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### Mistaken as Derelicts, Protesters Are Congratulated by Judge

“Steve Clemens, [the 3rd of four protesters appearing before Judge Lowe in Oklahoma, was] finally asked, ‘What were you guys doing at the Qwest Center in the first place?’ The judge assumed [that the four of us] were arrested for intoxication or vagrancy. Steve said, ‘Your honor, we were there to protest the Strategic Space Symposium. We were there to protest the selling of space weapons technology to STRATCom.’ And from the inmate sitting area I shouted, ‘You just sentenced two Catholic priests to jail!’”

‘Catholic priest! Protest!’ exclaimed Lowe as the blood went out of his face. ‘Bring those two priests [Fathers Louis Vitale and Jim Murphy] back before me. Give me their files.’ At the bench we explained our protest. Lowe congratulated us for our witness and said he believed in nonviolent civil disobedience. He said that more of it needed to be done.... We were all sentenced to time served, given a pat on the back and in essence told ‘Job well done!’ The judge ended the session saying ‘I hope you all come back again next year!’”

“Judge Releases Protesters After Mistaking Them for Derelicts” by Frank Cordaro, *Nukewatch Quarterly*, Progressive Foundation, Winter 2009-10.

### U.S. Military Budget an Affront to God and the Poor

“[The \$680 billion 2010 National Defense Authorization Act] includes \$130 billion in funding for the occupations of Iraq and Afghanistan and only modifies the military commissions system at Guantánamo Bay, rather than abolish it. The bill included several military spending projects Obama had previously opposed, including \$560 million for a new F-35 Joint Strike Fighter engine the Pentagon had rejected. Then there is the approximately \$16 billion tucked away in the Energy Department’s budget, money dedicated to maintaining the huge U.S. nuclear arsenal. Overall, the bill increases military spending \$24 billion from the last fiscal year.

However the president or members of Congress may try to justify this military budget, it is an affront to God and constitutes a direct theft from the poor.... Where is the moral outrage at this gross misuse of the public treasury and the political doublespeak used to justify it? How is it possible that so much money could be appropriated in this time of recession when so many billions of taxpayers’ funds have already been used to bail out Wall Street, banks and other private financial institutions? Why are there few, if any, public officials saying that this money should instead be spent on providing universal health care for the poor, addressing the global climate crisis, and alleviating poverty? Finally, why is there such deafening silence from the church leadership regarding this colossal misappropriation of wealth and resources?”

“\$680 Billion Military Budget an Affront to God, the Poor” by Art Laffin, Commentary *National Catholic Reporter*, Nov 12, 2009.

### It’s Time to Make Alternative Energy Cheaper, Not Fossil Fuels More Expensive

“It’s time to stop trying to put the cart before the horse. Instead of trying to make fossil fuels more expensive, we should focus on making alternative energy cheaper. The cost of fully implementing the Kyoto Protocol (in terms of lost economic growth) has been estimated at roughly \$180 billion a year. For just a little more than half that amount, we could fund a fifty-fold increase in spending on R&D for the kind of game-changing technological breakthroughs — like smart grids, ultra-efficient batteries or even cheap, manageable fusion — we will need to end our addiction to fossil fuels. Such a commitment would resolve many of today’s political challenges. Developing nations would be much more likely to embrace a positive path of innovation than a punitive one that handicaps their ability to grow their economies.

As things stand now, our political leaders continue to offer up little more than fanciful promises that either mean nothing or have little or no chance of being fulfilled. So let’s not mourn the failure of the Copenhagen summit. If we are serious about tackling global warming, we need action that actually does good — as opposed to empty agreements and moral posturing that merely make us feel good.”

“Beyond Copenhagen,” by Bjorn Lomborg, *TIME Magazine*, Dec 14, 2009.



## Recession Provokes Reexamination of Values

“Ultimately, our survival depends upon our ability to look beyond self-interest. As the Internet and global commerce over the past 20 years have broadened social relationships and increased the interdependence of citizens throughout the world, this has become even more important. To evolve, economies must rely on complex, large-scale cooperation. As the financial crisis shows, economic risks are not isolated to particular regions. But the crisis has provided the needed impetus for policymakers to reexamine many assumptions underlying our current economic policies. Such reexamination, the economist [John Maynard Keynes](#) wrote, may enable us to:

*‘return to some of the most sure and certain principles of religion and traditional virtue — that avarice is a vice, that the exaction of usury is a misdemeanor, and the love of money is detestable, that those walk most truly in the paths of virtue and sane wisdom who take least thought for the morrow. We shall once more value ends above means and prefer the good to the useful. We shall honor those who can teach us how to pluck the hour and the day virtuously and well, the delightful people who are capable of taking direct enjoyments in things, the lilies of the field who toil not, neither do they spin.’”*

“Auditing Self-Interest” by Maurice E. Stucke, *America Magazine*, Dec 14 2009.

## Dramatic Crime Reduction — without Death Penalty Option

“Despite a population of more than eight million, [New York City’s] rates of rape and murder are less than half that of other major cities such as Dallas. Why is this important for abolitionists? Because New York does not have the death penalty.

The drop in violent crime in New York City has many fascinating policy implications. New York City is a racially and economically diverse city where few citizens own firearms for self-defense. The state implemented and then abandoned the death penalty without executing a single prisoner, so for those who argue that capital punishment is a necessary deterrent for homicides, New York City’s policing and crime prevention innovations strongly suggest otherwise.

‘Crime in the city continued to decline after the [New York State Court of Appeals](#) struck down the death penalty,’ says David Kaczynski, Executive Director of New Yorkers for Alternatives to the Death Penalty (NYADP), an organization that works to unite victims, law enforcement, advocates for the mentally ill, [restorative justice](#) practitioners and families of the incarcerated around policies that address their real and immediate needs and reduce the likelihood of violent crime.”

“Smarter’ and ‘Tougher’ on Crime: New York City’s Crime and Policing Innovations and their Implications for Abolition” by Paul Ruffins, *Lifelines*, National Coalition Against the Death Penalty, Fall 2009.



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