December 28, 2007 Friday

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

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**The time is ripe for Mississippi to take the lead in green building**

The Dec. 19 piece by William Yeatman ("If China is exempt from climate change
policies, why isn't Mississippi?") typifies the half-truths and misinformation
all too common to the coverage of climate change by American media.

First, Yeatman errs when he claims that global warming treaties will not require
China to "lift a finger" to do anything about the problem. This is absolutely
not true. China was exempted from only the first round of the Kyoto Accords,
only until 2012.

Significantly, the "Bali Roadmap" for pollution-control negotiations, drawn up
this month at the U.N. Climate Change Conference in Indonesia, will address
exactly the issue Yeatman raises: the rise of large, polluting, carbon-driven
economies in poverty-stricken developing nations like China and India. Among
other things, the Bali agreement maps out the transfer of clean-energy
technology and know-how from developed world nations to those with developing
economies, such as China and India. In other words, instead of 21st-century
economies being driven by polluting 19-century energy technologies - coal and
petroleum combustion - new economies would be built, from the ground up, using
cutting-edge technologies for producing and conserving energy and reducing
greenhouse gas emissions. There's a message here that we on the Coast should not
miss.

In Katrina-devastated South Mississippi, we are at the beginning of a great
rebuilding boom. As we rebuild, we should utilize the Bali Roadmap, as will
other developing states, and seek national and international partnerships that
will enable us to rebuild green, from the ground up, with an eye to preserving a
livable planet for our posterity. If the time were ever ripe for our state to
become a world leader, specifically in green construction and sustainable
development, this is it.

WILL WATSONLong Beachcoastgreen1@yahoo.com

Port expansion could hurt local tax revenue

All citizens of Gulfport should support Rick Carter and the Island View Casino
in fighting the proposed plans for the Port of Gulfport expansion.

Island View Casino is a good neighbor and friend. Their own local money was used
to renovate the old Grand location to get back in business as soon as possible
after Hurricane Katrina. Island View employs local people, they purchase local
and they promote the local area. The tax revenue that would be lost should the
port project interfere with the existing casino resort operation would greatly
impact Gulfport in a negative way.

The Port of Gulfport operation could expand south or east and not have an impact
on existing tax revenue from the Island View. In fact if the project were to
move east, it would impact only a blighted area of downtown Gulfport that has no
immediate plans to be improved.

Please, citizens of Gulfport, contact the Corps of Engineers to request this
project be altered to protect the future of Gulfport!

RACHAEL HATTENGulfport

No one else can match this platform and record

There is hope for America. If you are interested in a presidency that will:

Let Americans keep more of their own money.

End the IRS and stop the central bankers' undue influence over our legislators.

Stop unconstitutional spending leading to national bankruptcy (over $9 trillion
debt).

Stop the financial dependency on China, Saudi Arabia, and other foreign
governments.

Oppose trade deals and groups that threaten American independence such as the
U.N., GATT, NAFTA, NAU, WTO, CAFTA, and the ICC.

Protect our privacy and stop the national ID card.

Protect our constitutional rights and end the Orwellian "Patriot" Act.

Protect and restore the Second Amendment.

Secure our borders, end illegal immigration and "birthright" citizenship for
illegal aliens.

Bring our troops home from no-win "police actions."

There is only one candidate who has:

Never voted to raise taxes.

Never voted for an unbalanced budget.

Never voted to raise congressional pay.

Never taken a government-paid junket.

Never voted to increase the power of the executive branch.

Never participated in the lucrative congressional pension program.

Voted against regulating the Internet.

This candidate is a retired obstetrician (over 4,000 babies delivered) currently
serving his 10th term in the U.S. House, and is a veteran who has served as a
flight surgeon in the Air Force and the Air National Guard.

He is honest and principled and is the only candidate who takes his
congressional oath to protect and defend the Constitution seriously, and will
work to restore its wise provisions.

He is Republican Ron Paul.

STEPHEN M. CLARKDiamondhead

Underage drinking is a grown-up problem

Alcohol touches virtually everyone's life and causes too many deaths.

It costs taxpayers, health-care consumers, and, most of all, it causes enormous
rips in the social fabric of the state and the nation.

If there were a realistic answer that could be suggested, the problem would have
been solved a long time ago.

As some of our local school district educators have stated, the answer is
complex, but most agree it should start with education. Most have read the
article "Alcohol: Cradle to Grave," and that's just about how alcohol education
should be approached.

Most schools, in part through the DARE program, already provide some alcohol
education.

The greatest influence on young people's decision to begin drinking is the world
they live in, which includes their families, friends, schools, and community.

Alcohol use by young people often is made possible by adults. Teens can't
legally get alcohol on their own, yet, by age 12, many have had at least one
drink.

Efforts to encourage responsible drinking, recognizing trouble, and avoiding
drunken driving should be stepped up, especially in the media.

Underage drinking is a serious problem, with roots deep in our culture. It's
time to change that picture. It's time to take action. It's time to stop looking
the other way. It's time to tell children and teens that drinking is not OK.
It's a long-term project for parents, schools, local groups, community leaders
and other concerned adults.

It's a project that so important that it should start when children are young.
As a community, let's resolve to continue this effort into the new year.

BRIAN E. PEARSEBiloxidrugfree@msgulfcoast.-[ymca.org](http://ymca.org)

United News of Bangledesh

                           December 28, 2007 Friday

**Climate change brings threats of war and terrorism**
SECTION: NATIONWIDE INTERNATIONAL NEWS

LENGTH: 2416 words

By: Afsan Chowdhury

The Bali conference which brought leaders of the entire world in one gathering
was desperately in search of unanimity amongst the leaders about how to proceed
to the next stage. This next stage was about agreeing to a roadmap of this
journey.

The Kyoto Protocol is to end by 2012 and a new set of goals, objectives,
principles and targets needs to be put in place before the final meet to hammer
out a deal occurs at Copenhagen in 2009. Although there was stiff resistance
from the United States, supported by Canada and Japan, the world opinion finally
made it through as at the final stage the US rather surprisingly agreed to what
were already quite watered down proposals. Of these, the key was the demand that
the developed countries agree to a mandatory cut of 25-40% of their carbon
emissions from the 1990 level by the year 2020. Three countries refused this and
instead demanded that a number of developed countries set their targets who are
also high emitters.

The US had two countries in mind, China and India. That both are high emitters
is a fact but this is largely because of their population and per capita carbon
consumption in these two countries are several times lower. The UN Framework
Convention on Climate Change (UNFCC) which covers the various treaties including
the Kyoto Protocol specifically states that developing countries are not held to
binding obligations. This is known to all, but even then the US and its allies
pressed on this issue. It's possible that apart from not taking responsibility
for new emission standards, the US was also concerned about the growing trade
capacities of the two who are penetrating into the US market.

One of the gains made at Bali was renewed agreement that developed countries
would provide resources, money and technology to the developing world to adapt
to the negative impact of climate change. This has clearly brought out the
concept of differentiated impact which is now part of the climate change
challenge and mitigation language. Climate change will affect different
countries in different ways and the UNFCC is clear that the price for cleaning
up is also going to be different. It means for those who are poor, low emitters
or with a low carbon footprint and about to be affected badly by various aspects
of climate change the cost must be paid by the high emitting rich countries.

Clearly, this difference is accepted by all but experts are now worried that
certain forces unleashed by the monster of climate change will not be bound by
any agreement. One issue that has everyone scared is the high possibility of
conflict and crisis, wars and terrorism, all directly and indirectly caused by
the fingers of climate change.

Climate refugees and conflict

The IPCC (Inter-Government Panel on Climate Change), which is responsible for
the research that has ended debate on whether human activity was responsible for
climate change, issued a stark warning that global climate change could suddenly
accelerate and become irreversible. The warning from the scientists doesn't
mention the political threats that are rapidly emerging and becoming
irreversible too but the connection between climate change and conflict was made
very clearly at the Bali conference as well. Climate change induced political
crisis may already have reached the threshold with the eye of the storm in South
Asia.

The damage caused by the latest storm in Bangladesh, a category 4 SIDR, will add
on to the misery of the July-August floods affecting already fragile
livelihoods. With more people impoverished, it will trigger environmental
refugees, internally and externally. As climate change gallops, millions may
trek to wherever they think will be safe. The natural choice of Bangladeshi
millions will almost certainly be India, creating the platform for instability
and possible conflicts in the entire region.

Dr. Rajendra Pachauri of the Nobel prize winning IPCC says, 'Bangladesh is going
to be one of the worst-hit regions and that will certainly be a matter of
concern. It may generate refugees at a scale not seen before. Obviously many
will move towards India."

Bangladesh's capital Dhaka is already collapsing under the weight of
environmental refugees. The city streets moonlight as bedroom and homes to
hundreds of thousands every night. Most have run away from the coastal areas or
from eroded river banks that take homes and livelihood regularly every year.
What may happen when refugee numbers reach millions as the country drowns due to
sea level rise of one-third of total land mass is not difficult to guess.

That Bangladesh will generate refugees and in millions is now an accepted fact
but climate change has largely been seen as a scientific issue and social
scientists have not paid enough attention. In the West, in the military security
world, this has however begun to rear its head though the thinking is narrow and
is more about protecting the West rather than initiating a global coping policy.

US military estimates

Senior retired military officials have participated in preparing a prognosis
where security threats to the US and possible military action has been spelt out
as reported in the Environment News Service dated April 16, 2007. There is great
US fear of inter-national war leading to nuclear conflict, but not enough
concern that this may lead to direct threats to the US as it becomes the 'global
villain' in the war of the climates.

Global climate change presents a serious national security threat that could
affect Americans at home, impact U.S. military operations, and heighten global
tensions, finds a study released recently by a blue-ribbon panel of 11 of the
most senior retired U.S. admirals and generals as stated by the panel known as
the Military Advisory Board.

"We will pay for this one way or another," said retired U.S. Marine Corps
General Anthony Zinni, former commander of U.S. forces in the Middle East. "We
will pay to reduce greenhouse gas emissions today, and we'll have to take an
economic hit of some kind. Or, we will pay the price later in military terms.
And that will involve human lives. There will be a human toll."

"The U.S. should commit to a stronger national and international role to help
stabilize climate changes at levels that will avoid significant disruption to
global security and stability," the Military Advisory Board recommends. The
study, "National Security and the Threat of Climate Change," says that climate
change acts as a "threat multiplier" in already fragile regions of the world,
creating the breeding grounds for extremism and terrorism.

The CNA Corporation, a nonprofit research and analysis organization, brought
together the 11 retired four-star and three-star admirals and generals as a
Military Advisory Board to provide advice, expertise and perspective on the
impact of climate change on national security. CNA writers and researchers
compiled the report under the board's direction and review.

Meanwhile closer at home the threat is taking its early shapes. India is already
putting fences on its border with Bangladesh, one of the longest borders between
any two countries, to stop Bangladeshis from crossing. It claims millions of
Bangladeshis have crossed over to India after 1972. That figure may look small
if one-third of Bangladesh drowns and millions try to enter India, seeking
safety.

Two dangerous components of possible conflicts arouse great fear. One, the spark
of communalism-related conflict which both countries are subjected to and two,
terrorism-related opportunities inherent in a region where it appears already
firmly planted.

Should India aggressively stop fleeing refugees from entering, repercussions are
obvious. Such measures may lead to communal interpretation of these actions.
India may quickly be painted as stopping Muslims from reaching safety. On the
other hand, stopping Hindu refugees from Bangladesh will be cause problem within
India. So whatever be the scenario, communalism may rise to conflict level in
both countries and there are many forces in both countries ready to take
advantage.

Extremist rises

Such decisions will be welcomed by the already active extremist groups. In the
last few years Indians have pointed fingers to Bangladeshi groups like HUJI (
Harkatul-Jihad Islami) and other groups as key players in Indian blasts. Many of
HUJI leaders including its leaders Mufti Hannan are in Bangladeshi jails
awaiting trial for killing or attempting to kill ordinary people, politicians
and intellectuals including Bangladesh's former Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina.
There are other groups who are all virulently anti-Indian and regularly in
conflict with Bangladeshi law enforcement agencies. Many are reportedly moving
freely across borders. Now they have almost no public support but in future as
the situation grinds down, support to such violent groups may increase.
Anti-Muslim groups in India will also find easy excuses to be violent, using
either the pouring refugees as an issue or reacting to the rising tensions
caused by their departure.

Dr. Ajay Sahni, of the Delhi based Institute of Conflict Management, says that
terrorism is the most efficient form of violence for those who have low
resources. He thinks that the low understanding of conflict and its management
has caused a lot of havoc in South Asia. Climate change will be another factor,
though for the moment it is a speculative area.

The 'solution' to climate change caused misery of the poor world offered by the
rich countries is adaptation, an idea which is interpreted as unilateral and
deeply unfair. Most Bangladeshis who know of the crisis say that they have no
intention of adapting to the crisis after being damaged. And that means conflict
and confrontation is brewing in many minds. Climate change has become a global
security problem that is hugely underestimated.

While scientists spell out what climate change can happen, political change is
already happening. Unless climate change and political threats are strategically
linked, there may not be enough time left to cut carbon emissions to pull back
and save the world. n

The fallout of global warming

Global warming could lead to internal conflict, regional unrest and war, with
North Africa, the Sahel and South Asia among the hotspots, a report issued at
the recently held global climate change forum in Bali, Indonesia.

The warning by the UN Environment Programme (UNEP) came just hours ahead of
ceremonies in Oslo to award the 2007 Nobel Peace Prize to US climate campaigner
Al Gore and the UN's top scientific panel on the greenhouse-gas problem.

UNEP called for a two-pronged approach, tackling the carbon emissions that stoke
global warming and helping vulnerable countries shore up defences against its
impacts.

"If global warming is not confined, fragile, vulnerable states which have
already now fairly bad governance might implode under the pressure of global
warming and then send shock waves to other countries so that you will have
spillover effects," said one of the authors, Hans Schnellhuber, a professor at
the Potsdam Institute for Climate Impact Research near Berlin, Germany.

If warming rose by five degrees Celsius (nine degrees Fahrenheit) "we might have
something like a global civil war," said Schnellhuber.

According to the Nobel-winning Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC),
by 2100 global average surface temperatures could rise by between 1.1 C and 6.4
C (1.98 and 11.52 F) compared to 1980-99 levels.

The UNEP document, issued on the sidelines of the December 3-14 meeting of the
UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), is the starkest warning yet
by a United Nations agency on the security risks that flow from climate change.

These perceived risks -- also shared by a growing number of political and
military think-tanks -- stem from competition over dwindling water resources as
well as tensions arising from the aftermath of major storms, failed harvests or
other cataclysms.

The report, "Climate Change as a Security Risk," placed the spotlight on a
number of "regional hotspots," including:

NORTH AFRICA: Worsening water shortages, dwindling crop yields, galloping
population growth and "poor political problem-solving capabilities" will
intensify the potential for political crisis and migratory pressure. The Nile
delta will be at risk from rising sea levels and salinisation of farmland.

SAHEL: Climate change will exacerbate the the problems of a region characterised
by weak states, civil wars and refugee flows.

SOUTH ASIA: India, Pakistan and Bangladesh face "especially severe" risks from
climate change, led by glacial retreat in the Himalayas that will threaten the
water supply for millions of people. Sea-level rise and cyclones will threaten
the coastline of the Bay of Bengal and changes to monsoon rains will hit
agriculture.

"These dynamics will increase the social crisis potential in a region which is
already characterised by cross-border conflicts (India/Pakistan), unstable
governments (Bangladesh/Pakistan) and Islamism," UNEP said.

CHINA: Higher temperatures will worsen heatwaves and drought, driving
desertification and water scarcity in some parts of the country, which is
already struggling with chronic environmental problems. On China's thriving,
highly populated eastern coast, the peril will come from sea-level rise and
tropical cyclones.

"The government's steering capacities could be overwhelmed by the rapid pace of
modernisation, environmental and social crisis and the impacts of climate
change," says the report.

The assessment is the latest, but most emphatic, in a series of analyses of the
link between climate change and instability.

The Stern Review, a 2006 assessment on the economics of climate change authored
by British economist Sir Nicholas Stern, quoted estimates of as many as 150-200
million "permanently displaced" environmental refugees by mid-century.

According to a US State Department report in June, more than a billion people in
Asia could face reduced water availability by mid-century.

In September, Britain's International Institute for Strategic Studies (IISS)
predicted fears about stability are bound to rise to the top of the agenda.

"The security dimension will come increasingly to the forefront as countries
begin to see falls in available resources and economic vitality, increased
stress on their armed forces, greater instability in regions of strategic
import, increases in ethnic rivalries, and a widening gap between rich and
poor," it said. N