

# Maryknoll Office for Global Concerns

# NewsNotes

*a bimonthly newsletter of information on  
international peace and justice issues*

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 Peace, Social Justice and the Integrity of Creation  
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## The new challenge of peace

We live in a world that is wracked by conflict. For too many people and nations, a major component of the fabric of life is war - preparing for war, struggling to survive in the context of war, and dealing with its consequences.

Forty years ago, in 1963, Pope John XXIII wrote in *Pacem in Terris*, "... [P]eople are living in the grip of constant fear. They are afraid that at any moment the impending storm may break upon them with horrific violence. And they have good reasons for their fear, for there is certainly no lack of such weapons." (#111)

Twenty years ago, in 1983, the U.S. Catholic bishops wrote in *The Challenge of Peace: God's Promise and Our Response*, "As bishops and pastors ministering in one of the major nuclear nations, we have encountered this terror in the minds and hearts of our people - indeed, we share it. We write this letter because we agree that the world is at a moment of crisis, the effects of which are evident in people's lives." (#2)

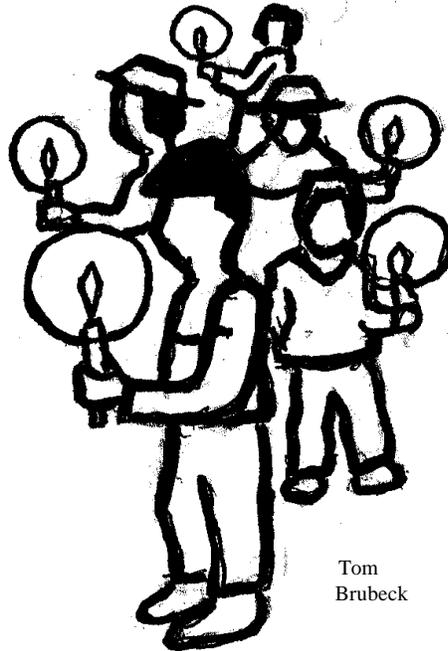
Since then, nothing has changed.

If anything, the fear has intensified. Despite the fact that the Cold War drew to a close, we have seen no peace dividend. According to the Federation of American Scientists ([www.fas.org](http://www.fas.org)), 33 wars are currently being fought in different parts of the world; over 150 have been waged since the end of World War II. Ninety percent of the casualties of modern wars are civilians. The human and environmental cost is enormous: 12 million refugees roam the earth, a sea of landmines and cluster bombs make many communities uninhabitable; psychological trauma resulting from war destroys families and communities; the environmental impact of war is tremendous; and the economic cost is a huge burden on the backs of the poor.

Then, on September 11, 2001, planes careened into the soul of U.S. Americans in a manner previously unthinkable, bringing life and death, truth and our own vulnerability into sharp focus. Despite poignant and powerful illustrations of our intense commitment to saving every life, almost immediately, another war -- a world-

wide war against terrorism -- was launched.

In honor of the 40th anniversary of *Pacem in Terris* and the 20th anniversary of *The Challenge of Peace*, each issue of *NewsNotes* during 2003 will open with a reflection on the "New Challenge of Peace" that confronts the human community as we move into the 21<sup>st</sup> century.



Tom  
Brubeck

That challenge is clear. As we write, war in Iraq is looming, the war on terrorism is being fought in Afghanistan and around the world, and conflicts in the Middle East, the Sudan, Colombia and elsewhere continue unabated. For FY2003 the U.S. military budget rose to \$380 billion, almost 20 times U.S. expenditures on foreign aid. In FY2000 the U.S. netted \$14 billion from arms sales. The new U.S. national security doctrine stresses offensive military intervention, preemptive first strikes, and proactive counterproliferation measures against rogues and other enemies. It is a strategy not of defense and reaction but of offense. The use of battlefield nuclear weapons is not precluded.

"Faith," wrote the U.S. Catholic Conference 20 years ago, "does not insulate us from the challenges of life; rather, it intensifies our desire to help solve them precisely in light of the good news which has come to us in the person of Jesus, the Lord of history. From the resources of our faith, we wish to provide hope and strength to all who seek a world free of the nuclear threat. Hope sustains one's capacity to live with danger without being overwhelmed by it; hope is the will to struggle against obstacles even when they appear insuperable. Ultimately our hope rests in the God who gave us life, sustains the world by his power, and has called us to revere the lives of every person and all peoples." (*The Challenge of Peace*, 1983, #2)

Peacemaking: Moral and Policy Challenges in the New World, edited by Gerald Powers, Drew Christiansen, S.J., and Robert Hennemeyer, is a follow-up to the bishops' 1983 statement. Reference no. 682-4, 368 pp., \$19.95. To order, contact the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops at 800-235-8722.

## Argentina: Government fails to agree with IMF

*After 11 months of negotiations and weekly headlines predicting an imminent agreement with the International Monetary Fund (IMF), the Argentine government was unable to satisfy the lending institution's changing demands. Because of the failure to sign an agreement, the administration of President Eduardo Duhalde paid only a fraction of the US\$805 million due the World Bank on November 14, according to the following article taken largely from NotiSur (11/22/02)*

Duhalde, a member of the Partido Justicialista-peronista (PJ), took office in January 2002, the fifth president in two weeks. He began negotiations with the IMF, and the government has several times said an agreement was close, only to backtrack when it was faced with new demands. On November 2, Duhalde said the government would not sign an IMF agreement that called for a new fiscal adjustment and "puts at risk the incipient economic recovery."

With the presidential election scheduled for early next year, IMF talks have become a contentious campaign issue. "If they are asking us for more taxes, more belt-tightening, or throwing people out into the streets, then there is nothing to talk about," said Cordoba Gov. Jose Manuel de la Sota, a contender for the PJ nomination. "These recipes have brought us to this crisis, which is killing children."

Argentines were shocked by recent news that four children had died from malnutrition in Tucuman, one of the poorest areas in northern Argentina, and authorities fear the number will increase. The nongovernmental organization Red Solidaria said there are 260,000 cases of childhood malnutrition in Argentina. The organization said 33 children under five die every day, 23 of those from preventable illnesses.

Government officials went back to Washington on November 11, in a last-ditch effort to avoid default on the World Bank loan. When all efforts failed, Argentine officials informed the World Bank that they would only make a token US\$79.2 million interest payment and would not pay the principal until an IMF deal was reached. The default cuts off one of Argentina's last sources of financing. It had already defaulted on US\$95 billion of its US\$115 billion commercial debts.

Argentine officials affirmed their commitment to meet obligations once an agreement is reached, but Duhalde and others said they would not tap into its diminished US\$9.8 billion in foreign reserves to pay back creditors, and would not accept the policy of savage budget adjustments as a strategy for solving its problems.

As if to demonstrate his opposition to prescriptions for more austerity, Duhalde said he was cutting the value-added tax (impuesto al valor agregado, IVA) by two points, from 21 percent to 19 percent.

IMF official Anne Krueger said some progress had been made with Argentina on how to resolve banking problems and on a commitment from Argentina not to further delay implementing its bankruptcy law. Other officials said the two sides were still unable to agree on issues ranging from tax and utility-rate increases to bankruptcy procedures. Particularly controversial is resolving the issue of some 250,000 mortgages that are not being repaid. The government says it is under IMF pressure to begin foreclosures on those loans as a way of assuring banks that existing contracts will be honored.

Duhalde and 20 of the 24 provincial governors signed a 12-point economic plan on November 18. The accord includes promises to address several points of concern to the IMF, including speedy approval of a coherent budget for 2003, elimination of tax breaks, and a commitment not to pass a law preventing banks from foreclosing on their debtors. IMF response to the plan was that a similar plan signed in April had never been implemented.

Privately, some officials in Washington worry that, if Argentina becomes more estranged from the IMF, popular sentiment throughout Latin America will turn increasingly against the IMF, the U.S. government, and the system of global capitalism that they champion.



## Ecuador: Voters reject traditional parties

On November 24, voters in Ecuador elected former Col. Lucio Gutierrez of the Partido Sociedad Patriotica 21 de enero as president, defeating multimillionaire Alvaro Noboa of the Partido Renovador Institucional Accion Nacional (PRIAN). This was the latest in a series of Latin American elections in which voters rejected traditional political parties seen as proponents of neoliberal policies pushed by the U.S. government and the International Monetary Fund (IMF).

Noboa, considered the richest man in Ecuador, has been accused of employing children and mistreating workers on his banana plantations. (Ecuador is the largest banana importer in the world and plantation workers who work under appalling conditions have been engaged for years in fierce battles for their right to unionize.) He is head of the Noboa Corporation which markets Bonita bananas and was recently the subject of an international campaign to persuade him to negotiate with his workers at the Alamos plantations. Instead, his company brought in thugs who violently attacked striking workers in May and then brought in strike-breakers. While the union workers have recently won reinstatement and health benefits, Noboa still refuses to negotiate a collective bargaining agreement.

The labor unions in Ecuador believe that President Gutierrez will be more sympathetic to worker rights than his predecessor or Alvaro Noboa.

The election of Gutierrez is also a sign of hope for Ecuador's 3.5 million indigenous, whose movement began with the creation of the Confederacion de Nacionalidades Indigenas de Ecuador (CONAIE) 15 years ago. The power of Ecuador's indigenous groups has been growing since 1990, when they began to play an active political role. To a large extent, they have displaced the role historically exercised by the unions. (*NotiSur*, 12/06/02)

The name of Gutierrez's Sociedad Patriotica 21 de enero refers to Jan. 21, 2000, when an indigenous uprising supported by the military forced former President Jamil Mahuad to leave office. Gutierrez was a leader of that movement and part of the ruling junta that resigned under U.S. pressure in favor of Gustavo Noboa, then vice president.

According to *NotiSur* (12/06/02), as president, Gutierrez will face major social and economic problems.

Ecuador recently dollarized its economy. Now it is one of the most expensive countries in Latin America. At the same time, 50 percent of the population earns the minimum wage of US\$140 a month, nowhere near the US\$800 cost of the basic basket of consumer goods. The Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC) says that 60 percent of the population is poor and nearly 28 percent indigent. A few upper and upper-middle class people benefited from dollarization, but for the majority, replacement of the sucre with the dollar was disastrous.

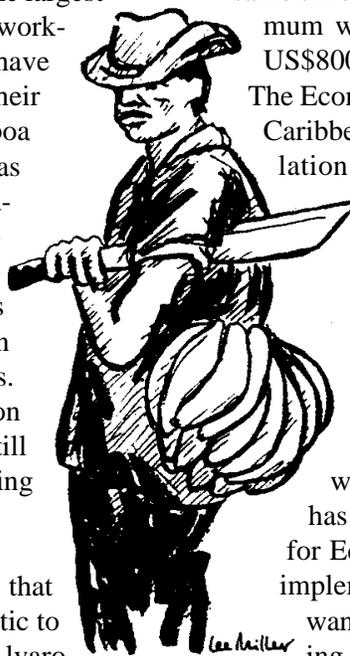
The outgoing government has been trying to negotiate an IMF agreement for US\$240 million since January, without success. Talks were suspended during the campaign. Gutierrez has said that an IMF agreement "is very positive for Ecuador," but he has also said that he will not implement the adjustment policies that the IMF wants. He contends there are alternatives for achieving the economic stability required by the IMF.

Additionally, the social movements that supported Gutierrez oppose the Free Trade Area of the Americas (FTAA). With Lula, the newly elected president of Brazil, Gutierrez is part of a growing number of Latin American leaders who will impede the U.S.-led movement towards hemisphere-wide trade agreements.

Ecuador's grassroots and indigenous groups were key in electing Gutierrez, but he must also work with the traditional political parties. Ecuador has 17 political parties, and Gutierrez's allies have just 13 of the 100 seats in Congress.

### **Faith in action:**

Contact the Campaign for Labor Rights ([www.campaignforlaborrights.org](http://www.campaignforlaborrights.org)) to learn how you can support efforts to reform Ecuador's labor code which makes it extremely difficult for banana workers to organize.



## Latin America: Poverty, hunger increase

*The Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC), a UN agency based in Santiago, Chile, released its "Social Panorama of Latin America 2001-2002" report in early November, which confirms that Latin America is losing ground in its effort to reduce poverty and hunger in the region. Among the most frequently cited causes are globalization, farm subsidies in rich countries, and the increasing gap between rich and poor. The following summary was provided largely by NotiSur (11/15/02)*

The ECLAC report says that poverty has persisted in Latin America and now affects 214 million people, 43 percent of the region's population of more than 500 million, and 18.6 percent of the population is living in misery. Between 1997 and 2001, little or no improvement occurred in people's standard of living, and the number of poor in the region grew by more than 10 million. The ECLAC report says the severe economic crisis in the region made the situation more difficult in the last two years. It says that "more sluggish economies and more volatile growth caused unemployment to rise and hampered progress or even brought regression in income distribution," pushing poverty up. The country that contributed most to the overall deterioration was Argentina, where poverty expanded by 5.6 percent in the period studied.



It also cites a need to improve educational opportunities, as 37 percent of the region's adolescents dropout of school. In most countries, the highest dropout rates occur in the first year of middle school, largely among low-income students, which reinforces the cycle of social inequalities. Honduras and Guatemala have the highest rates of urban school dropouts, while Bolivia and Chile have the lowest.

The number of people trained in high-tech areas is not enough to confront the demands of rapid restructuring of the productive sector and of technological changes. But the report also cites evidence of labor's inability to absorb more workers with more technical or professional training.

ECLAC predicts that, by the end of this year, the number of poor will increase in Venezuela, Paraguay, and Uruguay, pushing the overall rate to 44. No country in the region has made significant progress toward the goal set at the UN Millennium Summit in September 2000 to reduce global poverty by half by 2015.

Latin America suffers the greatest gap between rich and poor in the world. ECLAC suggests that "progressive redistribution of income" would allow economic growth to quickly improve the poorest population's living standard and achieve poverty-reduction goals. The agency urges governments "to take advantage of the relatively slim margin for action that they have to encourage improved income distribution."

ECLAC estimates that, by the end of 2002, poverty will increase by nearly seven million people, of which nearly six million will be indigent. The ECLAC report also

In a direct effort to combat poverty, in mid-July, the Catholic Church and the UN Children's Fund (UNICEF) met at UNICEF regional headquarters in Panama to extend their agreement to work together to reduce poverty in the region. Representatives from both institutions warned about the growing inequality in Latin America and the Caribbean, where globalization has made the region and its children poorer.

"Latin America and the Caribbean have suffered a great deal from the changes brought about by globalization, and, as a result, the poor are poorer and the rich are richer," said Colombian Bishop Jorge Jimenez Carvajal, president of the Latin American bishops' conference (Consejo Episcopal Latinoamericano, CELAM).

Jimenez Carvajal and Per Engebak, regional director of UNICEF, signed an agreement extending their joint programs until 2004.

Engebak recognized achievements in the last decade such as eradicating polio and providing greater access to primary education, but he said great challenges remain, including the need for a more equitable distribution of wealth.

Salvadoran Auxiliary Bishop Gregorio Rosa Chavez decried the tendency of governments, under demands of globalization, to set aside the obligations to their people, especially the poorest. "The states need to reassume their

role of looking out for the common good," he said. "In Latin America, the tendency is for the state to turn a deaf ear to the needs of the people as when basic services such as education and health are privatized."

Under the joint agreement, the priorities for the next two years will be to develop activities to promote the rights of children and work with people with AIDS, with an emphasis on children orphaned because of the disease.

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## Chile: Leaders approve U.S. trade agreement

*Chile and the United States reached agreement on December 11 on a trade and investment accord, part of a series of bilateral or regional trade pacts that the Bush administration hopes will culminate in a hemispheric commercial trade agreement, the Free Trade Area of the Americas, within two years. Both countries reached the agreement as their economies slowed.*

Upon approval by Chilean lawmakers and the U.S. Senate, the pact will eliminate tariffs on more than 85 percent of all goods shipped between the two countries, with the rest being phased out over 12 years. The U.S. sends mainly computers, heavy machinery and cars to Chile, whose exports to the U.S. include copper, paper products, fish, fruits and wine. Experts expressed doubt that the accord will measurably affect either economy, but critics will examine the accord closely for its impact on services, intellectual property rights, national treatment and other components that could set precedent for future trade agreements.

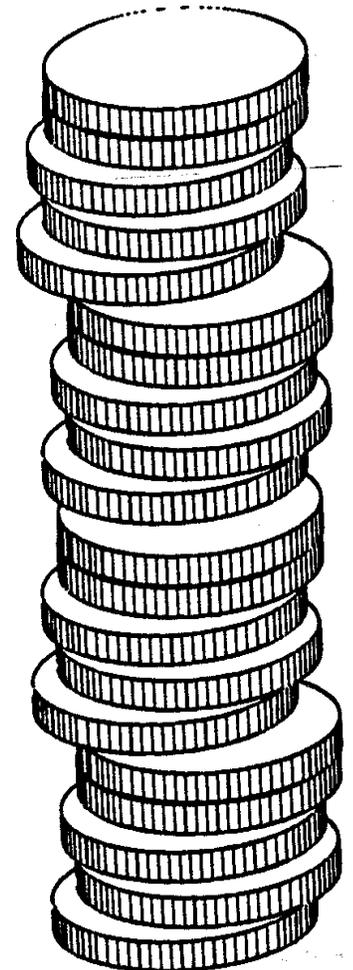
The talks were held up for days over Chilean opposition to U.S. Treasury demands that Chile drop all controls on foreign capital entering or leaving the country. Chile long has used limited curbs in times of economic turmoil to protect against the rapid movements of speculative capital. In the end, Treasury officials offered a compromise that allows Chile to impose monetary controls for as long as a year without sanctions provided they don't seriously impede capital outflows. If the country does impose restrictions, U.S. investors could seek compensation after six months in the case of bond holdings and direct investments, and 12 months for all other types of holdings.

The Chile agreement will require the government in Santiago to implement new rules controlling patent and trademark protections. Chile also will have to crack down on copies of U.S. patented drug products.

Another tough issue was the U.S. insistence that any agreement contain provisions to protect environmental and labor standards, a core concern among many in Congress. In the end the two sides agreed the free-trade agreement would contain language stipulating that fines could be imposed, backed up if necessary by trade sanctions, but only in cases in which a country wasn't enforcing its own labor and environmental laws.

Since the Bush administration won "fast-track" trade-negotiating authority in Congress last year, U.S. lawmakers will only vote up or down on these trade agreements.

Next in line for negotiations are the Central America Free Trade Agreement and the Free Trade Area of the Americas.



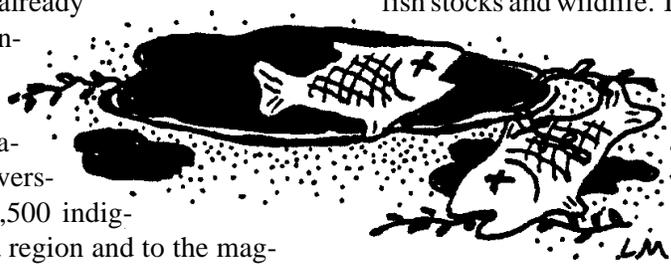
## Peru: Camisea project stirs controversy

The government of Peru and the Camisea consortium, led by Argentina's Pluspetrol and including two Texas energy companies (Hunt Oil and Halliburton) with close ties to the White House, are lobbying the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB) and the Export-Import Bank for US\$500 million in loans needed to complete an enormous natural gas project that Peruvian officials consider essential to the financial rehabilitation of Peru. Concerns about the project's impact on the region's biodiversity and indigenous peoples are threatening to derail the loans and delay the project, which is scheduled to start operations in mid-2004.

The Camisea project currently penetrates a Peruvian reserve where three nomadic indigenous groups live in voluntary isolation, vulnerable to diseases from which they have no immunity and dependent for their survival on a fragile ecosystem. Outside the reserve dozens more indigenous communities are already experiencing conflicts and contamination generated by the pipeline project. These communities are seeking international support to prevent irreversible harm to the estimated 7,500 indigenous peoples of the Camisea region and to the magnificent tropical rainforest of Peru's Lower Urubamba Valley.

The Camisea consortium plans to drill four gas wells, flow lines, a processing plant and two pipelines that will run side-by-side from the Peruvian Amazon across the rugged Vilcabamba mountains to the coast at a total cost of US\$2.7 billion. Three out of four gas platforms will be built inside the Nahua-Kugapakori Reserve. Peru established this Reserve to protect nomadic bands of Yora, Nanti and Kirineri people from unwanted contact. According to the *Washington Post* (11/20/02), an earlier attempt by Shell to tap the huge natural gas field was abandoned in deference to the rights of previously uncontacted indigenous groups and the jungle's "nearly pristine condition" and wealth of unique, "unidentified species."

Most of Camisea's gas will be shipped to Mexico's Baja peninsula. Halliburton is currently conducting an \$8 million feasibility study for gas liquifaction and processing plants on the coasts of Peru and Baja California. The Mexican plants will produce cheap electricity for Californian consumers, who will bear none of the environmental and health costs. Indigenous peoples in Peru and poor border communities in Mexico will suffer environmental contamination and social disruption so that Californians can get energy cheap. Californian environmentalists point out that the availability of cheap electricity will be a disincentive for developing clean energy alternatives, which is what California really needs.



In Peru, the pipelines will pass within 300 meters of a community school and even closer to some homes, risking people's safety in the event of pipeline ruptures and explosions. Industrial waste, increased river traffic, noise and deforestation already contaminate water and reduce fish stocks and wildlife. These are grave threats to people who depend entirely on natural resources for subsistence. Pipeline construction is also bringing a wave of workers, colonists and loggers to the area, challenging the indigenous peoples' rights to land and game. During the projected 33-year life of the project, environmental degradation and social and cultural breakdown are inevitable.

In response to criticism, Peru's ministry of mines and energy invited international nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) to observe the environmental monitoring of the Camisea natural gas project first hand, claiming that Peru has in place effective mechanisms to ensure protection of the environment. But environmental organizations, indigenous peoples and some members of the U.S. Congress are not convinced.

U.S. federal law requires that projects receiving support from the Export-Import Bank of the United States or a favorable vote by the U.S. representative to the Inter-American Development Bank pass rigorous environmental impact assessments. Already, numerous problems with the project have been identified, including fuel spills, unauthorized pipeline route diversions, destructive erosion and landslides. An independent analysis commissioned by Friends of the Earth and Amazon Watch, found that the project would have "irreversible impacts on the biodiversity of this area and on the indigenous groups."

For additional information and action suggestions, click on "Eye on Mega Projects" at [www.amazonwatch.org](http://www.amazonwatch.org) or visit [www.foe.org/camps/intl/eca/top5.html](http://www.foe.org/camps/intl/eca/top5.html)

## Venezuela: Strike threatens destabilization

*A general strike that started on December 2 turned into the longest in Venezuelan history, threatening to completely destabilize the country. The opposition took measures to intensify and prolong the strike at every opportunity, creating a situation of extreme social tension which they clearly hoped would trigger either a coup or foreign intervention. As we write, the strike continues. The following article was written by Julia Dietz, who worked with the Maryknoll Office for Global Concerns through the Lutheran Volunteer Corps.*

At first the strike had little effect, despite the media creation of what Maryknoll missionary Lisa Sullivan described as a “‘virtual’ *paro* [strike], in which TV stations show over and over again the same uncrowded streets in the same wealthy sector of Caracas, while everywhere else things are up and running.” She added that “people perceive (perhaps correctly) that the leader in this effort to oust Chavez is the media.” Most media in Venezuela has long been used as a political instrument of the opposition, though the state-owned media is pro-government.

When it was clear that the general strike was dying, the opposition transformed it into a protest action, calling it an “active” strike. The opposition media leapt to blame all violence on Chavez personally, especially the tragic shooting deaths of three opposition protesters on December 7. The sharpshooter incident, which was strikingly reminiscent of the violence that served as a pretext for the April coup, caused the opposition to dig in their heels on the need for Chavez’ departure.

During the strike, the state owned oil company PDVSA effectively halted oil exports, causing long lines at gas stations and threatening Venezuela’s oil-dependent economy. PDVSA’s involvement, which has been key to the strike’s success, stems from the opposition-friendly management, who stand to gain from the company’s privatization. They are angry that Chavez’ new laws and constitution firmly place Venezuelan oil in the hands of the state. Strategically located, Venezuela supplies the U.S. with 15 percent of its oil. Given the impending war with Iraq, the U.S. cannot afford to lose access to this petroleum, but major U.S. economic interests would also benefit from its privatization.

In the opinion of many Venezuelan friends of Maryknoll missionaries in that country, the real issue in the conflict is Venezuela’s oil. Keeping Venezuela’s oil in public hands, which ensures that oil revenue goes towards the common good rather than into private pockets, is just part of Chavez’ “radical” pro-poor social agenda that

threatens the opposition’s power. Other aspects include a land reform law, similar to the one passed in 1964, which Chavez clearly intends to enforce. The law has angered cattle ranchers near the Colombian border who currently benefit from weak land law enforcement, and land title mismanagement. Both the land law and a law strengthening state ownership of the oil industry will go into effect January 1, 2003. The traditional parties of the elite also felt excluded by the government when they were only given a

handful of delegation seats during the construction of Venezuela’s 1999 constitution. Meanwhile, Venezuela’s poor are fiercely loyal to the progressive document, carrying miniature copies with them and pointing out sections they helped write.

A familiar story is playing out in Venezuela, reminiscent of Chile, Guatemala, and Nicaragua: via a democratic process, a candidate with a radically pro-poor social agenda is elected (often by an overwhelming majority)

only to have the social change process thwarted by extreme opposition, both from within and outside the country. One Maryknoll lay missionary observes, “Just like with [Chile’s Salvador] Allende, the powerful absolutely *refuse* to let Chavez mover forward with his government.”

With each phase of the strike, the opposition has radicalized its demands, framing the conflict as if it revolved completely around the president’s personality: the call for a non-binding consultation on Chavez’ rule transformed into a demand for a binding referendum; insistence on early elections gave way to cries for his resignation.

Any electoral “solution” at this point is unlikely to stem the chaos. The opposition’s deep divisions create a leadership vacuum, and few would be able to take Chavez’ place. Any electoral steps taken before August 2003, when the constitution permits a referendum on Chavez’ rule, could be seen as unconstitutional. If Chavez is removed now, even through elections, the president’s many supporters will see the move as illegal. Lisa Sullivan explains,



“Whether or not one likes Chavez, it is not wise to underestimate the extraordinary passion that the barrio folks feel for him. They say that for the first time in their 40-year democracy there is a president who speaks their language, cares passionately for them, puts them as his top priority, and builds schools, low income housing, [and] sports complexes in *their* barrios. This was never the priority

before... More than anything Chavez has opened the door to this large segment of society, and has invited them in. They don't take lightly the request to now step out.”

*For more information, read Charles Hardy's editorials on-line at [www.vheadline.com](http://www.vheadline.com).*

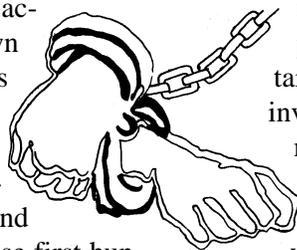
## Colombia: 100 critical days for human rights

*Since his inauguration as Colombian president in August 2002, Alvaro Uribe has issued controversial orders like Decree 2002, which limits rights, gives the military special powers and authorizes zones of “rehabilitation and consolidation” that permit warrant-less searches and arrests, and limit freedom of motion and the press. The following article by Julia Dietz, who worked at the Maryknoll Office for Global Concerns through the Lutheran Volunteer Corps program, excerpts some of the main conclusions of a report on the first hundred days of Uribe's presidency entitled “A war against whom? One hundred critical days for human rights,” by Colombian social justice and human rights groups (El Banco de Datos CINEP/Justicia y Paz, CODHES and la Escuela Nacional Sindical).*

Instead of targeting the illegal armed actors, the burden of the government crackdown has been borne by people like those residents of Comuna 13 killed or injured as military troops took over their Medellín neighborhood, or by peaceful reform groups subjected to raids by the Colombian army and secret police. The situation lived out in these first hundred days of the Uribe administration highlights the breach between the government's discourse and its actions. Above all, it confirms the concern, shared by many, that compliance with international and national human rights agreements are being subordinated to a strategy of “democratic security” that up until now has been nothing other than a strategy of war and repression against the civilian population.

The Uribe government's democratic security policy employs a strategy of “total war” which violates the essential principles of distinction and noninvolvement of the civilian population in the conflict. This concept also allows for civil powers to be subordinated to military power.

The issue of Decree 2002 contradicts international human rights conventions and international humanitarian law, and limits the fundamental rights of Colombians in regard to due process, the presumption of innocence, the distinction between combatants and non-combatants, and non-discrimination. Language in the decree warns that individuals or organizations involved in delinquent activ-



ity might disguise themselves as part of the civilian population. This rationale has the potential to make targets out of civilians in conflict zones or groups involved in political opposition, the defense of human rights, or the quest for peace. [This may already be happening: many Colombian human rights groups feel that the Uribe government is waging a de-legitimization campaign against them.]

The panorama of statistics collected by the CODHES databank indicates the prevalence of threats and selective assassinations during the first period of the Uribe's presidency, and a worrying increase in cases of torture. In a period of three months (July to September), about 150,000 people fled the armed conflict and other sociopolitical violence. Arbitrary detentions skyrocketed, with a particularly serious case occurring in Saravena, where thousands of people were taken to a coliseum, [photographed, fingerprinted] and their bodies stamped with indelible ink, an image reminiscent of what took place in stadiums during the Chilean dictatorships.

### **Faith in action:**

Write to President Uribe, stating your concern about his policies, and asking him to respect human and civil rights as well as international humanitarian law. President Alvaro Uribe Vélez, President of the Republic of Colombia, Palacio de Nariño, Santafé de Bogotá, Colombia; fax: (57 1) 342-0592; [auribe@presidencia.gov.co](mailto:auribe@presidencia.gov.co)

## Millions face famine in Africa

*More than rain is needed to end the food security crisis now faced by a number of African countries. The following article examines some possible solutions.*

There are many African proverbs about hunger, food and sharing. The Bena people of Tanzania say, "When there is severe hunger, it is better for the heavens to open," meaning that what is needed is rain. According to Bishop Rudolf Deng of the Diocese of Wau, southern Sudan, drought and war are the causes of famine. In late October 2002 Deng predicted that people in his area would be out of food by Christmas since there was no harvest that year.



To the east of Sudan, in Eritrea and Ethiopia, "the heavens did not open," and caused 60 to 70 percent crop failures in parts of the midlands and highlands, and as high as 95 to 100 percent in the lowlands. Eritrea needs US\$105.1 million to help feed the 1.4 million people affected by drought, while Ethiopia will require two million tons of food aid for some 14 million people.

In Southern Africa 14 million people are threatened with starvation, primarily due to two consecutive droughts. Malawi, Zambia, Zimbabwe and Swaziland are hardest hit. The severity of the famine is complicated by HIV/AIDS, political turmoil, heated debate over genetically modified (GM) maize in several countries, and by increasing poverty and unemployment for most affected people. In Malawi there is food for sale, but prices too high for many people.

A delegation of U.S. Catholic bishops and their staff visited Southern Africa in October 2002. The delegation called for food relief and increased U.S. development aid for such things as seeds. They also pushed for greater access to antiretroviral treatments for those infected with HIV/AIDS. Certainly these are important short term responses.

Long-term solutions to famine in Africa would have to include serious attention to three key issues that impact access to food on the African continent: Access to treatments for HIV/AIDS and other diseases, debt cancellation and more support for small holder farmers.

**Access to treatment:** Stronger political commitments from African, European and the U.S. governments

are needed to provide antiretroviral treatment for those with HIV/AIDS and to fight other diseases which weaken and kill millions of people every year. About 29 million Africans are infected with HIV, with only 30,000 receiving antiretroviral treatment. Without broader access to treatment, adult farmers will not have the strength to plant and cultivate their fields and millions of people will be threatened with starvation.

In the past, food aid was aimed primarily at the most vulnerable, that is, the children and the elderly. Alex de Waal of African Rights commented in a November 19 *New York Times* opinion piece that there must be imaginative, realistic, yet large-scale, responses to the present and future effects of HIV/AIDS. He points to the current plight of children and elders, who were taken care of by healthy adults in the past, who (usually without the basic resources to survive) now must reverse roles and care for the dying.

**Debt cancellation:** It is impossible for African leaders to think seriously of food security and health care when their main preoccupation is to pay or service the crushing debt. Currently southern countries send more money North in debt repayment than northern countries send south for development or aid, which is a ridiculous irony and terribly unjust for those facing starvation.

**Support for smallholder farmers:** According to the International Food Policy Research Institute (IFPRI), with enough support and some technological development, smallholder farmers can be as efficient as commercial farmers. This will mean new, creative thinking on African development from northern governments and NGOs. It will require African nations to turn canceled debt payments into investments in health to keep their farmers healthy. Such an approach could not only lead to food security, but give income and hope to the majority of people who are small-scale farmers.

More than rain is needed. The Kinganda proverb states, "A united family eats from the same plate." Once we recognize that we are all of the same family, and that hunger for some effects us all, then the solutions will follow to provide food for all.

## Sudan: Peace process update

*Given Maryknoll missionaries' solidarity with the people of Sudan, the Maryknoll Office for Global Concerns has continued to follow Sudan's peace processes with a special focus on the U.S.'s role and on opportunities that bring the most promise for a lasting peace. The following article is based on a longer document, written by OGC intern Emily Gish, which examines the recent diplomatic efforts at realizing peace in Sudan. It describes where these processes currently stand and recommends a course of action for further U.S. involvement.*

On November 18, 2002 the second round of talks begun with the Machakos Protocol (see *NewsNotes* Sept-Oct and Nov-Dec 2002) concluded without agreement. They are to resume early in the new year, although a specific date has not been scheduled. During the talks the Government of Sudan (GOS) and the Sudan People's Liberation Army (SPLA) agreed on broad principles, the extension of a countrywide cease-fire and to allow for humanitarian access to vulnerable populations in disputed regions of southern Sudan. Although the items on the November agenda included power-sharing and wealth-sharing, these two topics remain unresolved and will be taken up when talks resume in early 2003.

The Machakos process has brought about a cease-fire which is holding. For the first time there has been an absence of military activity in areas of the south that have rarely known such tranquility. Another piece of good news is that the international pressure which brought about this new round of peace talks held in Machakos, Kenya, has not subsided.

Sudan's civil war has raged for 35 of the 46 years of Sudan's independence. The most ravaging effects of the war have been in southern Sudan due to additional ethnic conflicts. The GOS capitalized on ethnic rivalries and disputes, supporting one ethnic group to fight another in a successful "divide and conquer" strategy. Since 1999, through a tremendous grassroots effort, called the People-to-People Peace Process, civil society members of Sudan's southern ethnic groups have met, negotiated and signed on to peace covenants, making them the guardians of peace in their own communities. These peace covenants brought tangible results: abducted people and looted cattle have been returned to their rightful families and owners; new instances of kidnapping and looting have dramatically decreased, and there is relative peace among southern ethnic groups. More can be done. To enforce such agreements members of civil society called for the creation of a uniformed police force, the reinstatement and strengthening of border courts and the creation of a Dinka-Nuer Peace Council.

These grassroots efforts have had a tremendous impact on unifying southern Sudan. Rival rebel leaders followed civil society's lead in January 2002 when Riek Machar made peace with the Dinka SPLA leader, Dr. John Garang, unifying the largely Nuer Sudan People's Democratic Front (SPDF) and the SPLA for the first time in ten years.

Religious leaders and other members of civil society deeply committed to the People-to-People grassroots effort welcomed the Machakos protocol and expressed some concerns about details left out of the protocol (see *NewsNotes* Sept-Oct 2002, p. 13). While the Machakos framework is the most hopeful step forward the two warring parties have taken in years, the fact that civil society has no access to the talks could mean possible set backs for the major gains of the People-to-People process. The best way to safeguard these moves forward would be to expand the IGAD negotiations to include the voices of civil society organizations. Past interventions in Sudan and other African countries have shown that quick resolutions are not always lasting. After 35 years of conflict, it may be well worth the effort to include civil society members who see themselves as peace keepers in crafting the peace agreement so it can be sanctioned by the entire Sudanese society.

Short of that inclusion, people to people peace process gains might be preserved if international mediators, especially the United States, could emphasize the major concerns raised by civil society, including: 1) that more attention be paid to all human rights issues; in addition to the right to religious freedom; 2) that the peace agreement incorporate a real sense of democracy and that it help to strengthen and grow new civil institutions which have been created through grassroots efforts; 3) that time be dedicated to building cooperation and coalitions with local constituencies.

For a more complete analysis of the peace processes in Sudan and a list of specific recommendations for further U.S. involvement see [www.maryknoll.org/GLOBAL/ALERTS/alerts.htm](http://www.maryknoll.org/GLOBAL/ALERTS/alerts.htm).

## Bush should not go to Africa empty-handed

*Just before World AIDS Day 2002 (December 1), representatives of the Catholic secretariats of Senegal, Namibia, Uganda and South Africa gathered to pray and to deepen reflections on HIV/AIDS and to propose a plan of action for the Symposium of Episcopal Conferences of Africa and Madagascar (SECAM), which called for expanding advocacy and increasing the human, material and financial resources to address the AIDS pandemic.*

*At the same time, over 100 NGOs in the U.S. outlined for President Bush what a new U.S. Presidential AIDS Initiative should look like in a document entitled "Saving Families and Communities." Signers of the letter urged President Bush to use the occasion of his upcoming trip to Africa to announce U.S. leadership in a new, global initiative to control the scourge of AIDS, tuberculosis and malaria. Activists demand that this AIDS initiative consist of new monies and policies that complement existing U.S.-supported programs in addition to the Millennium Challenge Account. The following is an edited version of "Saving Families and Communities."*

**Goal:** A comprehensive initiative to save families and communities affected by the AIDS crisis, extend the parent-child relationship and secure the future of young people.

### Essential components:

#### *I. Ensuring access to affordable medication:*

-- a commitment to funding and implementing, by 2005, an equitable percentage of the World Health Organization's plan to provide anti-retroviral therapies to three million people in need of such treatment.

-- support for a limited exception to international patent rules (and in future trade negotiations) to allow the export of a broad range of affordable generic medications to poor countries where such factors as lack of production capacity and insufficient market size inhibit efficient local manufacture.

#### *II. Ensuring prevention services and support for affected communities:*

-- provision of medication to prevent transmission of HIV from mother to child, as well as treatment to sustain and enhance the quality of life for mothers with AIDS, with a commitment to an appropriate U.S. share of the goal of achieving by 2005, and sustaining thereafter, 80 percent coverage of the estimated two million women with HIV who give birth each year globally

-- a sustained, fair-share U.S. contribution to support an annual global investment in comprehensive HIV prevention in low- and middle-income countries that increases from approximately \$1.2 billion today to \$4.8 billion in 2004, as called for by UNAIDS and supported by Global HIV Prevention Working Group. Such efforts should include effective economic, social, and public

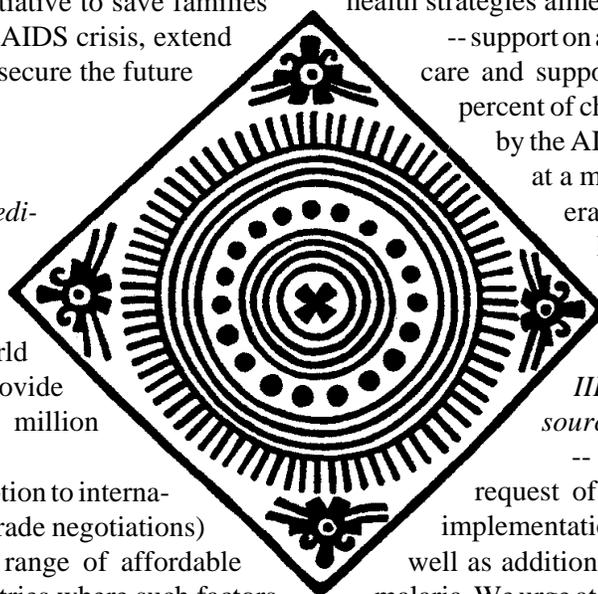
health strategies aimed at women and girls.

-- support on a global basis for community based care and support services to reach by 2005 80 percent of children orphaned or left vulnerable by the AIDS pandemic, in accordance with, at a minimum, the UNGASS (UN General Assembly Special Session on HIV/AIDS - June 2001) goals for orphaned and vulnerable children.

#### *III. Ensuring adequate financial resources:*

-- inclusion in the FY2004 budget request of a provision for \$2.5 billion for implementation of global AIDS programs, as well as additional funds to fight tuberculosis and malaria. We urge at least 50 percent of funds for global AIDS programs be allocated to the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, TB, and Malaria.

-- insistence on comprehensive debt cancellation for impoverished nations facing an HIV/AIDS crisis, with support for locally-determined processes to ensure resulting savings are re-channeled to social needs, and so that no such country should spend more than a maximum of five percent of total government revenues from internal sources on debt payments or future loans.



### **Faith in action:**

Write to President Bush and encourage him to launch an initiative on global AIDS, TB and malaria including the elements listed above.

To see the plan of action outlined at the SECAM meeting in South Africa see the Maryknoll Global Concerns website at [www.maryknoll.org/GLOBAL/ALERTS/alerts.htm](http://www.maryknoll.org/GLOBAL/ALERTS/alerts.htm).

## Increase development aid to 0.7 GNP

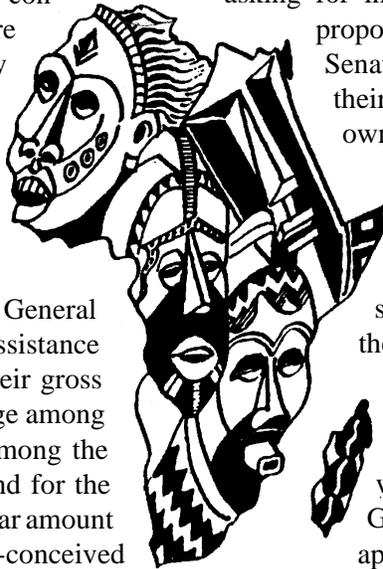
*There are many reasons that the U.S. is less generous than what U.S. citizens believe it should be when it comes to African development assistance. The following action suggestion comes from the Washington Office on Africa (WOA). Let the Bush administration and your members of Congress know how you feel about the U.S. contribution to African development.*

A variety of arguments are advanced to condemn development assistance, and there are always competing demands for funding. Many U.S. citizens seriously overestimate U.S. generosity, yet believe that we should be giving more. We must confirm our support of generous U.S. contributions to address the hopes and needs of our African brothers and sisters.

**The 0.7 Initiative:** In 1970, the UN General Assembly set the international development assistance target for donor nations at 0.7 percent of their gross national product (GNP). Currently the average among donor nations is 0.39 percent. Strikingly, among the wealthy G-7 countries, it is 0.19 percent, and for the U.S. it is barely 0.1 percent. Certainly the dollar amount must relate to priority needs and to carefully-conceived development programs, but the amount still matters. The goal of 0.7 percent can be thought of in two important ways: One, it is progressive – we rightly ask more of those to whom much wealth is given, and the U.S. is the wealthiest nation on earth. Two, it parallels (not in percentage, but in concept) our understanding of tithing. People of faith may well develop church budgets, but the point of departure is not what the need for the money is but how we respond to a call to tithe. We can ask our government to start that way, too, especially with the massive needs that cry for our attention in Africa.

In U.S. policy making there are three key stages in the appropriations process. Looking to 2003, the president will finalize his budget for 2004 and present it to Congress; it is due on the first Monday in February. (Currently the administration is working on the FY2004 budget proposal, to begin October 2003.) Second, by May Congress develops a general response to the proposal, called a budget resolution, which leads to a concurrent resolution in mid-summer. Third, by September, the Congress should have passed all of the 13 appropriations bills, including Foreign Operations, where most of the development assistance funds reside.

This means there are three times when citizens may effectively intervene: In a message to the administration,



asking for increased development assistance in the proposed budget; in a message to House and Senate budget committees, as they prepare their resolutions; and in a message to one's own members of Congress, urging particular actions in the appropriations bills.

In writing to advocate for increased development assistance for Africa, WOA suggests that messages generally include the following: 1) Development assistance to Africa matters to us; 2) Given the wealth of our nation, we need to be more generous in our contributions to the needs of the world; 3) The goal of 0.7 percent of our GNP to global development assistance is appropriate; 4.) Our government – administration and Congress – should take a significant step toward that goal in the budget for the coming year.

### **Faith in action:**

This January write a letter to President Bush urging that his budget proposal include generous development assistance for Africa. Use the points outlined in the above paragraph.

Some time after February 1, after the proposed budget has been presented, and early in the 108th Congress, contact the chairpersons of the Senate and House budget committees, with copies to your representative and senators, along the lines above, with a focus on the Congress' budget resolution.

The Washington Office on Africa (WOA) provides specific action alerts on development assistance during the year, depending upon the circumstances. They are available at [www.woafrica.org](http://www.woafrica.org) or by joining WOA's Rapid Response Network. To join, visit [www.woafrica.org](http://www.woafrica.org) or contact WOA at 212 East Capitol Street; Washington, D.C. 20017; email: [woa@igc.org](mailto:woa@igc.org); tel: (202)547-7503 fax: (202)547-7505.

## ADNA calls for progressive economic agenda

*The Advocacy Network for Africa (ADNA), a network of more than 200 U.S.-based organizations, issued a call for the U.S. government to respond to the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD) agenda in a progressive manner. If, ADNA argues, the U.S. government is to take Africa's latest development initiative seriously, it must move beyond a neo-liberal agenda featured in the NEPAD document.*

The New Partnership for African Development (NEPAD) is an economic plan for Africa initiated in late 2001 by the presidents of South Africa, Senegal and Nigeria. Modeled on the U.S. Marshall Plan for Europe after World War II, the plan recognizes that Africa remains heavily crippled by an unsustainable debt burden, that the "playing field" between Africa and the developed world is uneven and that economic integration and globalization have marginalized many African countries. NEPAD is premised on African states making commitments to good governance, democracy, human rights, and conflict prevention and resolution as a means of bringing an end to Africa's isolation.

The United Nations, the U.S. government and other G-7 countries look to NEPAD with interest since it envisions partnerships rather than subservient relations with industrial nations. It also seeks to create a strategic common vision among African countries, with a commitment toward eradicating poverty and supporting sustainable development based on improved access to capital, technology and human skills and resources.

At the G-8 Summit in June 2002, Canadian Prime Minister Jean Chretien remarked "[NEPAD] ...acknowledges that peace, security, democracy, good governance, human rights and sound economic management are pre-conditions for ending the economic marginalization of the continent."

Some of NEPAD's strongest criticism came from African civil society which was completely left out of the debate when NEPAD was formulated. Critics say that it resembles the IMF and World Bank structural adjustment strategies which they argue have yielded little growth, few jobs and a wider gap between rich and poor. NEPAD's economic schema promotes trade liberalization and invites foreign capital investment through greater privatization while it promises that African leaders will provide a relatively peaceful environment.

ADNA finds these economic assumptions disturbing. ADNA's critique, however, focuses on how the U.S. government should respond to the plan. In "Taking the

New Partnership of Africa's Development Seriously," released in late November 2002, ADNA members maintain that successful U.S. development efforts in Africa would:

- Focus primarily on a people-centered common security interest in its security relationship to African countries based on sovereignty;
- Show support for greater freedom and democracy in Africa countries and strengthen African civil society;
- Condemn human rights abuses wherever they occur and aid victims of such abuse;
- Respect the rights of African governments to define their economic policies and priorities, without insistence upon rigid free market provisions;
- Increase assistance for basic and vocational education;
- Increase annual U.S. contributions for global AIDS efforts, including the Global Fund, to a minimum of \$2.5 billion;
- Give high priority to development assistance programs that empower women, including women-led initiatives.

Copies of the document are available at [www.woafrica.org](http://www.woafrica.org). For further information about ADNA, visit: [www.africaaction.org/adna](http://www.africaaction.org/adna)

For further information about the Advocacy Network for Africa's work on NEPAD, contact Leon Spencer, co-facilitator of ADNA, at the Washington Office on Africa, 212 East Capitol Street, Washington, D.C. 20003; tel: (202)547-7503; fax: (202)547-7505; email: [woa@igc.org](mailto:woa@igc.org)

For access to NEPAD critiques from African civil society and from various NGOs worldwide, visit the website of KAIROS: Canadian Ecumenical Justice Initiatives, a coalition including the Inter-Church Coalition on Africa, [www.web.net/~iccaf/debtsap/nepad.htm](http://www.web.net/~iccaf/debtsap/nepad.htm)

## HIPC initiative does not deliver debt relief

*The Highly Indebted Poor Country (HIPC) initiative, sponsored by the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund, was critiqued recently by a gathering including 44 participants representing eight African countries and several major Jubilee cooperating partners from the North. Those meeting in Lusaka, Zambia, from October 8-9, 2002, asked: "Will the current creditor arrangements on debt make a difference?" Their answer was a resounding "No." The following is a summary of some of the group's findings.*

HIPC leaves the leaders of many developing countries committing scarce resources to debt servicing instead of meeting the needs of their people, the majority of whom live in desperate poverty. Why has this happened? HIPC failed because its primary focus is on economic measures to assure continued debt servicing rather than on social measures to meet the enormous needs of the poor. Furthermore, HIPC makes unrealistic estimates of economic growth, uses discredited elements of the structural adjustment programs, and does not look at the impact of its programs.

While HIPC has helped a few countries to increase primary school enrollment and gain better access to water resources, it is not helping the people as a whole. Even the debt of Uganda, Mozambique and Zambia, the so-called "success stories," has not significantly decreased, nor are

these countries seeing much progress in poverty eradication.

**What can we do in the U.S.?** First, we must let our governments and international financial institutions know that HIPC is not working and we need alternatives to the present system. Secondly, we must emphasize that debt cancellation is absolute necessary to eradicate poverty. Thirdly, we must advocate for an independent, fair and transparent arbitration system that ensures just debt solutions which must be accepted by creditors and debtors.

To see the press release from the gathering, visit the Maryknoll Global Concerns website at [www.maryknoll.org/GLOBAL/global.htm](http://www.maryknoll.org/GLOBAL/global.htm). For additional information, contact the Jubilee USA Network at (202)783-3566, or go to [www.jubileeusa.org](http://www.jubileeusa.org)

## Africa and the Middle East Advocacy Days

You are invited to participate in an ecumenical gathering in Washington, D.C., beginning Sunday February 23, and ending Wednesday February 26.

The gathering offers two learning/advocacy tracks, one focused on Africa and the other on the Middle East. Both tracks will provide challenging speakers, issue briefings, and advocacy training workshops. There will be opportunities to speak with your senators and representative in the U.S. Congress, or their key foreign policy staff, regarding Africa or the Middle East. There will also be common times for fellowship and networking, a keynote address and reception, and, on the second evening of the gathering, a special ecumenical service of worship for participants and the public.

Why Africa and the Middle East together? Recognizing that advocacy approaches share much in common across regions, Africa and Middle East advocates have joined together in planning this conference. The gathering is cosponsored by several church-related organizations including: the Washington Office on Africa, Africa Faith and Justice Network, Churches for Middle East Peace, Church World Service, and the U.S. Lutheran community's "Stand with Africa Campaign."

For details about the program, registration and other important information go to: [www.loga.org/advocacy2003.htm](http://www.loga.org/advocacy2003.htm), or contact Anna Rhee at 301-384-3615; [anna@cmep.org](mailto:anna@cmep.org).

## U.S. discourages action against corporations

*U.S. State Department counsel has provided opinions in two lawsuits that could help to discourage efforts to make multinational corporations more accountable in U.S. courts for human rights violations abroad.*

A U.S. District Court judge in California dismissed a lawsuit against Rio Tinto PLC, the world's largest mining company, after the State Department advised the court that the litigation could damage U.S. relations with Papua New Guinea (PNG). The plaintiffs have appealed, a process that is expected to take up to a year.

The class action on behalf of 11,000 residents of Bougainville, PNG's largest island, alleged that Rio Tinto caused massive environmental destruction during the operation of its gold and copper mine at Panguna from 1972 to 1988. It also alleged serious human rights violations during a ten-year blockade of the island after traditional landowners sabotaged the mine and forced it to close.

In a second case, the State Department urged a federal judge last fall in Washington, D.C., to dismiss a lawsuit against Exxon Mobil Corp. Plaintiffs allege that the world's biggest energy company was complicit in the torture, rape and murder of villagers living near its natural gas operations in northern Indonesia.

The State Department warned that, if the Exxon Mobil suit went to trial, Indonesia might curtail its cooperation with the U.S. war on terrorism "in response to perceived disrespect for its sovereign interests."

Both lawsuits were brought under the federal Alien Tort Claims Act, which allows foreign nationals to bring legal action in the United States against companies that violate international law. The London-based Rio Tinto is the parent company of U.S. Borax Inc., which is headquartered in Los Angeles.

According to the suit against Rio Tinto, the company dug the world's largest open-cut mine, two kilometers across and one-half kilometer deep. The mine excavated 300,000 tons of ore and water daily between 1972 and 1988. The suit alleges that mine tailings turned two fertile river valleys into wasteland. Fish and whole forests died and water became non-potable, turning 30 kilometers of

the river system into a moonscape.

The closure of the mine was followed by a ten-year civil war, including a blockade of the island, as PNG and Rio Tinto tried to force the mine to reopen. An estimated 15,000 Bougainvilleans – ten percent of the population – died by the time the war ended in 1999.

The U.S. State Department said in its opinion that allowing the lawsuit against Rio Tinto to go to trial could imperil the peace process on Bougainville.

Rio Tinto said its Panguna mine produced three million tons of copper, 306 tons of gold and 784 tons of silver from 1972 to 1988, and it contributed 12 percent of PNG's gross domestic product and 45 percent of its export income during that period. The mine provided nearly 4,000 full-time jobs and 10,000 indirect jobs.

The company also said it restored the river system to a reasonable condition, but it has been unable to undertake any further restoration work since the closure of the mine.

The State Department opinions in the Rio Tinto and Exxon Mobil cases contrast sharply with U.S. policy during the Clinton administration.

Under President Clinton the State Department chose not to intervene in 1997 in a human rights case brought by villagers in Myanmar against the Unocal Corp. That case is set to go to trial early this year in California Superior Court in Los Angeles. (See *NewsNotes*, November/December 2002.)



### **Faith in action:**

Write a respectful letter to Secretary of State Colin Powell. Urge the State Department to support due process so that human rights are not sacrificed to special interests. Encourage the department's collaboration in calling multinational corporations to greater accountability for their actions and policies.

## Opposition to U.S. military bases in Asia grows

*While the United States considers its military bases abroad as vital to its interests, opposition to the bases' presence is growing even among long-time allies. Officials of host governments and others are raising issues including crimes committed by U.S. servicemen, land use, impact on local economies, environmental pollution and national sovereignty.*

**In South Korea**, the acquittal in military court of two U.S. servicemen on negligent homicide charges in November heightened protests, including the firebombing of a U.S. Army base. The two were charged in a road accident in which a U.S. Army vehicle crushed two schoolgirls to death. (See *NewsNotes* September-October 2002.)

A Korean congressional report estimated that U.S. servicemen committed nearly 40,000 crimes against civilians in that country between 1967 and 1987, ranging from theft and smuggling to rape and murder. Critics complain that in many cases U.S. troops are disciplined by U.S. military authorities rather than Korean courts.

Critics also say that the Status of Forces Act allows U.S. military personnel to import goods duty free, enabling them to sell U.S. goods to local Koreans at a substantial profit on the black market.

The issue of land occupied by U.S. bases, such as the Yongsan Army Base in the middle of Seoul, has also been contentious. The U.S. military has offered to relocate Yongsan, but only if the Korean government pays for an alternate site and all relocation costs.

Meanwhile, the two nations signed a ten-year Land Partnership Plan last March, calling for the closure of 15 of 41 U.S. installations in Korea and the consolidation of 37,000 U.S. troops onto the 26 remaining facilities.

**In Japan**, a group called Okinawa Women Act Against Military Violence says U.S. troops in Okinawa have committed more than 4,700 crimes since 1972, when Okinawa reverted to Japanese administration.

As recently as December 2002 police charged a U.S. Marine with attempted rape on Okinawa. Such allegations recall the 1995 abduction and rape of a 12-year-old girl on Okinawa by three U.S. military personnel, which galva-

nized opposition to U.S. bases in the country.

The U.S. maintains 48,000 military personnel on 100 bases in Japan. Okinawa hosts 26,000 of those personnel and about 40 bases, which occupy 20 percent of the island.

Unemployment on Okinawa, Japan's poorest prefecture, is twice that of the rest of the country. Besides 8,000 local people working on the bases, area employment is skewed towards servicing the military – stores, car repair, restaurants, bars and prostitution.

In the past, as many as one in 30 Okinawa women worked as prostitutes for the U.S. military. Today some 7,000 Filipinas have displaced many local sex workers.

**In the Philippines**, U.S. forces withdrew from the Subic naval base and Clark air base after the Philippine Congress rejected an extension of the Philippine-U.S. Military Bases Agreement in 1991. With an eye on regular joint military exercises, however, nationalists remain wary of any effort to re-introduce a permanent U.S. military presence.

Nationalist sentiment was heightened after President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo signed the Mutual Logistics Support Agreement with the U.S. in November 2002, even though it provides that "No United States military base, facility, or permanent structure shall be constructed, established, or allowed under this Agreement."

Meanwhile, environmentalists are fighting for an assessment of toxic waste left behind at Subic and Clark. (See *NewsNotes*, January-February 2001 and July-August 2001.)

The two were the largest of 22 U.S. bases in the Philippines. U.S. forces left a toxic legacy of benzene, asbestos, PCBs and other dangerous compounds in the soil, air and water of the two bases. The People's Task Force for Bases Clean-Up claims that over 100 persons



have died and more than 300 have developed chronic diseases from the toxic chemicals.

Area residents petitioned the U.S. Air Force and U.S. Navy in 2000 under the U.S. Superfund law for an assessment of toxic waste contamination at Clark and Subic. The U.S. military rejected the request.

In December 2002 a lawsuit was filed in California by 38 Filipinos and others to force the U.S. Department of Defense to assess conditions at the two former bases.

If a Greenpeace experience in 2000 is any indication, further resistance from the U.S. government can be expected. In a symbolic gesture, 26 activists tried to deliver a container filled with poisonous industrial chemical waste, collected in residential areas near Clark, to the U.S. Embassy in Manila. The shipment was refused, and the activists – from China, India, Indonesia, the Netherlands, the Philippines, Thailand, Trinidad, Tunisia and the United States – were arrested.

## Middle East: Children suffer in conflict

*Watchlist on Children and Armed Conflict (<http://www.watchlist.org/>) reports that more than 370 children under 18 have died in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict since September 2000, and thousands more have been injured.*

Children represent about 15 percent of all individuals killed in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict since September 2000, despite Israel's ratification of the Convention on the Rights of the Child in 1991 and the Palestinian Authority's endorsement of the convention four years later.

### Palestinian children

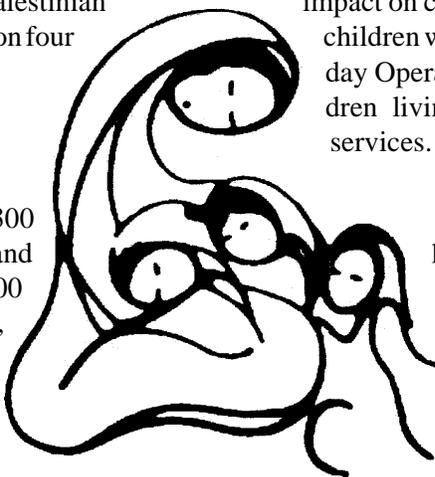
It is estimated that more than 300 Palestinian children have been killed and over 7,000 injured since September 2000 as a result of Israeli military operations, extrajudicial killings or denial of access to medical treatment and other humanitarian assistance.

In addition, the Israeli human rights group B'Tselem says that more than 2,500 Palestinians were detained in May 2002, the month after Israel's Operation Defensive Shield. Between 250 and 375 children - 10 to 15 percent of all detainees - are being held at any given time, according to Defense for Children International/Palestine Section, a Palestinian NGO.

Israeli Defense Forces (IDF) have demolished hundreds of Palestinian homes since September 2000, leaving thousands of children and their families homeless. Military actions such as Operation Defensive Shield also interrupt food and water supplies, cut electrical service and employ measures including detention and destruction of property. In some instances Israeli forces are said to have targeted children's goods and services. For example, soldiers allegedly destroyed computers, musical instruments

and furniture at a youth center in Al-Amari refugee camp.

Curfews, closures and blockades have a devastating impact on children. UNICEF says more than 330,000 children were confined to their homes during the 24-day Operation Defensive Shield, and 500,000 children living in villages had no access to health services.



In addition, rising poverty in the Occupied Territories - unemployment exceeds 60 percent during curfews - has contributed to a marked increase in anemia and malnutrition among children. (See *NewsNotes*, September/October 2002)

UNICEF says that virtually all 1.8 million Palestinian children in the Occupied Territories witnessed violence during Operation Defensive Shield, such as military bombardment or the death of neighbors. The Institute of Community and Public Health at Bir Zeit University in the West Bank reports signs of psychological stress among school children including crying, fear of loud noises, sleep disorders, nervousness, and decrease in eating and weight.

UNICEF also says that 112 of some 1,760 schools in the Occupied Territories were damaged by Israeli military forces between the end of March and August 2002. Eleven of these were destroyed. Restricted movement and shelling of educational facilities severely limit children's and teachers' access to schools, and thousands of lost school days will undoubtedly detract from children's education.

## Israeli children

Israeli children live amid growing insecurity and fear. Seventy-two Israeli children in Israel and in Israeli settlements have been killed by suicide bombings and other violent attacks since September 2000.

While most Israeli children are Jewish, approximately 20 percent are Muslim or Christian. These Arab Israeli children find themselves in the difficult position of being citizens of a country caught up in conflict with their Arab Palestinian kin in the West Bank and Gaza Strip. Arab Israeli children share many of the same dangers and security fears as Jewish Israeli children.

Suicide bombings, drive-by shootings and other violent attacks on Israeli civilians by armed Palestinians have left Israeli children and adolescents gripped with fear. One Israeli psychologist reported seeing “a lot of children suffering from regression - bed wetting, insisting on sleeping in their parents’ bed. Some have terrible nightmares. Others are depressed. They lose their appetites and just watch TV all day.”

Some reports also indicate growing intolerance and anger among Israeli children and adolescents toward Arabs. Open expressions of hatred toward Arab children are reportedly increasing.

For reasons directly and indirectly linked to the armed conflict, Israel is in an economic recession, with 10 percent unemployment and increasing poverty. Large-

scale military and defense spending has left social, environmental and other programs for children short-funded. Some child protection and other social agencies are calling for increased state spending on education, health care and special needs of children and other vulnerable groups. Pediatric intensive care units have reported a need for more beds due to increased child injuries in suicide bombings and other violent attacks.

Attacks by Palestinian groups on buses carrying Israeli school children and on educational facilities have put Israeli students at risk. In July 2002 Hamas detonated a bomb at Hebrew University in Jerusalem, killing and injuring a number of students. A study conducted in 2000 found that fear of violence in school or en route to or from school led some students to avoid attending class. Among respondents, 15.7 percent of elementary students, 6.5 percent of junior high students and 4.6 percent of high school students reported missing school at least once a month due to fear of violence.

### **Faith in action:**

Write to Israeli and Palestinian officials, asking that children be safeguarded as provided for by the Convention on the Rights of the Child. Urge a return to peaceful negotiations while encouraging activities that bring Jewish and Palestinian children and adolescents together to break down walls of hostility. Send an email to Prime Minister Ariel Sharon at [pm\\_eng@pmo.gov.il](mailto:pm_eng@pmo.gov.il); write the Palestinian Authority at [info@gov.ps](mailto:info@gov.ps)

## Iraq sanctions fuel humanitarian crisis

The following report is based on “Iraq Sanctions: Humanitarian Implications and Options for the Future,” prepared by a dozen humanitarian and faith-based groups. The complete text can be found at <http://www.globalpolicy.org/security/sanction/iraq1/2002/paper.htm#summary> See also the July-August 2001 issue of NewsNotes.

With President Bush skeptical of Iraq’s claim to have no weapons of mass destruction – clouding prospects that economic sanctions will be lifted anytime soon – Iraqi children continue to suffer.

UNICEF determined that 500,000 children below age five died in “excess” numbers between 1991 and 1998 in Iraq. Prof. Paul Garfield of Columbia cited 400,000 such deaths from August 1991 to June 2002. How many of these deaths could be directly attributed to the sanctions, however, is debated.

UNICEF also found that 21 percent of children under five were underweight, 20 percent were stunted (chronic malnutrition) and nine percent wasted (acute malnutrition). The World Food Programme and Food and Agriculture Organisation reported in 2000 that 800,000 Iraqi children were chronically malnourished.

Madeleine Albright, then U.S. representative at the United Nations, was interviewed by Leslie Stahl in 1996 on the CBS television show *60 minutes*. When asked, “We have heard that half a million children have died . . . is the price worth it?” Albright replied, “I think this is a very hard

choice, but the price – we think the price is worth it.”

Statistics on the economic sanctions can be misleading. For example, Iraq sold \$55.4 billion in oil through UN-controlled sales from Dec. 10, 1996, to July 19, 2002. However, far less than that value in goods entered the country. After deducting 33 percent for war reparations, UN operations and other items, the Security Council and the UN Secretariat approved \$35.8 billion in contracts. However, as of July 19, 2002, only \$23.5 billion worth of goods had actually arrived in Iraq.

The economic sanctions have allowed only about \$200 per capita worth of goods to enter the country in each of the past five years. This includes oil spare parts and other goods not directly consumed by Iraq's 23 million people. Allowing for domestic production outside of the oil-for-food program and for smuggling, the result still appears to leave Iraqi citizens with a per capita income at or below \$1 per day – the World Bank threshold of absolute poverty.

The process is further complicated by the right of any Security Council member to block the import of goods alleged to have potential military use. In July 2002 no less than \$5.4 billion in contracts was on hold. Yet, as Benon Sevan, director of the UN Office of the Iraq Programme, noted in 1999, “The absence of a single spare part or item of equipment, as small as it may be, could be sufficient to prevent the completion of an entire water injection project or well completion programme.”

The U.S. reportedly bombed all of Iraq's 35 water treatment plants and 20 of the country's 22 electricity grids in 1991. In contrast to the \$3.6 billion Iraq is allowed in yearly imports under the oil-for-food program, a UN delegation that surveyed damage to the country from the bombing estimated that it would have cost more than \$22 billion to restore service to pre-war levels in the following year alone.

*The Washington Post* reported that, during the 43-day bombing campaign in the Gulf War, the U.S. had deliberately targeted vital facilities that Iraq could not repair without foreign assistance. Said one Air Force

planner: “We're not going to tolerate Saddam Hussein or his regime. Fix that, and we'll fix your electricity.”

Conditions under sanctions improved slightly with Oil-for-Food in 1996 and “smart sanctions” in 2002, but the underlying humanitarian crisis was not resolved. The Iraqi government must answer for the suffering of its people because of the wars it has started, its lack of cooperation with the UN Security Council and its domestic repression. However, the Security Council also bears part of the responsibility.

The ongoing sanctions in Iraq are increasingly seen by the international community as illegitimate and punitive. Critics have raised doubts about their effectiveness and their legal basis under international law.

A thorough weapons inspection in Iraq is necessary to ensure disarmament and the elimination of programs to produce weapons of mass destruction. However, a comprehensive peace settlement cannot be attained until economic sanctions on Iraq are totally removed.

Humanitarian suffering in Iraq under sanctions has been well documented, a situation that led UN Humanitarian Coordinator Hans von Sponeck to resign in protest in 2000. But as he said later, “Lawlessness of one kind does not justify lawlessness of another kind.”

**Sanctions intended to block the government's access to foreign exchange have contributed to pervasive life-threatening public health conditions for millions of innocent people.**

**An emergency commodity assistance program like oil-for-food, no matter how well funded or well run, cannot reverse the devastating consequences of war and then ten years of virtual shut-down of Iraq's economy --**

*Human Rights Watch*

### **Faith in action:**

Keep telling President Bush and Secretary of State Powell that a preemptive, unilateral attack on Iraq would be unacceptable and illegal. Ask that economic sanctions be lifted as soon as possible after weapons inspectors have finished their work. Urge an international program of emergency relief for Iraq and a long-range program for the country's physical reconstruction and economic rehabilitation.

Support the work of EPIC (Education for Peace in Iraq Center), 1101 Pennsylvania Ave. S.E., Washington D.C., 20003; tel: (202) 543-6176; fax: (202) 543-0725; [www.epic-usa.org](http://www.epic-usa.org)

## U.S. religious leaders implore work for peace

*The following letter was read aloud by the Iraq Peace Journey at a prayer service at St. Joseph's Chaldean Church, December 18 in Baghdad. The service was planned by members of the Iraqi Christian community in Baghdad. Members of the Iraq Peace Journey, which travelled to Iraq from December 9-21, included Maryknoll missionaries Fr. Roy Bourgeois and Sr. Lil Mattingly.*

We U.S. religious leaders gather with our Iraqi brothers and sisters to pray for the common peace that we all desire. As women and men of faith, we have spent ten days in Iraq during this season of preparation for Christmas. We have met people like ourselves, people who hunger for peace. The Iraqi people have welcomed us with open arms and begged us to share with you the reality of their struggle.

We implore you, our fellow citizens of the U.S., to look into the eyes of the people in Iraq. See the Jesuit-trained doctor who can barely contain his despair and the Muslim mother who grieves for her dying son. Listen to the taxicab driver who fears for the safety of his family, the Catholic sister who cares for pregnant mothers, and the orphaned children who sleep fitfully at night waiting for the sound of bombs. These are the people of Iraq—people who share our hopes and dreams for a peaceful world. All they want is to live with dignity in this ancient land of arid beauty.

But the Iraqi people have suffered for the past twelve years under the most comprehensive sanctions in modern history. Water and sewage treatment facilities are not functioning due to the lack of spare parts, and children die of water-born illnesses. Hospitals are crippled by old and broken-down machinery. Depleted uranium from U.S. munitions is linked to a 400 percent increase in the cancer rate in southern Iraq—and this at a time when sanctions deny the people critical medicines needed for treatment of cancer and other diseases. The Iraqi people live lives of determined endurance, but many have revealed their anxiety and desperation. They ask us, “Why is this happening? Will sanctions end? Why can't we have peace?”

These are the people our government is preparing to sacrifice as “collateral damage” in an unconscionable war. As we speak, Iraqi people live in fear of an attack that could happen any day.

People of good will, we who live in the United States also know what it means to live in fear. We fear for the future of our families and our children. We fear the unpredictable violence of terrorism. We dread the weapons of mass destruction that exist in many nations, includ-

ing our own, and that threaten the future of our entire planet.

Our government suggests that war is the answer to our fears. But war will never protect us—it will endanger the entire human family. A war against the people of Iraq will slaughter thousands of innocent men, women and children in a land already devastated by sanctions. A war could also kill and injure countless young Americans. And a war will unleash violent repercussions and terrorist acts that could destroy our world.

War is not the answer. We must seek a path to peace.

Therefore, people of good will, join us in insisting that our government stop this madness and commit to a path of active nonviolent resolution. We ... can reach out to our Iraqi brothers and sisters, who are people like ourselves. Together we can support the work of the United Nations and other international efforts to build peace. Together we can work to create a world free of weapons of mass destruction, a world free of sanctions, violence and war. Together we can build a world where our voices speak peace, peace for all people. Then we will witness the words of the psalmist, “Mercy and faithfulness will meet, justice and peace will embrace...Justice shall march before us and peace shall follow in our steps.” (Psalm 85)

Join us in prayer and action with all people of good will who yearn for this promise to flourish in our times.

*Other members of the Iraq Peace Journey delegation include Dave Robinson, Pax Christi USA; Sr. Kathy Thornton, RSM, NETWORK, a National Catholic Social Justice Lobby; Sr. Simone Campbell, SSS, executive director of JERICH0, a social justice lobby; Sr. Beth Murphy, OP; Fr. John Grathwohl, diocesan priest and member of Veterans for Peace; Sheila Provencher, lay minister; Mary Trotochaud of SOA Watch; Chuck Quilty, co-founder, Voices in the Wilderness; and Rick McDowell, who has accompanied 14 delegations to Iraq, including an international delegation of Nobel Peace Laureates.*

Read the delegation's reports at [www.paxchristiusa.org](http://www.paxchristiusa.org)

## Our fateful choice: Global leader or global cop?

*Foreign Policy in Focus (FPF), a joint project of the Interhemispheric Resource Center and the Institute for Policy Studies, has initiated a call for a new U.S. foreign and military policy. Entitled "Our Fateful Choice," the statement opposes the Bush administration's national security policy of global military dominance and the right of preemptive military attack (see NewsNotes November-December 2002). Following are excerpts from the statement, which is available on line at [www.presentdanger.org](http://www.presentdanger.org).*

... [Today], our nation and our world face stark and growing threats. These include terrorists with global reach, the worst pandemic in human history (AIDS), the spread of weapons of mass destruction, unprecedented global environmental crises, and a global economy that is generating greater instability and inequality. None of these deepening problems ... can be addressed by any one country alone ...

Yet in the face of these threats, the Bush administration has launched a new foreign policy based on U.S. supremacy and exceptionalism. Despite the passionate opposition of its closest allies and the international community, the Bush administration has set our country on a dangerous and alarming course....

In the waning days of World War II, a key turning point in global affairs occurred. The U.S., as the dominant power, committed itself to a new international system whose aim was to bring the world's nations together within a system of agreed rules and norms for collective security. The UN and the other global agencies that it spawned were, of course, imperfect ... Nonetheless, this new framework of multilateralism marked a significant step toward genuine international cooperation as an alternative to a past dominated by nationalism, empire, and militarism.

This framework is now in danger of being irretrievably undermined. There is no mandate in the United States for this radical departure....

World peace depends on strong collective security mechanisms....The U.S. military must be prepared to protect the nation against external threats. But U.S. military might is an insufficient guarantor of national and international security. Well-funded international institutions and international cooperation in intelligence gathering, peacekeeping, and arms control are essential components to any real security.

The U.S. should adopt a real security agenda ... by using its leadership to mobilize international action against these global threats. Such an alternative approach would include:

- Renewing efforts to mobilize a global consensus and global action against all forms of terrorism at home and abroad.
- Increasing our commitment to the UN security system and international law, while urging UN action against threats to the peace.
- Committing the U.S. to the fundamental principle of international justice- that no country is above international law.
- Strengthening multilateral, verifiable arms control regimes that aim to curb weapons of mass destruction and their delivery systems.
- Exercising leadership for protection of the environment through the ratification of the Kyoto Protocol and other international ... agreements while protecting existing ... agreements from challenges by free trade agreements.
- Increasing support for the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria as well as other international efforts to respond to the AIDS pandemic.
- Supporting efforts to promote corporate accountability at home and abroad while working to insure that the global governance mechanisms of the international economy - including the World Bank, IMF, and World Trade Organization - are embedded within a framework that effectively addresses the poverty, inequality, environmental degradation, and social disintegration that are among the greatest threats to security in the world today.

In the past several decades, the international community has made progress in reaching effective agreements in the areas of human rights, environmental protection, arms control, and collective security. We turn our backs on this progress at grave risk to ourselves and humankind....

Not in our name can the U.S. government ignore world opinion, reject international treaties, adopt first-strike prerogatives, and put power before reason. We stand behind a foreign and military policy that uses U.S. power responsibly - one that wins respect at home and abroad through its commitment to global partnerships and prudent international leadership. It is precisely such a policy that will best ensure [the U.S.]'s own well-being and protect our own security.

## Little progress on access to medicines in 2002

*People living with AIDS around the world had hoped that 2002 would have made the difference for accessing affordable medicines since this debate was high on the agenda of the World Trade Organization (WTO) and the U.S. Congress. However strong the debate may have been, it made a minimal contribution to affordable access to essential medicines.*

At the WTO, the major debate was around how members could use the flexibilities afforded them in current trade rules to secure access to affordable medicines. Specifically, patented drugs are priced out of range for impoverished countries, so members looked closely at a provision called compulsory licensing.

Under the Trade Related Intellectual Property Rights (TRIPS) agreement, a government can issue a compulsory license and legally manufacture a generic version of a drug under patent. Although there is nothing in the current TRIPS Agreement that prevents a country from issuing such a license to a company in another country, there are a number of restrictions on importing and exporting the generic drug; so practically speaking, compulsory licenses can only be used domestically.

Understanding that many developing countries tend not to have a domestic pharmaceutical industry, the Doha Ministerial meeting of the World Trade Organization last year entrusted the TRIPS Council to find a way that countries with insufficient or no manufacturing capacities in the pharmaceutical sector could make effective use of compulsory licensing to access affordable medicines. This problem was to be solved by the end of 2002.

The TRIPS Council met throughout the year and the chasm of opinion on how to solve the problem only grew wider. The final meetings broke down in late November, with no solution, leaving the WTO's General Council to continue the discussion from December 10-12. As this issue of *NewsNotes* goes to press, the U.S. stood alone to block agreement while 143 WTO members indicated they would accept a compromise text put forward by the chair of these lengthy negotiations.

The major disagreements revolved around scope, or the countries and diseases to be included. While most acknowledged that least-developed countries should be given access to cheap non-branded drugs, there was no consensus on whether this right should be given to wealthier developing countries such as Singapore, South Korea and Taiwan. The U.S. advocated to limit the diseases to which this flexibility would apply while others argued to cover all

diseases including cancer and diabetes. Another issue of debate was around which legal mechanism within the WTO should be used to implement the agreement.

Pharmaceutical company representatives were at U.S. negotiators' sides lobbying to include only least developed countries, to limit the diseases to three and for the solution to apply to medicines only (and not vaccines or medical technologies). This year several pharmaceutical companies deepened discounts on a number of HIV/AIDS medicines, making them available in places they had not been before, but affordable medicines are still out of reach for much of the world.

Turning to the lack of funding for medicines as an obstacle to access, the 107th Congress moved to make available funding to combat HIV/AIDS, tuberculosis and malaria. The House unanimously passed legislation authorizing \$1.3 billion to combat these global diseases (see *NewsNotes* January/February 2002). Similar Senate legislation passed in mid-2002 pushed such funding as high as \$1.5 billion. A conference committee established to work out the difference between the two bills failed to pass it into law due to a Senate hold on the bill, and the 107th Congress ended with no action to increase AIDS funding.

The Bush administration boasts that the U.S., with a pledge \$500 million over two years, is the largest donor to the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria. When this contribution is compared to the size of the U.S. economy, it is far lower than the recommended contribution (\$2.5 billion) and actually half as much as Europe's.

This year, the U.S. has played a major role in the debate over access to medicines, but has done much less than needs to be done to increase access. Clearly the African Continent bears the brunt of this problem as nations with little or no manufacturing capacity, nor health infrastructure to ensure broad access to essential medicines, continue to suffer the ravages infectious disease.

President Bush is scheduled to travel to Africa in January and should go with a plan that includes access to medicines. See page 14 for action suggestions.

## U.S. budget feeds military, starves vulnerable

The following report, based on analyses from the Center for Defense Information and NETWORK, a National Catholic Social Justice Lobby, contrasts U.S. military spending with proposed allocations for vital social services in the United States.

As lawmakers consider allocating billions of dollars for the war on terrorism, millions of U.S. residents continue to struggle against a personal terror: trying to survive without a decent job, proper housing or health insurance.

Congress was asked for nearly \$400 billion for the military in fiscal year 2003, which would push the U.S. into deficit spending for the first time in four years.

The proposed military budget was 13 percent higher than a year earlier. Overall, the administration plans to spend \$2.1 trillion on national security over the next five years.

President Bush declared in September that the U.S. must be "strong enough to dissuade potential adversaries from pursuing a military buildup in hopes of surpassing, or equaling, the power of the United States" (See *NewsNotes*, November-December 2002.)

Maintaining that position comes at a high price, however. Weapons systems currently under development or in production include the Navy's "Virginia" attack submarine (total program cost \$66 billion) and the Army's "Comanche" helicopter (\$48 billion).

Individual items include the Air Force's F-22 fighter at \$226 million each, 24 percent higher than a year ago; and the Marine Corps' V-22 Osprey tilt-rotor aircraft at \$80 million apiece, up from \$24 million in 1986.

The U.S. military budget exceeds the combined military spending of the next 25 nations. Russia, second highest, spent \$60 billion on its military in 2000.

The U.S. military budget is also more than 26 times the combined spending of the nation's seven most likely adversaries, including those the president labeled an "axis of evil": North Korea, Iraq and Iran.

Meanwhile, U.S. non-military foreign aid has steadily shrunk from nearly 0.6 percent of GNP in 1962 to less than

0.1 percent for 2003. While the \$10 billion in this category given annually ranks first in absolute dollars, it ranks last among developed countries in percentage of the economy.

In contrast to the swollen U.S. national defense budget, other programs vital to the nation's well-being were being trimmed.

The administration proposed a four percent budget reduction for the Environmental Protection Agency, to \$7.6 billion. Grants to states and localities for improving water quality were to be reduced 14 percent. Job Training, which includes Youth Opportunity Grants that support inner city youth programs, was to be cut eight percent to \$6.5 billion. Community Development Block Grants aimed at low- and moderate-income persons were to be reduced six percent to \$4.7 billion.

Funding for welfare programs is flat, leaving the marginalized in a precarious position. At least 32 million U.S. residents live in poverty. An estimated 13.5 million are unemployed, and 39 million lack health insurance. Five million families live in substandard housing.

With even the number of "working poor" increasing - full-time workers who cannot support a family on their low wages - the budget issue is larger than the war on terrorism.

Spending on national security has become easier to support politically than other federal spending. Politicians who try to cut funding for human services or the environment are viewed as guardians of taxpayers' interests. Those who oppose higher military spending are often called unpatriotic - or worse.

### **Faith in action:**

Contact your lawmakers urging a smaller military budget, an increase in non-military foreign aid and immediate assistance to struggling, vulnerable people. For more information, contact Council for a Livable World at [www.clw.org](http://www.clw.org) or NETWORK at [www.networklobby.org](http://www.networklobby.org)

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**For the price of two B-52s, I could feed, clothe, and educate the entire population of Afghanistan for a year.**  
- Afghan-American aid worker, watching plumes of smoke

## Talisman abandons certain oil interests

*Talisman Energy, Inc., the Calgary-based oil and gas company, announced on October 30 it would sell its oil interests in Sudan for US\$750 million to ONGC Videsh Ltd., a subsidiary of India's national oil company.*

*NewsNotes* articles in 2000 reported on how Talisman's presence in Sudan has aggravated the conflict there, both in terms of oil revenues fueling the government's war efforts, and the forced displacement of people from oil drilling and pipeline areas in the country. The Canadian government issued a report that year on how Talisman's activities were contributing to human rights violations in Sudan. North American religious institutional shareholders and other socially responsible investors have been taking their concerns to Talisman since 1998.

"The deal is purely a commercial transaction and Talisman informed us of its intention to sell its stake six months ago," said Sudanese Foreign Minister Mustafa Osman Ismail at a news conference at the Sudan Embassy in Cairo after the sale. However, he felt that ONGC would feel less pressure from non-governmental organizations, and since the company is government-owned, no pressure from shareholders. In announcing sale plans, Talisman chief executive Jim Buckee said its shareholders had tired of having to analyze events relating to Sudan.

More likely, Talisman was tired of having to deal with socially responsible investors. A shareholder resolution in 2000 calling on Talisman to issue an independently verified report on its compliance with the International Code of Ethics for Canadian Business received substantial support. Socially responsible investment firms have also screened Talisman out of their portfolios.

KAIROS, a Canadian group of church-based and socially responsible investors, received the news with mixed feelings. In a statement, KAIROS said, "Talisman's Sudan venture has been a continual target of scrutiny and protest since investing there in 1998. But the company has blatantly walked away from its responsibilities in Sudan. Had Talisman listened to church and other shareholders, and properly incorporated a human rights framework into its business plan, it might have played a constructive role in transforming oil development into a force for peace rather than the instrument of death it has become.

"KAIROS and its Sudanese church partners have always maintained that oil development could have been of great benefit to Sudan, if the company adopted international human rights standards, an independent human

rights monitoring and reporting process, and provided assurances that the role of oil production was not exacerbating the conflict. The company sidestepped these demands and remained obdurate to the end, refusing to take any real responsibility for the human rights abuses associated with oil operations. According to reports issued by independent human rights experts, violations included attacks on civilians by helicopter gunships re-fueled and re-armed on airstrips on Talisman's concessions, and the forced displacement and killing of people in concession areas under exploration."

The Talisman record in Sudan, and the pressure put on it by shareholders and human rights groups, may serve to advance the work of corporate accountability and the extractive industries. According to KAIROS: "Other companies will now weigh offshore venture opportunities against a new set of standards that place greater emphasis on political risk analysis and human rights assessments. They will also want to ensure there is no conflict with their corporate values rather than 'managing' negative publicity through high-priced public relations firms."

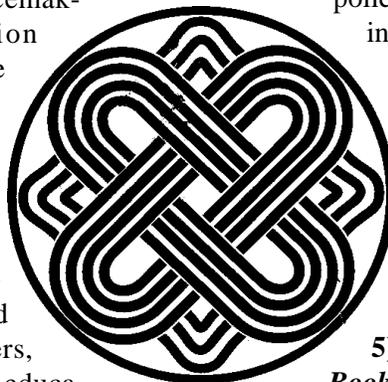
Talisman will continue to face scrutiny for its operations in Colombia. Civil litigation on behalf of Sudanese displaced from oil fields is ongoing in the U.S. KAIROS reports that activists and lawyers apparently are exploring whether Talisman executives and board members could eventually be charged before the International Criminal Court with crimes against humanity.

Meanwhile, KAIROS says it and its Sudanese church partners "will continue to call for a suspension of all oil development activities in Sudan until a just and lasting peace is achieved, and will continue to monitor the impact of Sudanese oil development and the operations of foreign companies working there."

After Talisman's announcement, Sudanese Bishop Abangite Gasi urged international oil companies to leave Sudan. He said oil profits were being used by the government to buy new helicopters to advance the goal of driving local populations from the oil regions. Speaking from Austria, Gasi called for a total halt to all oil drilling as long as there was armed conflict. "Only come back when there is peace," he said. The Austrian oil company OMV is doing exploratory drilling in Gasi's diocese of Tombura-Yambio.

## Resources

- 1) **NCPCR/PeaceWeb Conference & Expo “Weaving The Future of Peacemaking”**: The 2003 Network of Communities for Peacemaking and Conflict Resolution (NCPCR)/PeaceWeb Conference & Expo, “Weaving The Future of Peacemaking”, will be held near Atlanta April 3-7, 2003. The conference offers workshops and training sessions; theatre; art; film; concerts; receptions; celebrations; keynote speakers; and plenary sessions. Join peacemakers, conflict resolution practitioners, educators, youth, youth workers, social workers, activists, community organizers, experienced professionals, beginners, community based leaders and others as we all gather to share our vision, knowledge, cultures, experiences, and practices. For more information, contact NCPCR/PeaceWeb at (215)245-6993; fax (215)245-6994; email: [ncpcr@apeacemaker.net](mailto:ncpcr@apeacemaker.net); [www.apeacemaker.net](http://www.apeacemaker.net)
- 2) **National Interfaith Committee on Worker Justice Conference**: Please join leaders from local religion-labor coalitions and religious denominations to strengthen local efforts and enhance public policy advocacy for workers. May 18-20, 2003, Washington, D.C. For more information, contact the National Interfaith Committee on Worker Justice, 1020 W. Bryn Mawr, 4<sup>th</sup> Floor, Chicago IL, 60660; tel: (773)728-8400; fax: (773)728-8409; [www.nicwj.org](http://www.nicwj.org); [sara@nicwj.org](mailto:sara@nicwj.org)
- 3) **New resources from the Jubilee USA Network**: Jubilee USA recently updated its education and action packet. Learn more about the debt crisis, World Bank and IMF policies, the current debt relief plan, advocacy strategies, and more. \$5. Contact Jubilee USA at (202)783-3566, or email [coord@j2000usa.org](mailto:coord@j2000usa.org). Also, ask for information about how your church or worship community can become a “Jubilee Congregation.” For more information, contact Mara Vanderslice at (202)783-0129 or write [mara@j2000usa.org](mailto:mara@j2000usa.org)
- 4) **Iraq Under Siege: The Deadly Impact of Sanctions and War**: Edited by Anthony Arrove, this updated collection of essays by Noam Chomsky, Phyllis Bennis,



Kathy Kelly, Howard Zinn and others is helpful for anyone who wants to understand the roots of U.S. policy in Iraq and the Middle East. The volume also includes photographs and first-person accounts from Iraq that show the human story of the sanctions, which have now been in place for 12 years, ending with concrete ideas on how people can help end the war on Iraq. \$16.00. Available at independent booksellers or through South End Press, [www.southendpress.org](http://www.southendpress.org). Or call (800)533-8478

- 5) **Executive Excess 2002: CEOs Cook the Books, Skewer the Rest of Us**: The ninth annual CEO pay study by the Institute for Policy Studies and United for a Fair Economy, this report looks at 23 companies which are under investigation and which have had market capitalizations over \$1 billion sometime since January 2001. The CEO-worker pay gap of 411-to-1 is nearly ten times as high as the 1982 ratio of 42-to-1. 26 pages, \$6.00. To order a copy of *Executive Excess 2002*, which includes chapters on corporate lobbying and guidelines for reform, go to [www.faireconomy.org](http://www.faireconomy.org), or write: Executive Excess 2002, United for a Fair Economy, 37 Temple Place, 2nd Floor, Boston, MA, 02111; 877-564-6833 (toll free).
- 6) **Nourishing the Nonviolent Revolution**: The War Resisters League presents their annual peace calendar for 2003. This combination cookbook and calendar includes vegetarian recipes from around the world, plus weekly date pages, a directory of U.S. peace and justice organizations and international contacts, and an index. 128 pages, 5 1/2" x 8 1/2". \$12.95 each; four for \$48. Contact the War Resisters League to order: 339 Lafayette Street, New York NY, 10012; tel: (212) 228-0450; [wrl@warresisters.org](mailto:wrl@warresisters.org); [www.warresisters.org](http://www.warresisters.org)
- 7) **A World at Odds: Conscience in a time of terror**: The editors of Sojourners have created this new study guide focused on five timely and important issues: the U.S. conflict with Iraq; the global economy; fundamentalism and religious diversity; and the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. We invite you to use this guide however it's most useful; read it on your own or join with church and community groups to sort through the questions these topics raise. This study guide is only available online at [www.sojo.net](http://www.sojo.net).