



Maryknoll Office for Global Concerns

NewsNotes

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Correction: In the March-April 2011 issue, the article "Tanzania: Proposed road stirs controversy" contained a couple of errors: The budget for the proposed road is \$470 million, not billion. The actual quote, "What number of schools, dispensaries, hospitals, training centers ... could be built? Are there really altruistic motives operating here? Or will a few people, a few large enterprises, ultimately benefit?" should be attributed to the advocacy group Serengeti Watch. *NewsNotes* regrets the errors.

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Maryknoll works for peace

From their founding 100 years ago, Maryknoll missionaries have encountered violence and its aftermath. In China, the Philippines, Japan, Korea, Hawaii and other Pacific Islands they knew the horror of repression and war. At times the violence was local or national. At other times, it seemed to be part of a regional or even global conflagration. From El Salvador to East Timor, Sudan and Chile to Cambodia, Guatemala, Vietnam, Peru and on and on, Maryknoll missionaries accompanied the survivors and often knew the consequences of violence themselves. They have seen close at hand the tremendous importance of making and sustaining peace as an essential expression of their missionary vocation.

Faith grounds and shapes the work of Maryknoll for peace. They have tapped well the spiritual energies in our own tradition. A small community of contemplative Maryknoll sisters lived for years in the midst of war in Sudan. Their mission and that of other Maryknoll contemplative communities – to pray for a just peace – has been a powerful witness to peace that surpasses all understanding.

Maryknollers have accompanied communities torn apart by violence and have worked to prevent or to stop war, to close the School of the Americas, eliminate trafficking in small arms, minimize trade in weapons, ban the use of landmines and cluster bombs, end the production and stockpiling of weapons of mass destruction, shift budget priorities from preparations for war to support for life, and on and on.

Orbis Books, such as the recently published *Catholic Peacebuilding* and *Ambassadors of Reconciliation*; Maryknoll videos like “Gods of Metal” and “Arms for the Poor”; Maryknoll advocacy and public witness; and the Maryknoll Mission Institute’s research on grassroots peacemaking have contributed significantly to Maryknoll’s work for peace.

In Kenya, Maryknoll sisters facilitate multi-ethnic conversations as a way to move beyond the inter-community clashes that plague that country. In the Middle East, the Democratic Republic of the Congo and elsewhere, they have accompanied communities in grave danger as members of the Christian Peacemaker Teams. In Brazil, Maryknoll lay missionaries work to protect the rights of women in prison and to incorporate the practice of restorative justice into the official justice system. In many countries, Maryknollers promote self-esteem and affirm the dignity of women caught in cycles of violence. At the UN,

they support an increased role for women in peace negotiations, disarmament, transitional justice and reconciliation efforts.

But perhaps the most significant peacemaking role Maryknoll missionaries play is that of neighbor. Theirs is a long term presence in communities struggling for survival and peace, giving witness to the great value they place on people and their culture. Father Bob McCahill and other Maryknollers have lived very simply in predominantly Muslim and Hindu Bangladesh for most of 35 years. When asked by Bangladeshis why he was there, he would say, “I am here to serve seriously sick persons who are poor. Your religion and mine teach that those who serve the poor serve Allah. I respect your Islamic faith. It is good. My Christian faith is also good. You fulfill your faith, and I will fulfill mine. We shall meet again in paradise.”

To the pursuit of just peace and inclusive global security, Maryknollers bring many useful lessons. They have traditionally lived in places far from their places of birth. They have learned new languages and appreciate different cultures. They have seen poverty and violence, but also have discovered the treasure of respected traditions. This experience of crossing borders to encounter and be enriched by the “other” continues to encourage Maryknoll’s celebration of diversity in a world consumed by violence-inducing fear.

This is the basis of the Maryknoll Office for Global Concerns’ Sustainable Pathways to Peace and Inclusive Security work. It is significantly influenced by Maryknoll’s increasing consciousness of the great diversity and inherent relationality in the universe. Our planet with so much life and wonder is surely made for peace by its Creator. Lasting peace for the human community will only be found in harmony with these great cosmic patterns and relationships.

With this in mind, Maryknoll’s work for peace remains deep and wide, including the pursuit of “right” relationships among humans – personal and community relationships that celebrate the gift of diversity and encourage the celebration of cross-cultural, interreligious, intergenerational encounter and collaboration; international relationships that emphasize cooperation, hospitality and the common good, not military and economic prowess; and a deep commitment to respecting the integrity of the natural world.

South Korea: Naval base threatens harmony

The following piece was written by Maryknoll Fr. Russ Feldmeier, who lives and works in South Korea.

A quiet fishing and farming village in an idyllic coastal setting on the island of Jeju is being destroyed to build a huge South Korean naval base. Rather than promoting the peace that Isaiah called for, Jeju will become a lightning rod for military tension in Northeast Asia. As reported in the September-October *NewsNotes*, the naval base is being pushed by the U.S. and Korean governments despite strong opposition from local inhabitants, environmentalists and the Catholic Church.

The base would include a sea-based Aegis ballistic missile defense system, which would have a capacity for two submarines, 20 large destroyers and up to two aircraft carriers. It is obvious that such a large base is not aimed at North Korea, but at China. The base on Jeju would be right on the shipping lane through which China brings 80 percent of its oil. This is a dangerous escalation of military might which China understandably sees as a threat to its national security. One can only imagine the response the U.S. would make if China built such a port only 300 miles off the U.S. coast.

The Catholic Church strongly supports the inhabitants of Jeju in their struggle against the base. Bishop Kang Woo-il, who is both the head of the Catholic Bishops' Conference of Korea and the bishop of Jeju, sees this issue from four different but interrelated perspectives.

1. It is a peace issue. Bishop Kang points out that “[w]e see this as a peace issue not just for our country, but also an issue for China, Japan and Korea....If this military base becomes a reality, it will only stimulate a larger conflict in Northeast Asia. We believe that this is not healthy for the peace of Korea, for Northeast Asia, and for the whole world.”
2. It is a democratic issue. The wishes of the people have been ignored as the government has pushed through the beginning of construction.
3. It is an ecological issue. The bishop states: “On



the one hand, the government is to host the 2012 World Conservation Congress in Jeju Island, proudly hailing Jeju Island as the only place in the world to have been awarded the ‘triple crown’ by UNESCO [designated as a Biosphere Reserve, a World Natural Heritage and a Global Geopark.] On the other hand, the naval base will require dredging of the sea bed and building concrete dikes. However, the coastal water of Gangjeong is one of the most beautiful natural preservation areas in Jeju Island: it contains a colony of soft coral which is designated as a national natural

treasure and it is also the habitat for endangered species such as the ‘red feet crab’.”

4. It involves a very deep communal wound. In 1948, at the time of the U.S. military government in Korea, there was a massacre of 30,000 men, women and children in Jeju. It has become nationally recognized as a genocide. One aspect of healing from the horror of this genocide was that Jeju was designated an Island of Peace by former president Roh Mu Hyon. However, the naval base once again has brought up the old wounds from the genocide, as police have been brought from the mainland into the island to clamp down on the protests of the people. Some have been arrested, and an outspoken village leader is still in jail.

In solidarity, on October 10, 2011, hundreds of Korean priests and thousands of religious sisters, lay persons and ordinary citizens gathered in Jeju from all over South Korea to express their solidarity with the inhabitants of Jeju.

There is a need for international solidarity. It has been reported that when several U.S. Americans called the Korean Embassy in Washington to register concerns, they all received similar versions of the same prepared response, “Don’t call us; call the U.S. State or Defense departments; they are the ones who are pressuring us to build this base.” Pressure must be brought on the U.S. government and the Pentagon to stop pushing for a naval base that will surely be a threat to peace in Northeast Asia.

To learn more, see www.savejejuisland.org.

Bolivia: Highway plan stokes conflict

Bolivian president Evo Morales recently yielded to significant protests against a proposed highway through indigenous and protected territories called the Isiboro-Secure Indigenous Territory and National Park (TIPNIS in its Spanish acronym). While the plan was proposed before Morales took power in 2006, he surprised and infuriated many by going forward with the project without consulting affected indigenous communities as required by Bolivia's new constitution and international agreements. Though Morales ended up ceding to protestor demands, the process has severely strained relations between his administration and social movements and between movements themselves.

The Morales government in 2009 granted indigenous territory status to the TIPNIS where three different groups living in 64 communities hold legal title to the land in common. The proposed highway, to be built by Brazilian company OAS with at least 80 percent of the \$415 million price tag coming in the form of a loan from Brazil's national development bank BNDES, would cut through a 4,600 square mile nature preserve.

Numerous complaints have surrounded the proposal. Some say the road will mostly benefit Brazilian interests such as logging exporters. Environmental organizations and some indigenous groups complain that the road will rapidly accelerate deforestation and other environmental destruction in the area. One recent study estimated that within 18 years of the road's construction, 64 percent of the TIPNIS will be deforested. The state hydrocarbon industry, Yacimientos Petrolíferos Fiscales Bolivianos (YPFB), announced its intent to explore important petroleum reserves in the park adding to the ecological concerns.

The government sees the road as critical to Bolivia's economic development, linking the Amazonian region where many meat and agriculture products originate, to Cochabamba, the gateway to the Andean highlands. The road will significantly decrease travel times. Others who are in favor of the road are Quechua and Aymara "colonists" who left the highlands to live in the TIPNIS in the 1970s. Today, the colonists outnumber native indigenous people in the area by almost three to one. And as most are farmers who need access to markets for their products, they want the road to go through.

For native indigenous groups who rely on fishing and food gathering, the road represents an existential threat. They complain that eight communities have already disappeared in past years due to pressures from loggers, farmers and others encroaching on and polluting their land.

In addition to these environmental and social concerns, many objected to the way the Morales government moved forward with the proposal without free, prior and informed consent from the indigenous groups who would be affected by the project, as called for in Bolivia's new constitution and international agreements such as the International Labor Organization's (ILO) Convention 169. Bolivia was the first country to sign this convention and encouraged other countries to join. The fact that none of these groups were consulted motivated indigenous and civil society groups to organize a protest march from TIPNIS to the capital, La Paz, to stop construction of the highway.

The march started on August 15 and created a quandary within social forces that generally support Morales: While many were concerned about the road itself and the apparent ignoring of the new constitution, some felt that the protests would play into the hand of opposition forces. The issue especially brought out tensions between indigenous and small-scale farmers. Intense debates sprung up both in Bolivia and around the world about how best to react to the proposed highway.

As the march wound its way toward the capital, opposition forces began to take advantage of solidarity protests to make them appear to be more anti-Morales than they really were. While many were willing to protest the road and how the government was handling it, most felt uncomfortable with some protests becoming very adversarial to the government, at times even racist.

Another surprise was the government's reaction to the march and protests. While Morales frequently used such tactics when he was a union leader, as president he reacted with a heavy hand. He warned in June that "whether they like it or not, we're going to build this highway and we're going to deliver it under my administration." He also accused environmental NGOs and community leaders of manipulating their constituents, saying that anyone who is against the road is an "enemy of Bolivia," suggesting that they were being influenced by the U.S. em-

bassy and international environmental groups who practice a new form of “green imperialism.”

In early September colonists who were against the march set up blockades near Yucomo in the northern department of Beni saying that the marchers should sit down and negotiate with Morales, not march to the capital. The government allowed the blockade to remain for many days forcing the march to stop and camp. While leaving that blockade alone, police broke up two other blockades that had been set up by the Ayorerero and Guarani people in support of the marchers. The police used tear gas and there were injuries in both instances.

Some groups accepted Morales’ offer to negotiate with marchers who returned home, while others insisted on a consultation with affected indigenous groups as required by law, among other demands.

When Foreign Minister David Choquehuanca visited the marchers’ encampment on September 24, leaders of the march used the minister as a sort of human shield to get through the police barricade in front of the blockade. The government considered the incident to be a kidnapping and sent hundreds of federal police to raid the encampment the next day. Videos of the violent repression outraged many and increased public support for the marchers.

The next day Minister of Defense Cecilia Chacon resigned in protest over the government’s handling of the protests, followed on Tuesday by Minister of Interior Sacha Llorenti; the resignations of two sub ministers added to the crisis facing Morales.

The president offered to hold a referendum of all people in the TIPNIS including 15,000 coca growers (who are generally in favor of the road), but this was refused by most who pointed out that the Bolivian constitution, the ILO’s Convention 169 and the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples all require consultation of affected indigenous com-

munities and that the consultation be done before any work begins on the project. As the contract to build the highway was signed with the Brazilian firm more than three years ago, a non-binding referendum at this time would be at best symbolic.

On October 13, the Senate passed a bill suspending the highway’s construction and declaring TIPNIS a natural reserve. Morales signed the bill into law a week later. While the law will end protests, some of its language is unclear, so future conflicts over the law’s interpretation are possible.

The TIPNIS controversy is sandwiched between two other events that have weakened levels of support for the Morales government. In December of last year, Morales abruptly announced the end of gas subsidies that resulted in massive price increases overnight. Large protests convinced Morales to reconsider and the subsidies were reinstated.

A more recent setback for Morales took place during the country’s first elections for judges: Opposition forces said the candidates were handpicked by Morales’ political party, and told voters to nullify their ballots – purposefully fill them out incorrectly – in protest. (Examples of null votes included ballots with more than one box checked or with large cartoons drawn on them.) Forty-five percent of the ballots were considered null, and 16 percent were left blank; it’s possible some of these votes were the result of a lack of knowledge and general confusion in choosing among 115 candidates. Only 39 percent of people voting did so correctly.

Regardless of why so many voted null, the results weaken the beginning of reforms in the corrupt judicial system and add to the list of perceived failures of the administration. While the TIPNIS crisis is over, Morales now faces a more difficult situation with an emboldened opposition and increasingly divided base.

U.S.-Mexico: No More Deaths releases report

No More Deaths (NMD) is a network and movement whose mission is to end death and suffering on the U.S./Mexico border through civil initiative: the conviction that people of conscience must work openly and in community to uphold fundamental human rights. In October, NMD released “A culture of cruelty: Abuse and impunity in short-term U.S. Border Patrol custody,” its second report documenting the human rights abuses perpetrated against

migrants in the custody of the U.S. Border Patrol. (The first report, “Crossing the line,” was published in 2008.) Below are excerpts from the report’s executive summary; the eight-page summary, the entire report and more resources and information are available at <http://www.cultureofcruelty.org/>.

... The abuses individuals report have remained alarmingly consistent for years, from interviewer to

interviewer and across interview sites: individuals suffering severe dehydration are deprived of water; people with life-threatening medical conditions are denied treatment; children and adults are beaten during apprehensions and in custody; family members are separated, their belongings confiscated and not returned; many are crammed into cells and subjected to extreme temperatures, deprived of sleep, and threatened with death by Border Patrol agents. By this point, the overwhelming weight of the corroborated evidence should eliminate any doubt that Border Patrol abuse is widespread. Still the Border Patrol's consistent response has been flat denial, and calls for reform have been ignored.

[The report's] findings demonstrate that the abuse, neglect, and dehumanization of migrants is part of the institutional culture of the Border Patrol, reinforced by an absence of meaningful accountability mechanisms. This systemic abuse must be confronted aggressively at the institutional level, not denied or dismissed as a series of aberrational incidents attributable to a few rogue agents. Until then we can expect this culture of cruelty to continue to deprive individuals in Border Patrol custody of their most fundamental human rights.

[NMD's] documentation from Fall 2008 to Spring 2011 includes 4,130 interviews with 12,895 individuals who were in Border Patrol custody, including 9,562 men, 2,147 women, 533 teenagers (ages 13-18), and 268 children (ages 0-12). ... Based on these interviews we have identified 12 areas of concern, and in the full report provide prevalence statistics and case examples for each: denial of or insufficient water; denial of or insufficient food; failure to provide medical treatment or access to medical professionals; inhumane processing center conditions; verbal abuse; physical abuse; psychological abuse; dangerous transportation practices; separation of family members; dangerous repatriation practices; failure to return personal belongings; and due process concerns.

- Border Patrol agents denied food to 2,981 people and gave insufficient food to 11,384 people. Only 20 percent of people in custody for more than two days received a meal.
- Agents denied water to 863 people and gave insufficient access to water to 1,402 additional people. Children were more likely than adults to be denied water or given insufficient water. Many of those denied water by Border Patrol

were already suffering from moderate to severe dehydration at the time they were apprehended.

- Physical abuse was reported by 10 percent of interviewees, including teens and children. The longer people were held in custody, the more likely they were to experience physical abuse.
- Of the 433 incidents in which emergency medical treatment or medications were needed, Border Patrol provided access to care in only 59 cases—86 percent were deported without necessary medical treatment.
- The most commonly reported forms of inhumane processing center conditions were overcrowding (5,763 reports), followed by unsanitary conditions (3,107), extreme cold (2,922), and extreme heat (2,349).
- NMD recorded 2,926 incidents of failure to return personal belongings ... People deported without money or key personal belongings are at heightened risk of exploitation and physical harm.
- Border Patrol deported 869 family members separately, including 17 children and 41 teens. Family separation frequently involved “lateral repatriation,” or deportation through ports of entry that are distant from the location of apprehension. It is a costly practice that increases the risk of physical harm to those who are repatriated to unfamiliar or dangerous locations.
- 1,051 women, 190 teens, and 94 children were repatriated after dark in violation of the Memorandum of Understanding between the Mexican Consulate and U.S. Customs and Border Protection and, in the case of children, the Trafficking Victims Protection Reauthorization Act (TVPPRA) of 2008.
- Increasing reports of psychological abuse included threatening detainees with death; depriving them of sleep; keeping vehicles and cells at extremely hot or cold temperatures; playing traumatizing songs about people dying in the desert (*migracorridos*) loudly and continuously; and forced holding of strenuous or painful positions for no apparent reason other than to humiliate.

It is clear that instances of mistreatment and abuse in Border Patrol custody are not aberrational. Rather, they reflect common practice for an agency that is part of the largest federal law enforcement body in the country. Many of them plainly meet the definition of torture under international law.

Africa: Agricultural labor, livelihoods

In most African countries, agriculture supports the survival and well-being of up to 70 percent of the population. Since the food crisis of 2008, international attention has shifted toward reinvestment in agriculture with a particular focus on Africa. While this reinvestment is important, it is critical to get the investment model right because so many livelihoods are dependent on it. There is little development in industry and other sectors to employ such a large percentage of people if agriculture was no longer possible for them. This fifth article in our series on African agriculture and food security takes a look at agriculture's role in creating jobs and fair labor conditions.

With special emphasis on consumer campaigns during the fall when people in the United States purchase Halloween and holiday candy, Green America and other organizations including those represented in the Interfaith Center on Corporate Responsibility are again pressuring Hershey to put an end to child labor on cocoa farms in West Africa. Hershey continues to lag behind its competitors in tracing its supply chains and continues to source cocoa from farms in West Africa where hundreds of thousands of enslaved children continue to work long, grueling hours.

A report commissioned by the U.S. Department of Labor recommends third party certification as the most effective way to prevent child labor, human trafficking, and forced labor in cocoa production. Hershey's competitors, Mars and Nestlé, have committed to begin using third party certification while others, like Green & Black's and Ben & Jerry's, have moved their entire cocoa supply chain to Fair Trade. The Hershey Company, however, refuses to adopt third party certification for any of its name-branded products, or to make any of its line fair trade.

While the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) touts the importance of improving supply chains for Africa's agricultural development, the Hershey story highlights some of underlying ways in which unchecked supply chains could fail African small holder farmers on labor standards. As the reinvestment goes forward with USAID encouraging more transnational corporations to become involved, Olivier De Schutter, UN Special Rapporteur on the Right to Food, warns that this process should be watched closely.

Access to markets is vital to improving livelihoods for small scale farmers in Africa, and contract farming has been presented as a solution to benefit both the farmers as sellers and the firms as buyers. But De Schutter points out that contract farming rarely encourages farmers to begin any value added activity like packaging and processing or marketing their own produce. In simply producing raw products, many small holder farmers become locked into accepting prices set by the buyers with whom they have a contract. The price offered may or may not reflect the costs of inputs like seeds and fertilizers. But through corporate consolidation and global concentration there are fewer buyers, and therefore all the power in the price setting process rests with buyer and not the seller. If the price is set such that the small holder farmer barely breaks even, no real opportunities are provided for farmers to climb out of poverty.

In his report De Schutter emphasizes that there is little attention paid to the rise in contract farming arrangements. "Under these arrangements, farmers commit their output to processing or marketing firms at predetermined prices that, more often than not, do not reflect the cost of production." He goes on to explore a number of business models that might better serve small holder farmers so they can realize their right to food, such as farmer-controlled enterprises, joint ventures or direct-to-consumer food marketing. De Schutter recommends several policy changes that government can implement to protect workers from exploitation. For example, governments could "encourage preferential sourcing from small-scale farmers through fiscal incentives by making access to public procurement schemes conditional on bidders' compliance with certain sourcing requirements." Also, governments could "ensure that the degree of competition among traders is sufficient to prevent farmers from being locked into unequal relationships with a particular trader" when alternative buyers are absent for that particular crop. Additionally, governments could "monitor labor conditions in contract farming and ensure that the expansion of such farming does not lead to the overexploitation of cheap family labor or to indirect downward pressure on the labor rights of agricultural workers." (De Schutter, 2011, p. 20)

As one of the largest source of employment, African agriculture faces several challenges. Though

women play a central role in agricultural production, growing as much as 80 percent of staple foods, it is the men who are the primary decision makers. In many communities diseases like malaria, tuberculosis, HIV and AIDS keep otherwise able-bodied workers (both the ill and the caregivers) out of the fields to plant and harvest. This is a circular problem because those who are ill often need good nutrition, but are unable to produce the food themselves. This is one of the major reasons that the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation began to become involved in agricultural reinvestment – but as we have seen the type of reinvestment is important to its success in addressing food insecurity.

In Africa, like in Latin America and other places, land is often passed down through generations guaranteeing that already small parcels of land become even smaller. This places pressure on the land itself because farmers need every square inch of the land to produce – even when the land itself might need a break from planting to rest and regenerate. Howard Buffett, the U.S. philanthropist, photographer, farmer and eldest son of billionaire investor Warren Buffett, speaking at the 2012 World Food Prize addressed this key issue for the African small holder farmer. Buffett commented on the kind of reinvestment now needed to help improve livelihoods in rural Africa saying that one “cannot correct low soil fertility by piling on chemical-based fertilizers. Even if you could, there are over 500 million small-scale farmers in Africa that ... cannot access them and cannot afford them...”

Buffett pointed to the fact that “one-size never fits all” in terms of finding solutions to improve African agriculture. Speaking to other donors and foundations he remarked: “Saying you’re interested in helping small-scale farmers only counts if the results transform their lives. The rhetoric has been strong, the results have been few.” As a way forward Buffett held up the findings of the International Assessment on Agricultural Knowledge, Science and Technology for Development (IAASTD) report (see *News-*



Vendor at food market on Lamu island, Kenya; photo by Judy Coode

Notes, March-April 2009 and May-June 2011), stating that a green revolution is not the answer. Although Buffett is a conventional farmer himself, he advocates for new thinking around agriculture in Africa, emphasizing the agricultural inputs that are free to farmers (like pollinators and beneficial nematodes).

Buffett hints that the Rodale Institute may be one place to look. The Rodale Institute is a nonprofit dedicated to pioneering organic farming; for over 60 years it has researched the best practices of organic agriculture sharing their findings with farmers and scientists throughout the world. In early October the Rodale Institute released the findings of its 30-year Farming System Trial (<http://www.rodaleinstitute.org/fst30years>) showing that in terms of productivity, drought tolerance, building soil quality, using less energy with less pollution, and most importantly, yielding higher profits for farmers, organic farming outperforms conventional industrial farming. These findings are corroborated by a study carried out by the UN Special Rapporteur on the Right to Food which revealed that organic farms create 30 percent more jobs per hectare than nonorganic, since more of the money in organic farming goes into paying local people rather than paying for farm inputs.

Improving the productivity and the economic returns of agriculture can have immediate effects on improving livelihoods and alleviating poverty and hunger, but farmers must not only keep their farms productive, they also must be offered a fair price for their labor. Market access is important, but the quality of the exchange must be watched closely. As De Schutter warns, “Entering into a contract is a private choice, but how much choice do farmers really have if their only access to markets is via a single dominant buyer? And how much benefit can this arrangement bring the farmer if the buyer can dictate the terms of that contract? If they are not careful, farmers end up as disempowered laborers on their own land.”

N. Uganda: Obama sends troops to Central Africa

On October 12, President Obama sent a letter to Congress saying that he had deployed “the initial team of U.S. military personnel with appropriate combat equipment deployed to Uganda.” The letter continued, “During the next month, additional forces will deploy, including a second combat-equipped team and associated headquarters, communications, and logistics personnel. The total number of U.S. military personnel deploying for this mission is approximately 100. These forces will act as advisors to partner forces that have the goal of removing from the battlefield Joseph Kony and other senior leadership of the LRA [Lord’s Resistance Army].”

An October 24 statement from the Acholi Religious Leaders from Northern Uganda in response to the administration’s decision said:

In response to the White House’s recent announcement, we would first like to reiterate our sincere appreciation to President Obama and the American Congress for your attention to the plight of our people. We are thankful for your desire for peace and justice in the world. Your efforts to achieve reconciliation and meet humanitarian needs in LRA affected regions cannot be understated and loudly communicates that we are not forgotten.

We also, however, feel the need to express our concern over the military nature of the current strategy. As history has taught us, military intervention is not the way to resolve the LRA conflict and achieve a sustainable peace. In the past, such approaches have directly resulted in the intensification of LRA violence and the increased endangerment of civilians.

While many have lost hope in any peaceful resolution to the conflict, the reality is that the peace process, in particular the Juba peace talks which began in 2006, is responsible for the relative calm being experienced in northern Uganda today. We, therefore, strongly implore all concerned parties to prioritize and creatively explore non-violent means to resolve the conflict. Instead of relying on military intervention, let us redouble our efforts to engage in dialogue.

After years of urging U.S. attention to the very serious violence perpetrated by the LRA, Human Rights Watch welcomed the administration’s decision and an October 14 press release from Resolve, Enough Project, Invisible Children, and the Voice Project said in part, “A coalition of human rights

and anti-genocide NGOs welcomed the announcement today by the White House that the U.S. will be deploying military advisers to areas of central Africa decimated by Lord’s Resistance Army (LRA) violence. The White House announced that the advisers will seek to assist ongoing regional efforts to protect civilians from rebel atrocities and to apprehend Joseph Kony and senior LRA commanders.

“By deploying these advisers, President Obama is showing decisive leadership to help regional governments finally bring an end to the LRA’s mass atrocities,” said Paul Ronan, director of advocacy at Resolve. “These advisers can make a positive difference on the ground by keeping civilians safe and improving military operations to apprehend the LRA’s top commanders.”

John Ashworth, an analyst who has worked for decades with the church in the region, particularly in South Sudan, where LRA violence has been devastating, wrote, “While one welcomes increased international engagement on the LRA conflict, one wonders whether military escalation is the solution. Churches have consistently called for a negotiated solution, along with increased protection and humanitarian assistance for the affected population.”

In September 2010, the Maryknoll Office for Global Concerns and Mennonite Central Committee hosted representatives of the Acholi Religious Leaders Peace Initiative, who came to Washington, D.C. to present recommendations from their own organizations and others in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Central African Republic, Sudan, and Uganda as the administration’s LRA strategy was being developed.

They were very clear then in their rejection of military operations against 200-300 LRA combatants across four countries and they stressed the importance of creating an environment conducive for effective peace talks, as well as the need to investigate the supply lines to the LRA.

According to the religious leaders, the launch of Operation Lightning Thunder, a military offensive against the LRA, in December 2008-January 2009, dealt a “devastating blow” to those who were still working to ensure the successful completion of peace talks at that time. The regional conflict has roots and dynamics that go beyond the LRA issue to deeper historical grievances.

We support the engagement of the Obama

administration in efforts to stop Joseph Kony and the LRA from marauding in the region. We are, however, very concerned about the involvement of AFRICOM and U.S. troops in this action and will urge the administration to take the Acholi Religious Leaders' fears and recommendations seriously.

Faith in action:

Follow the activities of the LRA with the LRA Crisis Tracker [<http://www.lracrisistracker.com/>], a joint venture between Invisible Children and Resolve Uganda, which provides data on attacks, killings, abductions, injuries and looting by the LRA.

Sudan: "The church God wants us to be"

The Sudan Catholic Bishops' Conference, covering the Republic of Sudan and the Republic of South Sudan, met in Wau, South Sudan from October 19-28. They released the following statement after their time of prayer and reflection on the new reality in the two countries.

... We remain one bishops' conference covering the two countries. As we wrote during our meeting in April 2011: "We are all children of God, regardless of geographical boundaries, ethnicity, religion, culture, or political affiliation, and we insist on respect for diversity." The Church in the two nations will continue to be in solidarity due to our shared history and the very real practical and human links between us. We have set up two secretariats, one in Juba and one in Khartoum, to implement the pastoral policies of the bishops in each nation.

During nearly five decades of war, the infrastructure of the Church stayed with the people through its bishops, clergy, religious, catechists and other personnel, alongside our brothers and sisters from other churches. The Church is the people of God; wherever there were people, the Church was there. For much of that time it was the only institution which remained intact on the ground. As well as its pastoral and evangelical role proclaiming the Good News, the Church delivered basic social and humanitarian services and provided leadership and security in the absence of government or in the face of a hostile government. The Church mediated local and national conflicts, and played a decisive role in giving the voiceless a voice in the international arena. The Church will continue to play a public role in both nations. Our role is not political in any partisan sense. Rather we hold our two nations, both governments and citizens, accountable to Gospel values. We confront them with truth.

To the citizens of the Republic of South Sudan, we repeat what the bishops of South Sudan wrote in September 2011: "[W]e recognise that 'Rome was

not built in a day' and that the development of a new nation is a process which will take time. While constantly holding the government to account and always expecting progress, we nevertheless caution citizens to be patient in their demands, to be fair to the government and to allow them time to move forward carefully and in good order." We emphasise that not only the government, but also all political leaders and citizens, have a responsibility to build the new nation.

To the citizens of the Republic of Sudan, we assure you of our continued presence. The Church is with you and will continue with its programmes which bring hope. We will pray and work for the rule of law, and particularly for a just solution to the question of citizenship.

We remain united in our concern for human dignity, the sanctity of human life, the common good, solidarity and basic human rights. Truth is indivisible. We reject talk of "protection of minorities" and instead insist on the rights of all citizens. We call for respect of human diversity, created by God, whether ethnic, cultural, linguistic or religious. Human beings are created with God-given dignity and rights, which are spelled out in Catholic Social Teaching, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the African Union Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights.

Our people have displayed great strength, courage and fortitude in the face of war and hardship, but they have been traumatised and cycles of resentment and revenge have been created. Trauma healing is an immediate priority. The Church, by its nature and mission, is a sign of reconciliation, and South Sudanese have demonstrated a remarkable ability to reconcile, both through traditional mechanisms and in the Church-led "People to People Peace Process." Reconciliation within South Sudan will be essential in building a new nation, addressing the grievances and pain of many individuals and ethnic groups who feel they have been mistreated even by

the state or those who misuse the powers entrusted to them. However a number of necessary conditions must be in place for this to happen successfully. These include education, security, and a degree of stability and political maturity. Eventually, when the time is ripe, a truth and reconciliation process should be developed. It is to be hoped that, with time, reconciliation (as opposed to mere absence of conflict) will also be possible between the two republics. The Church will continue to do whatever it can to bring people together in truth, justice, peace, mercy, love and forgiveness.

We are deeply troubled by the ongoing violence in our two nations. Civil war has broken out in the Nuba Mountains/South Kordofan State and in Blue Nile State, alongside the ongoing war in Darfur. We have consistently warned of the danger of a return to hostilities if the legitimate aspirations of the people of these areas were not met. Civilians are being terrorised by indiscriminate aerial bombardment. There is an urgent need to open humanitarian corridors to allow food and medicines to reach those in need. The dispute over the status of Abyei has been militarised. We urge the international community, and particularly our brothers and sisters in the African Union, to ensure that these conflicts are resolved peacefully through the full implementation of the remaining protocols of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement for these three areas, and to assist with outstanding issues between the two nations including citizenship and demarcation of boundaries.

In various parts of South Sudan, ethnic groups and individual leaders resort to violence to resolve their real or perceived disputes. Even as we meet, we hear of fresh conflict in Eastern Equatoria amongst some Madi and Acholi communities. We call for restraint from all concerned to allow their problems to be resolved peacefully. We are aware of tensions over land and boundaries in many parts of South Sudan, and we call on government, traditional leaders, youth and all stakeholders to acknowledge that there is a problem and to use peaceful and legal means to resolve these issues.

The people of Western Equatoria, Western Bahr el Ghazal and neighbouring countries continue to suffer due to the activities of the Lord's Resistance Army. We reject further militarisation of any of these conflicts, and call upon governments and the international community to work for negotiated settlements. We call for increased protection and humanitarian assistance for the affected populations.

We call for open, transparent and democratic governance in both nations. The two nations must learn to live in peace with each other, but also with their own citizens. We reject all policies which oppress, marginalise and dehumanise any citizens. Both countries are poor, and all their energy should be devoted to development and peace. Government, like Church, is called to exercise responsible stewardship. Leadership should be viewed as service to the community, not personal power or profit, and corruption is unacceptable. Delivery of basic services to the citizens must be prioritised, and the Church will continue to play a major role, particularly in health and education. We recognise new problems of urbanisation, economic hardship, land grabbing and more, and we call upon all stakeholders to address these issues honestly and transparently.

"The Church God wants us to be" is at peace with people of good will in all Christian denominations and all faiths. We thus reaffirm our commitment to ecumenism and inter-religious dialogue. As a founder member of the Sudan Council of Churches and Sudan Ecumenical Forum, we look forward to playing a leading role in the restructuring of ecumenical bodies to reflect the new situation.

At the root of everything are the values of Catholic Social Teaching: human dignity, the common good, a recognition of both rights and duties, option for the poor, care for creation, solidarity, subsidiarity and participation, good governance, and the promotion of peace. Without these Gospel values to inform our consciences, we will not succeed.

We want to give a special word of encouragement to our pastoral agents. We recognise the selfless witness of our priests, religious men and women, catechists, teachers, health workers and other Church personnel, both local and missionary, who are the pillars of the Church. We are aware of the toll it has taken upon them. There is still much work to do: The harvest is plentiful but the workers are few (Matthew 9:37). Go forward with our gratitude, our admiration and our blessing, with renewed commitment for evangelisation.

We call upon the faithful to pray continually, building on our 101 days of prayer for a peaceful referendum and our season of prayer for the independence of South Sudan. Prayer is at the heart of "the Church that God wants us to be."

May God bless you, through the intercession of St. Josephine Bakhita and St. Daniel Comboni.

Zimbabwe: Advocates present human rights charter

The following is taken from information from the Zimbabwe Advocacy Office in Geneva, <http://zimbabwegeneva.blogspot.com/>, and the Crisis in Zimbabwe Coalition, www.crisiszimbabwe.org.

On September 23, during the 18th Session of the UN Human Rights Council in Geneva, a coalition of Zimbabwean civil society organizations (CSOs) launched a Human Rights Advocacy Charter. They did so in anticipation of the October 10 review of Zimbabwe's compliance with its human rights obligations through the Universal Peer Review (UPR) process. The charter, written by a coalition of over 30 organizations, highlights the key human rights issues in Zimbabwe and urges the country's government to take advantage of the UPR process to evaluate its human rights record in the past decade and take measures to correct its failings.

The Advocacy Charter was presented during a special event, "The Universal Peer Review Process (UPR) and the current human rights situation in Zimbabwe," jointly organized by Zimbabwe Lawyers for Human Rights (ZLHR), the International Commission of Jurists (ICJ) and the Geneva-based Zimbabwe Advocacy Office.

In officially commissioning the Advocacy Charter, Dzimbabwe Chimbga, a projects manager with ZLHR, noted that although the UPR process did not allow for direct interventions by CSOs during the review itself, there were mechanisms by which CSOs can make submissions to the Office of the UN High Commission that would form part of the overall submissions to the state. "CSOs can additionally lobby UN member states to relay certain questions or recommendations to the State under review during the actual review process. It is this space, among other state-targeted initiatives, that the coalition of CSOs had sought to explore," said Chimbga.

Commenting on the current human rights environment in Zimbabwe, Chimbga noted that, notwithstanding the signing of the Global Political Agreement that brought about the coalition government, human rights violations continued to be reported across the country. He said that in 2011, more than 1,000 cases of various human rights violations, including arbitrary arrests, persecutions and harassment of human rights defenders had been documented by ZLHR.

With fresh elections imminent, Chimbga urged

the government to create conditions that would allow for the holding of a free, fair and credible election by ensuring that the electorate freely exercised its right to vote. He declared that the era of disputed elections should become a thing of the past.

The UPR is a UN-led State to State review process of each member States' record of compliance with international human rights law. The process culminates in recommendations being made to the particular State on how it can enhance the protection and promotion of human rights of its people.

On October 10, the government of Zimbabwe presented its Human Rights Report at the ongoing UN Human Rights Council's 12th session of the Universal Periodic Review. According to the Crisis in Zimbabwe Coalition (comprised of over 350 civil society groups), the report, prepared by the Ministry of Justice and Legal affairs, "painted a rosy picture of the human rights situation in Zimbabwe and is starkly different" from reality. "Torture, harassment and politically motivated prosecutions of human rights defenders and perceived opponents have persisted, while villagers in many parts of the country have suffered ceaseless intimidation by supporters of the former ruling party, ZANU PF."

The government's report to the UPR claimed that the judiciary is independent and the army and police are non-partisan, but the Crisis in Zimbabwe Coalition asserts that state security agents continue to be at the forefront of perpetrating violence, intimidation and torture on innocent civilians perceived to be in opposition to President Robert Mugabe's ZANU-PF party.

The government's report also claims that Zimbabwe's constitution guarantees the protection against inhuman and degrading treatment and that the country has incorporated the rights to a fair trial and access to justice in the legal system. However, the Crisis in Zimbabwe Coalition points to cases of trumped up charges against innocent political activists and human rights defenders that have been pending as a result of delays in court hearings and judicial abuse.

The coalition also faulted the report's claim that an independent Zimbabwe Media Commission exists to further human rights and that the government had opened up communication platforms through the licensing of commercial radio broadcasting services and satellite-based subscription services.

Kenya, Somalia's response to al Shabaab

On Thursday October 13, two Spanish doctors working with Doctors Without Borders were kidnapped by al Shabaab gunmen at the Dadaab refugee camp in Garissa. This was the third incident in two months in which foreigners were abducted by gunmen and taken to Somalia.

It marked an escalation of cross-border raids by the Islamic militants who have abducted two tourists, Marieu Dedieu from France and Judith Tebutt from England, whose husband, David, was killed.

The attackers, who were armed with AK-47 rifles, were reportedly among the refugees who had stayed in the camp for some time. Many believe that there are more al Shabaab fighters in the camp pretending to be refugees.

On October 18, Catholic Information Service for Africa (CISA) reported that at a meeting in Mogadishu between Sheikh Shariff, president of the Transitional Federal Government of Somalia (TFG), and a Kenyan delegation led by Foreign Affairs Minister Moses Wetangula, the TFG and the Kenyan government agreed to develop a common security strategy to fight the militia, since the al Shabaab constitutes a common enemy.

An article published on the website Somali Youth for Peace reports: "The meeting with the president was convened against the backdrop of the growing spate of armed attacks by the al Shabaab elements on Kenya.

"The meeting deliberated on the current situation on the ground, and noted as follows:

"That the prolonged situation of crisis and conflict in Somalia, resulting from the collapse of the Somalia state in 1991, has progressively mutated into a myriad of threats to the Somalia population, the neighboring states, the region and the international community.

"The region, through IGAD [Intergovernmental Authority on Development] and the AU [Africa Union], has consistently called upon the international community to focus serious attention on these growing threats. However, most of these pleas have been met with inadequate, inconsistent and unsustainable support.

"The security situation in Somalia improved following the defeat of al Shabaab after six months of intensive military operations by the Transitional Federal Government (TFG) and AMISOM [Africa

Mission in Somalia] forces and their subsequent withdrawal from Mogadishu on 6th August 2011. However, the al Shabaab group has since re-grouped and is posing a significant threat to the peace and security in Somalia and throughout the region.

"Further, the al Shabaab relocation towards Lower Juba, near the border, has seen some of its elements infiltrate into Kenya and commit heinous crimes, including abductions of foreign nationals within Kenya, attacking civilians, destroying property and obstructing humanitarian efforts for the more than 600,000 refugees hosted in the Dadaab complex. More fundamentally, these activities increasingly pose threats to public safety and security within Kenya, create anxiety among the populations and negatively impact Kenya's economy.

"The recent spate of blatant attacks is indicative of a changed strategy by al Shabaab calculated to terrorize civilians. This warrants decisive action to forestall the threats of al Shabaab elements to the humanitarian operations, restore security in the border areas and ensure that insurgents do not launch attacks against Kenya, the region and beyond.

"Based on the discussion, the two sides agreed that al Shabaab constitutes a common enemy to both countries, and therefore, they should evolve a common political and security strategy to address this threat. In this regard, they agreed to:

"1. Continue working together to stabilize Somalia and to stamp out the threats of the al Shabaab elements

2. Cooperate in undertaking security and military operations in the Lower Juba regions of Somalia and to undertake coordinated pre-emptive action, and pursuit of any armed elements that continue to threaten and attack both countries. In this regard, both sides agreed to revamp the joint mechanism to ensure enhanced cooperation and coordination in all aspects.

3. Reaffirm their commitment to continue to work together in urging the international community to favorably consider the recommendations and decisions of the IGAD and AU in relation to strengthening the Peace Support Operation in Somalia.

4. Express their determination to strengthen the existing cooperation between the two sides. In this regard, they agreed:

a) To facilitate cooperation among communities along the border on matters of mutual interest.

- b) To cooperate and collaborate in sharing and exchange of information that is relevant to the fight against cross border crimes.
- c) To continue working with the international community in the implementation of Peace Support operations as well as humanitarian action in Somalia.

5. Reaffirm their obligations to defend the sovereignty and territorial integrity of both countries from internal and external threats.

6. H.E the President of Somalia reaffirmed the commitment of the TFG to fully implement the Kampala Accord of 9th June 2011.”

Africa: World Bank Group facilitates land grabs

When the global food and financial crises hit in 2008, with food prices increasing an average of 43 percent, African countries were among the most devastated. The Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) estimates that at least 20 African countries remain in protracted food crises. African countries account for 39 of the 70 low-income food-deficit countries in 2011, while food prices are above those seen during 2008 peaks. In Ethiopia alone more than 13 million people are in need of food aid.

The “official” response by development agencies like the World Bank Group (WBG) to the crises has been a model of increased humanitarian aid and increased investment in African development. Concurrently, many African countries increased their openness to foreign direct investment (FDI) in an attempt to regain economic capacity. Ostensibly, this combination is a win-win situation. It should result in increased economic growth, development, jobs, and food security for struggling African countries, while providing investors a return on their investment and access to increasingly rare farmland. But there is another side to this investment model, one that proponents of the model tend to leave out.

Part of African countries’ increased openness to FDI is the practice of offering fertile land to foreign investors, often at extremely low prices—one lease, for example, had terms of 99 years at \$1.00 per hectare. (See *NewsNotes*, March-April 2009) According to the Oakland Institute report, “(Mis)investment in Agriculture,” this has “ignited a global rush for the world’s farmland by investors in what has become known as the global ‘land grab’ phenomenon.” Land grabs are not new in Africa, but the rate and scale at which they are occurring is without precedent in post-colonial Africa.

The Oakland Institute report focuses exclusively on the WBG role in facilitating these land grabs, and sheds light on how land grabbing is not simply an organic phenomenon resulting from the mutual interests of foreign investors and African countries.

Rather the WBG, through its Global Food Crisis Response Program (GFRP), and more specifically through its private sector arm -- the International Finance Corporation (IFC) -- is working through multilateral initiatives to directly facilitate this rush of land grabs.

The IFC is known for its private sector financing of international development projects, in which it first and foremost expects to make sufficient returns. But it also provides, along with its partner organization the Foreign Investment Advisory Service (FIAS), advisory services and technical assistance to developing country governments. “IFC thus advises governments from the perspective of an investor and with the objective of increasing and strengthening not only FDI in general, but also its own investments and development agenda.” This is a conflict of interest for the IFC and FIAS, which both clear the way for land grabs in African countries as well as offer advice and financing to investors.

Through advisory services and technical assistance to poor countries, IFC and FIAS spur land grabs in three general ways. First, they work closely with governments to rewrite investment and industry specific laws and regulations, which allow investors easier access and less constraints and oversight once operating within countries. Second, they work with governments to carry out land policy reform. In many African countries most land is traditionally unestablished or unregistered and controlled by local communities. By encouraging governments to create land registries, IFC and FIAS help consolidate land into land banks of central governments and, to a lesser extent, regional governments, which they can then make available to potential investors. In either case local communities are stripped of sovereignty over the land on which they live and often displaced as a result of these deals. Third, IFC seeks to establish Investment Promotion Agencies to promote a pro-FDI climate from within African countries, which can continue to facilitate land grabs long after IFC and FIAS stop their direct services.

Despite the purported benefits of these land grabs – jobs, rising income, increased food security – clearly the IFC and FIAS prioritize investor access to land above the serious problems of poverty, food security, and land sovereignty. In doing so they have directed policy and legislative agendas of African countries down a road that is leading to increased instability, less food security, and more internal conflict. (See *NewsNotes* July-August 2011)

It is right to focus on and hold the foreign governments and private investors participating in these

land grabs accountable, but it is equally important to understand the role that the WBG plays in facilitating them. If the global North does not begin to recognize and address the serious disconnect between its “benevolent” development approach to poverty and hunger alleviation in Africa and the reality of actual African communities on the ground, the only service provided will be to perpetuate the shape of that relationship for the past half-millennium: Exploiting the global South for the benefit of the global north.

DRC: Elections possible beacon of hope

A scheduled election on November 28, the first held in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) since the uprisings in North Africa, post-electoral conflict in Cote d’Ivoire, and the election of opposition leader Michael Sata in Zambia, may provide a much needed step toward peace and people-centered governance. (Since 1998 approximately 5.4 million people in the DRC have died in wars which primarily have been fueled by the struggles over mining and access to valuable minerals and other natural resources.)

President Joseph Kabila will run for re-election, vying with well known opposition candidate Etienne Tshisekedi, head of the Union for Democratic and Social Progress party, and Vital Kamerhe, former president of the National Assembly, who actually worked on Kabila’s first presidential campaign. The constitution adopted in January 2011 allows for a candidate to win with a simple majority, therefore only one round of voting will take place. “Given

that the next incumbent could be elected with a mere 15 percent of the vote, this will taint the legitimacy of the presidency,” writes Samuel Kapata, the pseudonym of an observer of Congolese politics, in an Oct. 25 article on AllAfrica.com.

“After Tshisekedi’s nomination by more than 80 political parties as a common candidate of the opposition,” writes Kapata, “he is in a position to reach out to Kamerhe ... and other political groupings to ensure that the opposition vote is not split. And, even without a united vote, he could still be elected under current voting rules and form a team of rivals Opposition candidates have to strike a deal to ensure democratic change in the DRC. For this to happen, Tshisekedi needs to capitalize on his long history and reputation in DRC politics to usher in what would be an unprecedented and long overdue victory for popular democracy... . In so doing, Tshisekedi would keep his ‘unflinching faith’ in the DRC’s cause alive.”

Economics: Vatican releases strong statement

On October 24, the Vatican’s Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace released an extraordinary document. Signed by the Council’s head, Cardinal Peter Turkson, and by its secretary, Bishop Mario Toro, “it offers a breathtaking analysis of the moral failings behind the current economic crisis,” writes Dr. Stephen Schneck, director of the Institute for Policy Research and Catholic Studies at the Catholic University of America, and “charts ... a ‘Catholic way forward’ from the present morass.” The rest of Dr. Schneck’s reflection, originally published on the blog of Catholics in Alliance for the Common Good, follows:

The analysis of the intrinsic moral failing of modern economic life is particularly compelling. For while the authors detail how the economic crisis of our day “has revealed behaviours like selfishness, collective greed and the hoarding of goods on a great scale,” it is not the greedy sinfulness of individuals that is emphasized. Instead, analysis here focuses on certain structural aspects of contemporary civilization that have abetted and facilitated such greed. Greed no doubt is an endemic temptation for our fallen nature, as it were, but special failings of current institutions, practices, and ideology corrupt the process of human formation in a fundamental way.

What practices and ideologies are to blame? “First and foremost,” we’re told is “an economic liberalism that spurns rules and controls,” an “approach unsympathetic towards public intervention in the market.” The European terminology might confuse American readers (who’d likely call such ideology “conservative,” not “liberal”). But, this is what Blessed John Paul II once called the idolatry of the market, which is described in [the October 24] release as a “system of thought, a form of ‘economic apriorism’ that purports to derive laws for how markets function from theory, these being laws of capitalistic development.”

Such thinking is neither radical nor new. Radical as it might seem to Americans, this analysis from the Pontifical Council fits comfortably within magisterial traditions. From the 19th century onward encyclicals and other Church teachings—including the writings of Blessed John Paul II and Benedict XVI—have preached that unregulated market forces endanger the common good.

Valuable as they are for economic development, without moral safeguards markets are perceived to foment attitudes toward others and toward the community that not only oppose Christian values but also are unsustainable for an enduring and just social and political order. Market operations incline us to valorize the self and self-interests and to do so in opposition to and competition with others. In individual moral terms, the worry is selfishness, greed, and pride. We’re nudged by market forces, as the document puts it, to live like a wolf among our fellow men and women. Understood more broadly, the Church’s long-standing argument is that the unregulated market’s “invisible hands” erode *caritas* and concern for others (especially concern for those Jesus called “the least of these”) and militate against the primary purpose of our public life as citizens which is the common good of the whole community in light of salvation.

[The October 24] release from Rome draws from the writings of Benedict XVI pointedly in making this case, noting that “In his social encyclical [*Caritas in Veritate*], Benedict XVI precisely identified the roots of a crisis that is not only economic and financial but above all moral in nature. In fact, as the Pontiff notes, to function correctly the economy needs ethics; and not just any kind but one that is people-centered.” Being should have primacy over having. Ethics should precede economics. Persons are irreducible: they are not merely commodities,

consumers, or producers. Thus, a moral appreciation of the utter dignity of the person, the solidarity of the human community, and concern for others must be empowered in public life to guide and regulate the dynamism of economic markets to support the fullness of the Christian vision for the common good. The economic miseries of our time trace to our generation’s failure in this regard.

The Pontifical Council’s analysis is powerful, and it resonates poignantly within our world’s current atmosphere of frustration and despair over out-of-control economic forces that seem to be shredding the fabric of our lives and livelihoods. The remedies that the Council proposes are similarly appealing. Needed, we are told, are morally inspired laws, regulations, and institutions to guide market forces toward the common good and to assure that markets serve humankind rather than the reverse. Specifically, the Council advocates for a supra-national network of laws and an international authority to regulate globalized markets. No fantasizing about black IMF or United Nations helicopters hovering over Wall Street, however. In keeping with the principle of subsidiarity, the Council would empower such authority to intervene only where local and national efforts to regulate for the common good proved ineffective.

American Catholic conservatives are in a tizzy, naturally. “Rubbish, rubbish, rubbish,” George Weigel writes, shouting for all who’ll listen that the Pontifical Council does not speak with papal authority and not only can its teachings be ignored, but they should be. Samuel Greg of the Acton Institute (echoing the American Tea Party’s shrilling that wrong-headed intervention by the “authority” of the Federal Reserve and the national government actually precipitated the crisis) complains that the Pontifical Council offers only “an uncritical assimilation of the views of many of the very same individuals and institutions that helped generate the world’s most serious economic crisis since the Great Depression.” As if anticipating such dismissals, Bishop Toso at the release of the document in Rome reminded the assembled journalists that the Council took its inspiration from Benedict XVI himself who, in *Caritas in Veritate*, proposed that some form of world authority was needed in the present age to bring order to emerging global economic forces.

Cardinal Turkson came to Washington earlier this year where he delivered a powerful defense of Catholic Social Teaching at an event commemorat-

ing the 120th anniversary of *Rerum Novarum*, the seminal papal encyclical to confront issues of economic justice. He is hardly a radical. It is a measure of how distorted the American political landscape has become that his analysis sounds so fresh and so

different from the norm in contemporary debates about the economy. In this new document, he invites all Catholics to look at the financial crisis as Catholics first and political partisans second. It is an invitation we should all accept.

Initial wins in fight to reduce commodity speculation

The growing number of individuals, businesses and social movements around the world who are concerned about excessive food and energy speculation won some recent victories in the U.S. and Europe with some market regulators passing stronger laws and others indicating a future shift to stronger rules. More than 450 economists signed a letter to the G20 finance ministers (U.S. Treasury Secretary Timothy Geithner and his counterparts from countries with the 20 largest economies) and the five commissioners of the Commodity Futures Trading Commission (CFTC) calling for regulators to “curb excessive speculation on food commodities” by increasing market transparency and establishing “position limits” or limits on the amount that any one speculator can hold at one time.

In the U.S., the CFTC voted 3-2 to establish new position limits in 28 commodity markets (19 agricultural, four energy and five metal markets). The new rules were criticized as both too strong and too weak. Republican appointee to the CFTC Jill Sommers said the limits “will make hedging more difficult, more costly, and less efficient, all of which, ironically, can result in increased costs for consumers.” Others felt the limits were too high to have any real effect. Paul Cicio, president of the Industrial Energy Consumers of America, said, “The speculative limits are so large that they will not have any measurable positive impact reducing excessive speculation.”

None of the rules will become law until the CFTC defines the term “swap” at some undefined future date and the bulk of the limits will only be in effect years from now after more data has been gathered about swap markets. Tyson Slocum, director of Public Citizen’s Energy Program, called the CFTC’s position limits “soft rules that won’t take effect until who-knows-when... [T]he banks’ status quo reigns supreme.”

Across the Atlantic, the European Commission proposed new rules to increase transparency

in commodity markets. In a joint statement, environmental and development organizations said the rules, if implemented, “will shed light on betting on food commodities by financial traders, but will not do enough to prevent speculation from fuelling high and volatile food prices.” They complain that the rules “include too many exemptions, allows EU member states to create ‘alternative arrangements’ to position limits and does not go far enough to clamp down on speculation that is divorced from supply and demand.”

Finally, at the G20 finance ministers meeting in Paris, the ministers suggested that regulators in each country should take measures to increase transparency but also stopped short of calling for measures to establish speculative limits.

The international divestment campaign has seen progress, with a number of universities pressuring their endowments to divest from commodity derivatives, and civil society organizations and concerned individuals approaching pension fund managers with the same appeal.

While these decisions can be seen as advances, there is still a long path ahead to truly rein in excessive speculation. In coming months and years, we see the following as key areas for civil society organizations and concerned individuals concentrate their efforts:

In the U.S. Congress: Defend CFTC and SEC funding; support the passage of Anti-Excessive Speculation Act, S. 1598, sponsored by Sen. Bill Nelson (D-FL) [and the parallel bill, HR 3006, sponsored by Rep. Peter Welch (D-VT) in the House]; and support passage of Sen. Ron Wyden’s (D-OR) Stop Commodity Speculation Act (yet to be introduced).

In Europe: Follow EU Commission process to implement stronger transparency. Special focus on UK leadership who has been most resistant to stronger rules in the EU and G20.

With the G20: Push for stronger recommendations on speculative position limits.

Drones: Critical moral questions

In recent years, what journalist Jane Mayer describes as a “radically new and geographically unbounded use of state-sanctioned lethal force” has become one of the foremost weapons in the U.S. arsenal. Despite significant moral and ethical questions about the use of drones for assassinations in, but also far beyond, Afghanistan and Pakistan, the Obama administration has continued and is apparently expanding their use.

Drone technology is not new. Invented shortly after World War II, drones were used to gather intelligence during the Vietnam War and were modified to fire missiles and drop bombs as early as 2001. Drones can remain in the air for a long time without refueling, record data and attack immediately when a target is detected, making them a dogged and lethal weapon.

In an October 26, 2009 *New Yorker* article, “The Predator War,” Mayer wrote about two U.S. drone programs, one run by the military and the other by the CIA. “The CIA’s program,” she said, “is aimed at terror suspects around the world, including in countries where U.S. troops are not based. It was initiated by the Bush administration and, according to Juan Zarate, a counterterrorism adviser in the Bush White House, Obama has left in place virtually all the key personnel. The program is classified as covert, and the intelligence agency declines to provide any information to the public about where it operates, how it selects targets, who is in charge, or how many people have been killed.”

Since then, *Washington Post* investigative reporters Dana Priest and William M. Arkin have conducted extensive research that was published in their new book, *Top Secret America: The Rise of the New American Security State*. The book documents the “spectacular rise” of the Joint Special Operations Command (JSOC), which has its own drones (as well as its own intelligence division, reconnaissance planes, dedicated satellites and cyber warriors).

According to a September 2 *Washington Post* article, which was based on Priest and Arkin’s book, “Two presidents and three secretaries of defense routinely have asked JSOC to mount intelligence-gathering missions and lethal raids, mostly in Iraq and Afghanistan, but also in countries with which the United States was not at war, including Yemen, Pakistan, Somalia, the Philippines, Nigeria and Syria

... The president has given JSOC the rare authority to select individuals for its kill list — and then to kill, rather than capture, them. Critics charge that this individual man-hunting mission amounts to assassination, a practice prohibited by U.S. law. JSOC’s list is not usually coordinated with the CIA, which maintains a similar but shorter roster of names.”

Brian Terrell, co-coordinator of Voices for Creative Nonviolence, in response to a June 7 *Foreign Policy* article, “Don’t fear the reaper: Four misconceptions about how we think about drones,” by Charli Carpenter and Lina Shaikhouni, insisted that the four “misconceptions” the authors list are actually true: Drones are “killer robots;” drones make war easy and game-like, and therefore likelier; drone strikes kill too many civilians; and drones violate the international law of armed conflict.

In “The Psychology of Killer Drones – action against our foes; reaction affecting us,” a post on the Fabius Maximus blog (<http://fabiusmaximus.wordpress.com/2011/09/28/29263/>), G.I. Wilson writes that drones are a “gateway to moral disengagement, dehumanization and de-individuation”:

- Moral disengagement – to mitigate, justify, neutralize or eliminate inhibitions and moral constraints connected to committing acts of violence or crimes using moral justification, advantageous comparison and sanitizing language – to relieve oneself or others of a sense of personal accountability by displacing or diffusing responsibility.
- Dehumanization – to objectify the enemy, no longer viewing him/her as a human with feelings, hopes, concerns – a form of moral disengagement, such as imagining one’s self as a hero or a functionary, thus minimizing the harm done...
- De-individuation – to disguise, hide within a group or in other ways become anonymous.

The danger seems obvious and public debate, essential. The Obama administration is establishing a series of secret drone bases for counterterrorism purposes in the Horn of Africa and the Arabian Peninsula. From Ethiopia, the Seychelles, Djibouti and the Arabian Peninsula, the United States will maintain “overlapping circles of surveillance in a region where al-Qaeda offshoots could emerge for years to come.” (“U.S. assembling secret drone bases in Africa, Arabian Peninsula, officials say,” *Washington Post*, September 21, 2011)

Nuclear weapons: 25 years since Reykjavik

The following article was written by Tim O'Connell, a former Maryknoll lay missionary.

October 11, 2011 marked 25 years since the Reykjavik summit, when President Ronald Reagan and Soviet leader Mikhail Gorbachev nearly agreed to eliminate their countries' nuclear arsenals. Twenty five years after the summit, two events used the anniversary to urge the U.S. Congress and global citizens to face the economic, political, and military realities associated with nuclear weapons today.

Representative Ed Markey (D-MA) and 65 co-signers from the House sent a letter to the "super-committee" tasked with cutting federal deficits. The letter calls for \$200 billion in cuts from the nuclear weapons budget over the next 10 years before cuts are made in programs essential for the well being of "seniors, middle-class families, and the most vulnerable." In an October 11 press conference, Markey stated, "America needs another nuclear weapon like Lady Gaga needs another outfit."

After President Obama's inauguration, hopes were high that he would take important steps towards nuclear disarmament. During a 2009 visit to Prague he promised "to seek the peace and security of a world without nuclear weapons." Since then he and Russian President Medvedev signed a follow-on agreement to Start II to reduce the numbers of nuclear weapons and reinstate on-site inspections to verify reductions. He also convened a summit on securing nuclear materials, the building block of these weapons. These were good and necessary moves but nuclear spending continues to rise.

Obama's latest budget request called for increases that would make the nuclear weapons budget 20 percent higher than it was under President Bush. Part of that increase was the price for Senate Republicans' approval of the new treaty with Russia. However, long term-planning also indicates a continued commitment to nuclear weapons.

In a recent essay, Daryl Kimball of the Arms Control Association outlined U.S. government proposals that include replacing 12 of 14 Trident submarines, which carry a total of approximately 1,100 nuclear warheads, upgrading over 400 land-based missiles carrying nukes, and building between 80 and 100 long range nuclear bombers. The price tag for these nuclear enhancements would top \$400 billion. That's quite a shopping list for a country with

national debt approaching \$15 trillion, nine percent unemployment, and census data showing 42 million citizens living in poverty.

The United States is not alone. Russia will spend \$10 billion in 2011 to replace old nuclear weapons systems that are nearing the end of their effective life. In a recent piece for Time, Bruce Blair, president of the World Security Institute, calculated that the nine countries currently possessing nuclear weapons will spend \$100 billion a year and \$1 trillion over the next decade on nuclear weapons programs. This total does not even include research and development occurring in other countries with nuclear ambitions.

Blair is also a co-founder of Global Zero, an international movement working towards nuclear disarmament that convened the other October 11 event. Their summit, held at the Ronald Reagan presidential library, brought together approximately 100 current and former government and military officials, analysts, activists, and others to call on leaders of the nine nuclear weapons states to initiate the first ever multilateral negotiations towards elimination of nuclear weapons.

People from across the political spectrum joined the summit in the belief that nuclear weapons are too costly, too dangerous and not militarily useful. They frame the nuclear question as a choice between nuclear disarmament and an ever increasing number of state and non-state actors with nuclear capability. They argue that the likelihood of a deliberate detonation or accidental launch increases as nuclear weapons proliferate.

Today thousands of nuclear weapons across the globe remain on hair-trigger alert, capable of killing hundreds of millions of people. Meanwhile terrorist organizations are working hard to procure the technology and materials required to build their own nuclear devices. To avoid a nuclear nightmare, we must eliminate nuclear weapons. Global Zero has established a step-by-step four-phased verifiable process that would accomplish this goal over the next 20 years. Pressure is building from political and military leaders and civic and religious groups. Grassroots support is essential for the movement to zero to be successful. To learn more about Global Zero's plan and become part of the solution visit www.globalzero.org.

War in Iraq ends – for whom?

With millions of others, Maryknoll missionaries have worked and prayed and fasted for peace. We have consistently supported alternatives to military action – and then to expanded military action – in Afghanistan and in Iraq. We celebrate the recent announcement of an end to the U.S. war in Iraq. But we do so with heavy hearts, for the repercussions and cost of that war are enormous and mounting; the war in Afghanistan continues; U.S. drones are attacking in a widening theater of war against terrorist activities; assassination seems to have replaced the rule of law for stopping criminal behavior; and U.S. foreign policy is increasingly militarized, with AFRICOM as a prime example.

On October 21, President Obama announced the end of the war, saying that the U.S. and Iraq would establish “a normal relationship between sovereign nations, an equal partnership based on mutual interests and mutual respect ... With our diplomats and civilian advisors in the lead, we’ll help Iraqis strengthen institutions that are just, representative and accountable. We’ll build new ties of trade and of commerce, culture and education that unleash the potential of the Iraqi people. ...”

Phyllis Bennis, director of the Institute for Policy Studies’ New Internationalism program, noted that the U.S. pressured Iraq for an agreement of immunity for U.S. troops that would have enabled them to stay beyond the December 31, 2011 deadline. But Prime Minister Nouri al Maliki, who is afraid his government “may fall” without the backing of U.S. troops, could not convince the Iraqi parliament, which is far more representative of the Iraqi people, to approve the extension. Political pressure on both Obama and al Maliki to end the war was significant. Bennis wrote, “[T]his is a huge victory for the anti-war movement, which has successfully transformed the discourse in this country from a very supportive population of this war to a population that now over 75 percent say this war is not worth fighting and the troops should be brought home immediately. That has been the case for some years now. And it has taken this long to transform that discourse change into policy change.”

The war in Iraq was morally unacceptable from the beginning; we opposed it formally and repeatedly. Much of what we feared did come to pass:

- The cost of war in terms of human life and suf-

fering for the people of Iraq, for our own service people and their families, and for others involved in the conflict has been unconscionable. The cost for Iraqi refugees and, in particular, for those who are Christians or members of other minority groups has been exceedingly high.

- War in Iraq destabilized the Middle East, causing more death and destruction in the region and increasing the threat of terrorist attacks throughout the world.
- The ecological damage is tremendous.
- The burden of war has been carried by the poorest and most vulnerable people as military expenditures steal funds from social programs in the U.S. and around the world.

When Maryknoll called for an end to the war, we also called for reparations. The U.S. should pay for reconstruction in Iraq, repairing damage caused by the invasion, occupation and years of U.S.-led sanctions. Reconstruction projects should not provide another windfall for U.S. firms, but rather jobs for Iraqi workers and companies.

Also, immediate and comprehensive attention is owed by the U.S. to the millions of Iraqis who are refugees or internally displaced. UN figures from January 2011 estimate approximately 1.34 million internally displaced persons and 1.68 million refugees. Since 2007, according to U.S. government statistics, 166,249 Iraqi nationals have been referred for resettlement to the U.S. 101,884 Iraqi refugee applicants have been interviewed; 84,435 approved for resettlement and 58,810 Iraqi refugees have arrived in the United States. Concerns about the deficit in the U.S. budget, national security interests and immigration fears and bottlenecks cannot be used as an excuse to avoid this serious responsibility.

In his announcement, the president continued, “And finally, I would note that the end of war in Iraq reflects a larger transition. The tide of war is receding. The drawdown in Iraq allowed us to refocus our fight against al Qaeda and achieve major victories against its leadership ... Now, even as we remove our last troops from Iraq, we’re beginning to bring our troops home from Afghanistan ... Meanwhile, yesterday marked the definitive end of the Gaddafi regime in Libya. And there, too, our military played a critical role in shaping a situation on the ground in which the Libyan people can build their own future.”

We hope so, but at the heart of our concern is a deep skepticism that the U.S. will ever build its foreign policy around a commitment to the global common good and an unwavering belief in the worth

and dignity in the eyes of God of each person, including Saddam Hussein, Osama bin Laden, Muammar Gaddafi, and the children of Afghanistan, Iraq, Libya and Yemen.

UN: Ban Ki Moon highlights civil society

Following are UN Secretary-General Ban Ki Moon's remarks on October 26 to non-governmental organizations.

The world needs to forge a common agenda for sustainable peace, prosperity, freedom and justice. I see three areas where [non-governmental organizations'] [NGOs'] efforts will be especially important.

First, sustainable development. The first Earth Summit in 1992 was a landmark. It produced Agenda 21 and binding conventions on climate change and biodiversity. Global awareness soared. So did NGO engagement. Next year's Rio+20 Conference is a chance to build on that spirit. ...

The second area where NGOs can make a big difference is disarmament. We have seen encouraging progress in recent years, advanced in large measure by civil society and organizations such as yourselves. I welcomed your decision to make disarmament the focus of the DPI/NGO conference in Mexico City two years ago — one of the largest assemblies of disarmament NGOs ever to be held. We need you to keep pushing — for greater transparency, for deeper reductions in arsenals, and for more ratifications of disarmament treaties, above all the CTBT (Comprehensive Nuclear Test Ban Treaty). Too many people dismiss disarmament as a pie-in-the-sky ideal. Let us work together to bring disarmament down to earth.

The third major opportunity: helping countries in transition. This year has been a most remarkable year for all of us. Not only those countries in the Middle East and North Africa — Tunisia, Egypt and Libya face major challenges — organizing elections, drafting new constitutions, promoting democratic practices, building independent judiciaries and free media. There can be no success without a healthy civil society. Please, do your part. Help these women's groups, social media activists, human rights defenders and others to take their rightful place in society — in government, in parliament, in every public institution.

One of the most important lessons I have learned as Secretary-General is the power of partnerships. Governments cannot do it alone. We need

support from business communities, civil societies, philanthropists, and faith leaders, and we need coalitions, we need alliances, multi-stakeholder platforms. This is our business model, and we know that it works.

Thanks to the power of partnership, we are closing in on a day when we can eliminate deaths from malaria. Our target is 2015. By that time, we expect that there will be no malaria-related deaths. It is the operational strategy underlying our new initiative for maternal and child health, "Every Woman Every Child."

That is also our approach with the new "Sustainable Energy for All" initiative.

By working together — NGOs, business, philanthropic groups, the United Nations and other international agencies — we can leverage our efforts and resources. Together, in close coordination and cooperation, we can achieve outsized results on virtually every aspect of our shared agenda. And we will continue.

These are difficult economic times. Tight budgets. Cutbacks. Belt tightening. You are living all of this, too. Everywhere, people are living in fear — fear of losing their jobs, fear of being unable to feed their families, fear that governments and public institutions will fail them yet again. It is up to us — organizations like yours and mine — to help restore that faith. To deliver for people in need; to not forget people in need, especially now when times are so hard. These are some of the messages which I am going to deliver next week to the G20 summit meeting in Cannes. During this era of new austerity, I often say that we must learn to "do more with less." In fact, however, we must think and act in a deeper way. The austerity challenge is not merely about quantity; it is about quality. It is not merely about "doing more with less" but about "doing better with less." By that, I mean increasing the impact of our work, making a bigger and measurable difference in the daily lives of real people.

I know that we can do that with you by our side — as partners across the full spectrum of our work. That is the power of partnership.

Resources

- 1) **Advent reflections: Incarnation spirituality in the light of the new universe story:** This four week reflection process is presented by the Society of the Holy Child Jesus, American Province. Available for free in PDF format, 10 pages, <http://www.shcj.org/amer/documents/2011AdventBook.pdf>.
- 2) **Catholics spending and acting justly:** A small group guide to living economic stewardship: Written by Charles K. Wilber, this eight-week resource on economic stewardship explores ongoing questions about how one spends limited human, natural and monetary resources. 96 pages, \$5.59. Published by Ave Maria Press. www.avemariapress.com; 800-282-1865.
- 3) **Move the Money:** American Friends Service Committee (AFSC) offers this new activist toolkit. Includes facts sheets and tips on community-based resolution campaigns; how to communicate with Congress; how to alert the media and advocacy advice. Learn more on AFSC's website: <http://www.afsc.org/resource/move-money-action-toolkit>, or contact AFSC at 1501 Cherry Street, Philadelphia, PA 19102; 215-241-7000.
- 4) **National Day of Action Against Guantánamo:** As the prison at Guantanamo approaches its 10th year, we rise up anew to say no to torture and call for its closure, accountability for the torturers, and justice for the victims of U.S. abuse. Join Witness Against Torture in Washington on **January 11, 2012** for a demonstration against U.S. detention policies. Buses will leave from many cities, from Chicago to New York; if you are interested in helping to organize a bus from your hometown, please e-mail jan11@witness torture.org for more information. From January 2-14, many will participate in the Fast for Justice. Learn more about the January 2012 activities at www.witness torture.org.
- 5) **Home:** This full length film tells the history of the planet, the history of civilization, and the impact of modern society on the web of life. Through visually stunning footage from over 50 countries, all shot from an aerial perspective, Yann Arthus-Bertrand shows us a view most of us have never seen. He shares with us his sense of awe about our planet and his concern for its health. With this film, Arthus-Bertrand hopes to provide a stepping-stone to further the call to action to take care of our home. A DVD version is available through Commission on Voluntary Service and Action, 22-19 41st Ave, 2nd Floor; Long Island City, NY 11101; (718) 729-2872. To watch for free online, and to learn more about the film, go to www.home-2009.com.
- 6) **Militarism Watch:** A project of the Fellowship of Reconciliation and endorsed by Daniel Ellsberg, Medea Benjamin and other veteran activists, Militarism Watch responds to the need in our movements for skills to research the many aspects of U.S. militarism, to inform our work and choices, make us effective in advocacy and media outreach, and be aware of emerging issues. Militarism Watch produces handouts and brings together resources to help increase skills on research, with digital versions and links to these tools posted on the Militarism Watch web page, which we encourage you to browse. Activities to increase capacity include workshops and webinars or cyber-seminars conducted by project members: <http://forusa.org/groups/services/militarism-watch>
- 7) **Tanzania Encounter, March 16–31, 2012:** Sponsored by Friends Across Borders, a program of Maryknoll Lay Missioners, this immersion trip will include visits with Maryknoll lay missioners at their ministries; participation in local liturgical celebrations; and experiencing wildlife in its natural environment on a safari in the Serengeti. Sign up now – deadline is January 16, 2012. Group size is between 10-15 persons. The total ground cost is \$1,950 + \$200 nonrefundable (unless program is cancelled) registration fee per person. Program fees cover all lodging and meals, all transportation within the country (including national air travel), medical insurance with medical evacuation, English-Kiswahili speaking guides, cultural activities, and safari. International airfare, taxes, and visa are not included. To make a reservation, request an application form at www.friendsacrossborders.org or by calling 914-762-6364 ext. 207.