth. This will require wholehearted cooperation amongst peoples to embrace family planning and contraception.**

There are 50 million abortions worldwide every year, and we could easily reduce that number by 20% with the establishment of good women's health clinics worldwide, ones that provide comprehensive maternal healthcare, family planning and contraceptives. Imagine 10 million fewer abortions every year, Right to Life people! And the Bonus is, at an annual cost roughly equal to the cost of one aircraft carrier, we would help reduce the transmission of AIDS and other sexual diseases, we would reduce unwanted pregnancies by many millions annually, and we would save tens of thousands of women from dying in childbirth. The consumption of resources, the extent of starvation, and the many adverse ecological impacts of greater human numbers would be reduced. And there would be substantially less human suffering and many fewer abortions! This represents an extraordinary effect at a small price!! Compassionate, and cheap!!!

And the only cost to achieve these wonderful results is to give up an apparently extremely strongly felt conviction of Conservatives and Traditionalists that other people in the world should conform more to their puritanical sexual attitudes. Whoa! -- - this smacks of terribly presumptuous double standards, misogyny, hypocrisy, and foolishness! What is truly important --- being intolerantly and righteously Right, or being morally right?

The official policy of the current Administration in the United States, tragically and unfortunately, is: Abstinence, the Global Gag Rule, and withholding of funding from the United Nations Population Fund. Truly caring about the well-being of people in the United States and in the world necessitates broadminded Progressive ideas. The right wing anti-women policies and political appointments that characterize the Bush Administration are contrary to the best interests of the majority of people in the world.

**Tiffany Twain recommends that we amend the Constitution NOW to include Roe vs. Wade women's rights --- And pass the Equal Rights Amendment, too!!**

## Oblivious Insensibility

"It was the best of times, it was the worst of times,  
it was the age of wisdom, it was the age of foolishness,  
it was the epoch of belief, it was the epoch of incredulity,  
it was the season of Light, it was the season of Darkness ..."

--- The Tale of Two Cities, Charles Dickens

**A Pyrrhic victory is a victory won with staggering losses, such as that of the Greeks over the Romans in 279 B.C. Mankind is winning a string of Pyrrhic victories over the natural world. We are in unconscious denial of this foolishness. The very premise of our culture is that human beings have the right to do as we like, asserting dominion over all living things, no matter how harmful, unsustainable, unsound or jeopardous our actions become. We proudly congratulate ourselves on being the only beings that matter on Earth, appointed by the gods.**

The impoverishment of the ecosystems of Planet Earth at the hands of the human race is partially due to our modern industrial mode of consciousness, wherein we fail to recognize and respect the primary basis for survival in uncontaminated air, water, and soil --- and we apparently do not accord adequate value to the integral community of life systems of the planet.

We live in extraordinary times. We have used more natural resources in the last 50 years than in ALL of previous human history. The population of human beings on the Earth has doubled from 3 billion to 6 billion in the last 40 years, and we are currently adding another billion every 14 years. We are decimating the planet's rainforests, and dramatically increasing the amount of methane, nitrogen, and carbon dioxide in the atmosphere --- all greenhouse gases that are contributing to global warming and climate change. We are literally altering conditions in the world to which we are so well adapted, making an enormous gamble. **"Climate is an angry beast, and we are poking it with sticks," says a Columbia University expert.**

We are undeniably exploiting, damaging, and polluting the world, with insensitive hubris. We pretend that our wastefulness and our ruinous consumption are our birthright. We act as if we are outside of nature, as if no other species of life matters at all. We pretend that we can continue using up resources and exploiting living systems detrimentally, without depleting them or destroying them. This is an obscenely risky gamble. We must stop openly or tacitly supporting cunning opportunists in our government and business who promote their own selfish interests, reflecting a contemptuous callousness to the concerns of environmentalists, of deep ecologists, and of future generations.

**It is a radical risk to stick with the Status Quo, promoting mindless economic growth and consumption, and pursuing policies encouraging ever-greater use of polluting fossil fuels. We must act more intelligently and responsibly to future generations. We must courageously and resolutely begin weaning ourselves from our economic addiction to growth at any cost, and from neoconservative leadership which fervidly opposes contraception and family planning, seeks to implement a flawed National Energy Policy emphasizing fossil fuel dependence, and panders to selfish, wrongheaded Big Business and Big Money.**

## Ethics and Transformation

**“Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world. In fact, it’s the only thing that ever has.”**

--- Margaret Mead

The Dalai Lama was once asked what he thought the most serious problem is that the world faces. He answered that clearly it is human overpopulation and the adverse impacts that human beings are having on the environment. He indicated that what we need most today is a new religion, a secular one, one which appreciates and respects the natural world and values it highly enough to protect it and to help restore its balance.

Humanity must take steps to ensure that we leave the planet inhabitable to our descendents. We must begin to live sustainably, shifting the design of our economic systems to become restorative of healthy ecosystems, instead of increasingly using them up and damaging them. We must increase international protections of temperate forests, rainforests, fisheries, coral reefs, water resources, wetlands, farmlands, and the atmosphere. And we would be wise to embrace family planning programs worldwide to ensure that all children are wanted and can be provided for.

We are almost certainly driving other species of life to extinction at the fastest rate in millions of years. This must be seen as ethically wrong, and as extremely risky and foolish. Even with an anthropocentric worldview that ignores the well-being of any other forms of life, this is a development that bodes ill for our own health, now and in the future. We must choose to make a difference by supporting positive progressive change.

**The first law of morality should be to think straight, to reason clearly, to grapple with observation and experience for truth. Morality should be founded on sociology, not on theology and fear; what is best must be determined by the changing needs of society, taking into account the well-being of the majority and of future generations --- and not by any unchanging revelation or dogma.**

Education should not be restricted to the transmission of a certain body of settled knowledge. Rather, it should encourage the development of a scientific habit of mind, and open-mindedness of understanding. Education could prove to be a great contributing solution to the challenges faced by the world. “Let everyone, even teachers and pundits, differ and debate; out of such diverse opinions will come an intelligent relativity of belief that will not readily take up arms --- for it can be seen that hatred and war come largely of misunderstanding, of fixed ideas or dogmatic faith.”

**Encourage free thinking!**

**Embrace the Environmental Revolution!!**

**“I reckoned that if the message warn’t ridiculously redundant, it wouldn’t have stood a snowball’s chance in hell of being long remembered, and would consequently be barely honored.”**

--- Mark Twain

## Primary Principles

Ambrose Bierce, in *The Devil's Dictionary* makes an enlightening definition:

**“Politics --- A strife of interests masquerading as a contest of principles.”**

A democracy claims to be competing for “the hearts and minds of men.” Political parties do, in a very real sense, appeal to the hopes, convictions, biases and fears of voters. Yet it is also very true that the Contest of Principles --- and very loose Promises --- upon which political candidates sell citizens their candidacy each election is actually a sham, a façade for the reality that Money Talks, and the politicians have already sold their souls to the Special Interests who give them the biggest contributions.

**Politics must be made more responsible and progressive, reflecting a greater clarity of purpose. Genuine, effective campaign finance reform must be enacted. Politicians and our society must begin to adhere to the following broadminded and farsighted principles:**

- (1) Public policies must take into account their long-term impacts, recognizing the interests of future generations, and adhering to precautionary principles that reflect a definite concern for the effects that human activities are having on the environment. This requires a shift to economic sustainability.
- (2) We must hasten the arrival of a new, cleaner energy regime, embracing efficiency, conservation, and fossil fuel alternatives. We must reduce our dependence on fossil fuels, and eliminate the wastefulness of our current energy policies.
- (3) We must make sweeping changes to conservation policies to ensure the integrity of clean water and healthy ecosystems, and minimize pollution problems, while restoring habitats and protecting people from environmental abuses.
- (4) We must protect the integrity of National Parks, Roadless areas of National Forests, Wilderness areas, and other public lands from subsidized and irresponsible degradation and exploitation.
- (5) We must act to protect, maintain, and restore the health, integrity, resilience, and productivity of the world's oceans for present and future generations.
- (6) We must enact emissions control policies to curb global warming and help prevent detrimental changes in the Earth's climate.
- (7) We must hasten the transition towards a sustainable human population, encouraging the lowering of the birth rate worldwide, supporting contraception and family planning programs at home and abroad, and reversing the Global Gag Rule.
- (8) We must address issues of social fairness, embracing ideas contained in the Soliloquy “Intelligent Investment” that follows. And,
- (9) We must reduce spending on weapons and the military, mitigating Shock and Awe bombing campaigns, respecting international laws against torture and human rights abuses, tightly controlling waste and fraud by unscrupulous Pentagon contractors like Halliburton, and redirecting expenditures to beneficial programs that help make the world's nations more secure, peaceful, and just.

**“The time is ripe, and rotten ripe, for change; then let it come.”**

--- James Russell Lowell, 1819 - 1891

## Intelligent Investment

A business interested in long-term survival and prosperity invests wisely in its future. It invests in innovation, technology, efficiency, infrastructure, productivity, customer service, and employee satisfaction. Business often has a well-defined mission and purpose, in philosophic and economic terms, with the highest priority being given to maximizing profit for its owners and shareholders. But business must also be required to be more responsible with regard to society and the environment. Big Business must accept the facts that environmental and social costs must be included in the prices of products and services. This will help ensure that decision makers at every level will be fairly informed with regard to all true costs, automatically resulting in a more wise allocation of resources. This will move our societies towards sustainability and harmony with Earth's ecosystem health and balance.

**The public, and our political leaders, must come to realize that our annual spending in federal and state budgets should reflect better investments, and a more clear vision. It is wrong to allow our government spending to shortsightedly pander to Vested Interests, giving enormous amounts of taxpayer money to misguided subsidies, absurd pork-barrel projects, foolish entitlements, and wasteful budgetary allocations. We must redesign our economic systems to do things right, which is to say efficiently; and to do the right things, which is to say, less wastefully!**

**It would be best to invest in the future well-being of our society, with guidelines as follows:**

- (1) Provide more generous funding for high-quality public education.
- (2) Establish meaningful and significant incentives for innovations to ensure the efficient and productive use of natural resources, getting people voluntarily and automatically to do what is in the best public interest.
- (3) Give greater funding for the improvement of infrastructure, including urban renewal, safe and convenient public transportation in cities, traffic congestion mitigation, affordable housing, and the curbing of suburban sprawl.
- (4) Provide incentives for renewable resource usages, recycled materials usages, and the reduction of pollution and waste, while simultaneously reducing misguided subsidies that stimulate the depletion of non-renewable resources, particularly fossil fuels. Investments in energy efficiency are particularly advantageous because saved energy is the cheapest way to provide new sources of energy to competing interests.
- (5) Achieve energy independence by developing alternative energy sources, rather than continuing the aggressively wasteful, polluting consumption of oil, gas, and coal resources.
- (6) Commit funds to domestic and international programs whose goal is to reduce population growth. This should optimally be done in a way that satisfies everyone, including Conservatives. The small minority whose beliefs posit that we cannot prosper without endless expansion of our human numbers --- or those that believe we must obey Holy Book directives to be fruitful and multiply, regardless of the consequences -- must have their ideas consigned to the history heap of harmful doctrines.
- (7) Reduce "defense spending" by \$100 billion (about 20%), and allocate half of the savings to reduce the enormous national budget deficit, and the other half to the investments above, plus \$5 billion to sustainable development assistance to poor nations abroad. Helping others, instead of arrogantly exploiting them, or dominating them militarily, is humanitarian AND self-interested, as it will make us safer from injustice-driven terrorism.

**The restructuring of the world economy so that economic progress can be indefinitely sustained represents one of the greatest investment opportunities in history.**

## Fairness, and the Greening of Taxation – A Progressive Plan

Chapter 11 of Paul Hawken's brilliant book, The Ecology of Commerce, makes it extremely clear that partially replacing income taxes with green taxes would revolutionize economic activity, very effectively addressing many social and environmental problems bedeviling the world. My recommendations for more fair and wise tax policies:

1. Make Federal Income Taxes more progressive. Progressive taxation is fair. Every taxpayer pays exactly the same rate for every level of income they earn. Higher rates apply to higher earnings. Establish a new tax bracket of 48% on all annual income above \$300,000. Use the additional income to decrease taxes on the first \$15,000 of taxable income for all taxpayers.
2. Reverse the Bush Administration elimination of the Inheritance Tax. Allow the threshold of estate tax exclusion to increase to \$5 million, so that wealthy people can pass on their good fortune to their heirs, but levy taxes on estates with a net worth of \$5 million to \$15 million at 60%, and estates with a net worth exceeding \$15 million at 75% of the amount over \$15 million. Recycling wealth in this way will help ensure that we do not create a permanent class of extremely wealthy people in a country that has enormous fiscal problems and great inequalities of fortune.
3. Implement legislation to increase federal gasoline taxes by 10 cents per gallon EACH YEAR for the next 25 years. Use the funds generated for two purposes: (a) to pay for safer, more convenient, and less expensive public transportation, which will serve to reduce traffic problems in urban areas, and (b) to help repair the infrastructure of American transportation, including roads and bridges.
4. Create an Incentive for new fuel-efficient vehicle sales by giving a 5% tax reduction for all vehicles, which get 32 mpg or better. Fund the cost of this program with a 5% federal sales tax on all new vehicles sold which get less than 24 mpg. Tax gas-guzzling Hummers sales 20%.
5. Establish green taxes not only on fossil fuel usages, but also on hydrocarbon-based chemicals, using the proceeds to create incentives for processes that use organic, non-polluting, renewable resources.
6. Levy significant taxes on all sales of guns, ammunition, and military arms. Use the funds generated to create peacekeeping and sustainable development programs, here in the U.S. and abroad. While we are at it, let's tax land mine sales extremely heavily.
7. Impose luxury taxes on all new homes built which are larger than 3,000 square feet. Use funds generated by this tax to build affordable housing, and to provide a federal renter's credit, so that those who rent are not discriminated against in favor of homeowners.
8. Make Charitable Giving more advantageous by making donations deductible from gross income, not just as a component of itemized deductions.
9. Create a mechanism that encourages a balanced budget. The U.S. National Debt of \$7.35 trillion in September 2004 represents the accumulation of irresponsible deficit spending over the past 25 years, resulting in annual interest costs of more than \$300 billion. This is the cost today's taxpayers are paying for yesterday's taxpayers' shortfalls.

Taxation is an obligation, and an excessive one to the extent that government spending is wasteful and misguided. From this perspective, government has the duty to frugally control spending, limiting it to programs that are necessary and important to society. This necessity is not satisfied when we approve spending appropriations far in excess of taxes collected, because this expedient of deficit spending gives us the illusion that we can have more than we are willing to pay for. We must better control spending, eliminating pork; and balance the budget, simplify and reform the Tax Code, and increase tax audits for compliance with the law, targeting higher incomes with greater frequency than lower incomes.

## A Political Aside

We judge businesspersons by their results, not by their words. The same standard should be applied to POLITICIANS. We should "fire them", no matter how convincing their rhetoric, if they mislead us and enact laws and policies that are characterized by the following:

- 1) They are regressive, primarily seeking to benefit a very small minority, rather than to "promote the general Welfare", one of the goals stated in the Preamble to the U.S. Constitution.
- 2) They strive to reduce the power and funding of States, local governments, and communities by consolidating power in the centralized Federal government, dominating the political scene and squandering funds for authoritarian purposes;
- 3) They are designed to foster social inequities and injustices, denying women rights equal to men, opposing contraception and family planning services worldwide, denying women the ability to choose to have an abortion under any circumstances, and foisting puritanical sexual views on 21<sup>st</sup> Century society.
- 4) They are fiscally irresponsible, saddling future generations with enormous debt and interest payment obligations, while simultaneously striving to give the wealthy a permanent status of good fortune with the elimination of estate taxes on the richest 1% of Americans, and they fail to provide a basic level of funding for education, healthcare, public transportation, and infrastructure maintenance and improvements.
- 5) They are environmentally irresponsible, polluting the commons and exploiting public lands, to the detriment of a healthy legacy for the future.
- 6) They extravagantly embrace the interests of Big Business with pandering enthusiasm with such actions as increasing subsidies for, and reducing sensible environmental regulations on, the Oil and Auto industries --- or if they support only voluntary do-nothing approaches in dealing with global warming, despite aerial photos confirming that the Arctic polar ice cap has shrunk 20% over the past 20 years due to warmer temperatures;
- 7) They give lavish support to aggressive military adventurism and wasteful military spending, or they are arrogant and dishonest about extremely significant things like misleading the American people into war with deceptive claims about Weapons of Mass Destruction and ties to terrorist threats, and simultaneously strive to suppress dissent and reduce the civil rights of citizens with such legislation as the Patriot Act.
- 8) They allow Special Interests like the National Rifle Association and organizations on the Christian Right to dictate policies that the majority of Americans oppose.
- 9) They undermine the Constitution and existing laws and regulations in pursuit of ideological goals.

**We need new ideas and new blood in American politics. We need ecological and social sanity. Please demand much greater accountability and more principled actions from all political candidates and from incumbent politicians!**

**Koyannisqatsi (from the Hopi language) means :**

**"Life out of balance; in a state that calls for another way of living."**



## It's the Economy, Stupid!

A principal measure of the impact of human enterprise on Planet Earth is aggregate economic activity. "Political wisdom" mandates that economic growth must be a very high priority, since economic stagnation and high unemployment heighten political risk and can cause candidates to lose elections.

**But economic growth can be achieved in many ways, and it is extremely foolish not to incorporate into economic policy the vital qualities of productivity, efficiency, conservation, fairness, ecological values, and activities that are wholesome, socially beneficial, sustainable, and environmentally sound.**

We enthusiastically congratulate ourselves on our rebound from the recession of 2001 with moderate economic growth in the year 2004 --- but how much of this is due to aggressive expenditures on the military, Homeland Security, rapid inflation in medical costs, and other less-than-salubrious spending? Check out [RedefiningProgress.org](http://RedefiningProgress.org) to see a truer indicator of economic health, called the Genuine Progress Indicator. This measurement strives to include positive contributions and eliminate non-productive and destructive spending from GDP.

**Our paramount priorities must be shifted, as follows:**

- 1) Change our budgetary priorities in accordance with the seven guidelines identified in the Soliloquy, "Intelligent Investment".
- 2) Reform the Tax Code to embrace the ideas contained in the Soliloquy, "Fairness, and the Greening of Taxation --- A Progressive Plan."
- 3) Refocus our energies and funding priorities to help prevent the degradation of the commons.
- 4) Strive to change our economy to one that embraces sustainable consumption.
- 5) Strive to increase opportunities for the majority, rather than advocating private schools and special privileges for the few.
- 6) Do everything we can to promote energy and resource conservation.
- 7) Encourage good health, organic foods, a more vegetarian diet, healthier lifestyles, and preventative medicine, rather than fast foods, drugs, increased meat consumption, and unneeded surgeries.
- 8) Strive to create more social fairness, rather than promoting injustices and inequities.  
And,
- 9) Do everything in our power to achieve and maintain peace, reducing the influence of military industries and the Pentagon on national policy, rather than stimulating armaments manufacture and the growth of weapons industries.

**It's a Stupid Economy that values growth without embracing truly important values. Let's change this --- the priorities of American politics and our economy are seriously distorted by our representatives' pandering to Vested Interests, by championing preferential treatment over fairness and justice, by mistaking doctrine and conviction for proper vision and intelligent planning, and by figuratively and literally failing to see the forest in our enthusiasm to harvest the trees.**

**Principled Measures Are Required! Let us recognize them, and enact them!!**

## Advocating "Twelve" for Justice

The disparity of wealth in the world between the rich and the poor has on many occasions in history reached such a great chasm that a crisis condition prevails. Instances have arisen where inequities and injustices became so great that despotic power was necessary to defend the privileged and to maintain order. Accompanying these unstable circumstances, dramatic reforms became necessary, or else revolution became inevitable.

**The wise leader Solon saved Athens from revolution in the 6<sup>th</sup> Century B.C. by implementing extensive reforms. One of these mandated that the Rich had to pay taxes at a rate TWELVE times that of the Poor. The Rich protested, but eventually recognized the measure as a fair price to pay for the privilege of maintaining their wealth and fortunate status.**

In a contrasting episode in history, the Roman Senate failed to address the inequities of a great concentration of wealth in the year 133 B.C. Instead of boldly adopting a Solon-like fair compromise, the rich were allowed to continue enjoying their great privileges, with the result that the Roman Empire was plunged into a century-long class and civil war, destroying much wealth and creating terrible suffering. We now see that today poverty, injustice, terrorism, war and social instability are widespread, threatening not only the global community, but also the quality of life for all future generations of human beings, as well as the survival of many other species of life on Planet Earth. Yet the Rich ever more aggressively defend their privileges, even brazenly striving to expand them.

We would be wise to reform the tax laws in the United States so that the wealthy pay taxes on their marginal income at a rate 12 times greater than the rate paid by the poor. To be fair, taxation should remain progressive, which is to say that every taxpayer should pay exactly the same amount of tax on equal amounts of income. Thus, assuming a poverty level of \$15,000 in earnings per year, every taxpayer would pay just 4% tax on their taxable income of \$15,000 or less --- and the wealthy, who earn over \$300,000 per year would pay 48% (a rate twelve times higher) on all taxable income in excess of \$300,000. A progressive sliding scale would set tax rates for all earning brackets in between \$15,000 and \$300,000.

Fairness also requires that we reign in our Borrowing from the Future. The National Debt was \$845 Billion in 1980, when Ronald Reagan took office. The debt increased more than 300% to \$2.6 Trillion during Reagan's Administration, due mostly to big increases supported by Reagan for military spending and for tax cuts that primarily benefited the wealthy. George H. Bush presided over a 56% increase in the National Debt from 1988 to 1992, to \$4.07 Trillion. It increased 28% during Bill Clinton's first term, and then 9% more during his second 4 years, from 1996 to 2000. And now George W. Bush has been responsible an astonishing increase of more than \$1 Trillion in additional deficit spending in just 3 years, so that in September 2004 the National Debt exceeds \$7.35 Trillion. The annual interest cost on this liability exceeds \$300 Billion every year --- more than ten times as much as the federal government spends on public education. **It is foolish to aggressively continue giving the green light to red ink!**

**Reform is required! We must wisely implement policies of fairness, moderation, peace and social justice through humanitarian initiatives and progressive taxation. Also, loopholes must be eliminated so that the wealthy cannot avoid paying a fair share of taxes by reducing their total earnings to a taxable income that is artificially low. And businesses must not be allowed to move offshore, a tactic that currently allows American companies to evade taxes to the tune of about \$70 billion per year.**