

(GEF); the head of the U.S. observer delegation attending the meeting, Robert Ryan, immediately rejected the Third World call for a new control mechanism. "The United States is not in favor of a new fund; existing mechanisms, including the GEF, could instead be strengthened," Ryan said.

The GEF is a three-year pilot project which already has \$1.3 billion at its disposal. The three agencies responsible for implementing GEF are the UNDP, the World Bank, and the U.N. Environmental Program (UNEP). According to the GEF's own writings, the implementing agencies are committed to working with NGOs, who act as "implementing agents." The fight around the GEF has been raging for months. Describing the last U.N. Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED) preparatory meeting in New York, Martin Khor, a representative of a Malaysian NGO, told the *Sunday Star* that it was "this call for reform of the Bretton Woods institutions (which many South countries perceive to be serving northern financial interests) that did not go down well with the northern delegations" and nearly broke up the meeting.

Minimally, developing sector leaders want to control the environmentalist agenda in their own countries. However, under GEF guidelines, a project that would be of value to a given developing sector countries, is automatically excluded. According to GEF literature, "Projects that are deemed to benefit the *global environment, as distinct from the local environment, qualify for funding.*" Thus, the large funds, under GEF control, which UNCED is demanding be funded at least 80% by developing sector countries, will not go toward solving environmental problems that these countries have.

Thus, Third World nations are calling for a new, independent fund. The criteria for this fund is explained in the final communiqué entitled "The Kuala Lumpur Declaration on Environment and Development," a document reported to have been drafted primarily by India, Malaysia, and China. The new fund "should be democratic in nature, with an equal voice for all parties in setting project eligibility criteria, project selection, the authority to release funds. . . . It should provide access and disbursement to all developing countries without any conditionality; it should provide for funding of activities according to the priorities and needs of the developing countries," the communiqué read.

Although "sustainable development"—the catch-word which Club of Rome leaders devised when "zero growth" wouldn't sell—is referred to throughout the Kuala Lumpur Declaration as a desired end, it is clear that developing sector countries have redefined the term. One formulation in the document read, "For the developing countries, sustainable development implies the right to development." As could be expected, the declaration focuses on development a great deal and the environment very little. "Development is a fundamental right of all peoples and countries. An environmentally sound planet should correspond to a socially and economically just world."

U.S. mayors issue 'ready to go' public

by Anthony Wikrent

By releasing a voluminous report listing 7,252 public works projects in 506 cities that would create 418,415 jobs this year, the U.S. Conference of Mayors has not only dramatized the extent to which infrastructure has collapsed in the United States, but has also directly challenged the "free market" shibboleths of the Bush administration.

Following a request by members of the U.S. Senate in January, the Conference of Mayors set about to survey U.S. cities and compile a list of public works projects that could be initiated immediately, but which lack funding. Cities were asked to provide the total amount of funding required for each project, the amount of funding required to begin construction in 1992, and the number of jobs that would be generated in 1992.

Though a dozen or so large cities did not respond,* the survey elicited an impressive response, with 506 municipalities, including some port authorities, participating. The responses were compiled into two large volumes, which were released by the Conference of Mayors at the end of February. Entitled "Ready to Go—A Survey of U.S.A. Public Works Projects to Fight the Recession Now," the survey results cited all backlog projects for essential services—sewer treatment, flood control, streets, roads, sidewalks, bridges, public transit systems, police and fire facilities, public housing, etc.—that the cities wished to undertake immediately, but lacked the funding for. Almost all the projects had advanced to some stage of final planning, but had been put on hold as local and state budgets withered under the "recession."

Repair infrastructure

Looking at the 300-plus pages of listings, it appears that at least one-quarter to one-third of them are for various water, sewer, flood control, or storm-water runoff projects. A similar proportion is for repaving, widening, improvement, or redesign of streets, roads, highways, and bridges. Most cities

* Among the large cities which did not respond were San Francisco, Calif.; Washington, D.C.; St. Louis, Mo.; Cincinnati, Ohio; Columbus, Ohio; Norfolk, Va.; San Antonio, Tex.; Indianapolis, Ind.; Rochester, N.Y.; Nashville, Tenn.; Memphis, Tenn.; and St. Petersburg, Fla.

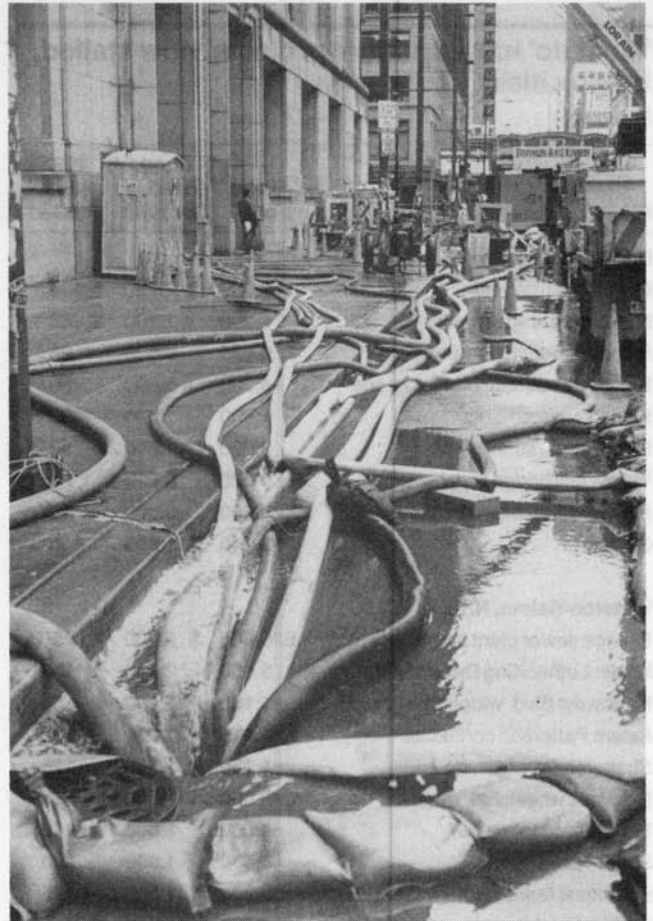
list of works jobs

provided quite detailed breakdowns of their desired projects, but a few cities appear to have consolidated their responses into general categories.

For example, Boston, Massachusetts provided a list of seven general public works categories, with a total cost of \$277.5 million. Boston estimated that it would need \$98.8 million to start these projects this year, immediately generating 3,060 jobs. The largest category was for water and sewage treatment, with a total cost of \$167.1 million, immediate funding needs of \$67.2 million, and creating 1,950 jobs. "Total Housing" was the second largest category listed by Boston, with a total cost of \$47.3 million and immediate funding need of \$7.5 million; followed by "Economic Development," total cost of \$25.6 million and immediate need of \$1.5 million; "Total Infrastructure," total cost of \$24.2 million and immediate need of \$12.3 million; "Road and Bridge Improvements," total cost of \$11.8 million and immediate need of \$9.5 million.

Topeka, Kansas listed only five specific projects, totaling \$40.4 million, with 1992 funding tagged at \$35.3 million, and immediately creating 720 jobs. By far the largest project was a sewage treatment plant, with a total cost of \$30.0 million, \$25.9 million of which is required this year; the project would create 400 jobs. San Diego, California listed only one project: a drainage pipeline costing \$20 million; \$18 million this year would allow the project to break ground, creating 500 jobs. The two largest projects listed by Atlanta, Georgia are a combined sewer overflow system, and the rehabilitation of Freddie Mac apartments. Atlanta needs \$42.1 million to start rehabilitation of the apartments, and \$41.0 million to start construction of the sewer overflow system. Approximately the same amount again is required to complete each project. The two projects would create 525 jobs.

Altogether, the 7,252 projects require \$12.919 billion to get started this year. That is less than one-third what the Bush administration wants to give to the International Monetary Fund this year. The total, multi-year cost of all these projects is \$26.730 billion—about one-tenth the amount of money the Reagan and Bush administrations have spent taking over bankrupt savings and loan institutions.



Cleaning up after the April 13 Chicago flood, which was caused when the Chicago River surged into an abandoned tunnel built in 1904-06. How many such infrastructure disasters are just waiting to happen?

'Free market' a failure

The Conference of Mayors' report provides a stark contrast to the cultish belief in a "business cycle" that typifies the "free market" ideologues in the Bush administration and in the fourth branch of the U.S. federal government—the news media. According to these "free market" ideologues, such as chairman of the Council of Economic Advisers Michael Boskin, or Office of Management and Budget director Richard Darman, any intervention into the business cycle would be unnatural; the U.S. economy will "recover" on its own. Thus, the U.S. government has done very little to steer the nation out of its economic travails, other than to have the Federal Reserve lower interest rates, have the IRS withhold slightly less of everybody's weekly paycheck, and to make sure that the CIA's colony, Saudi Arabia, keeps OPEC oil production high enough to maintain the present artificially low pricing structure of petroleum and natural gas.

These measures are aimed at maximizing the amount of disposable income available to consumers; the theory being, that since consumer spending accounts for two-thirds or more

'Must do' infrastructure projects, now stalled, in two cities

(millions \$)

Project	Total cost	Funds needed in 1992	1992 jobs created
Bridgeport, Conn.			
Chlorination project	\$ 3.500	\$ 2.750	138
Municipal garage repairs	1.200	1.200	60
Pleasure Beach bridge repairs	0.525	0.525	26
Sewage treatment plant upgrade	44.000	5.000	250
Sewer replacements	1.000	1.000	50
Sewer separation	2.000	1.000	50
Yellow Mill bridge repairs	0.020	0.020	1
Park Avenue reconstruction	0.500	0.500	25
City totals	\$52.745	\$11.995	600
Winston-Salem, N.C.			
Elledge sewer plant upgrade	\$25.000	\$ 5.000	250
Martin Luther King Drive const.	3.500	2.000	100
Northwest Blvd. widening	1.100	1.100	50
Salem Patterson connector	1.415	1.000	100
Shattalon Dr. widening	1.350	1.350	125
Sidewalk wheelchair ramps	2.000	1.000	50
Sidewalk construction	4.000	1.000	100
South Fork sewer	1.900	1.900	200
Southeast feeder water main	3.000	1.500	75
Traffic signal system	3.500	1.500	50
Union Cross elevated water tank	0.600	0.600	30
Water System upgrade	1.900	1.900	200
W. Clemmons Rd. widening	0.845	0.845	75
Yadkin River water intake	4.600	2.000	100
City totals	\$54.710	\$22.695	1,505

of U.S. gross domestic product, the sooner consumers have some money to throw around, the sooner the recovery will be under way.

But it is just such thinking that wrecked the economy in the first place, and has mislabeled as "recession," a new, much deeper phase of the depression that began with Paul Volcker's double digit interest rates in 1979. The Bush regime may be able to temporarily boost consumer spending before the November election, but the underlying cause of America's economic decay—the lack of investment in infrastructure and new, capital-intensive technology—is being completely ignored.

The Rebuild America Coalition, for example, has reported that during a recent two-year period, there were 229 water main ruptures for every 1,000 miles of line, in 34 large U.S. cities. In most older cities, some water and sewer lines date

back as far as 150 years, and are even sometimes made only of wood. That this older infrastructure has served as long as it has is due to the tremendous redundancy and resiliency with which it was designed and built. But the fact remains that the nation's infrastructure is old, much of it now being used well past its intended service life, and it needs to be replaced.

To some extent, the Conference of Mayors hits at this point, though not nearly hard enough. In a news release accompanying the list, Raymond Flynn, mayor of Boston and president of the Conference of Mayors, said: "This report is aimed at those in Washington, who need to know what could be accomplished if an anti-recession jobs stimulus were provided to our cities. It is also aimed at those who say that an economic stimulus program would take too long to implement, too long to have an effect on the recession. The report covers just a few hundred cities, but here are hundreds of thousands of jobs on the shelf, waiting to be done; and here are hundreds of thousands of workers on the shelf, waiting for an opportunity to produce something—for themselves, their families, their cities, their country." Flynn stated that the projects listed "are not 'make work' projects, they are 'must work' projects. These projects must go forward if we are to pull our country out of recession and prepare ourselves for the economic competition of the 21st century."

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