

Maryknoll Office for Global Concerns

NewsNotes

A bi-monthly newsletter of information on international justice and peace issues

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MARYKNOLL OFFICE FOR GLOBAL CONCERNS:

Peace, Social Justice and the Integrity of Creation

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40th anniversary of *Pacem in Terris*

Peace can be like the Mississippi River, whose origin is a small stream 20-30 feet in width and ankle-deep, gently flowing from Lake Itasca in northern Minnesota, and takes a 2,500-mile voyage to the Gulf of Mexico. Such has been the journey of Pacem in Terris, the encyclical Pope John XXIII wrote April 11, 1963, less than two months before his death on June 3, 1963. Two years before, the Berlin Wall had been erected; six months earlier, the world had come to the brink of a nuclear war during the Cuban Missile Crisis. Media concentrated on war with little consideration given to peace, but John XXIII did not agree that peace was impossible.

Pacem in Terris was the first document on peace by the Catholic Church in modern times. A ceremony at the United Nations commemorated its 40th anniversary on October 6 this year. The three Catholic cardinals among the speakers noted that peace is an ethical question. Julian Hunte of Saint Lucia and president of the UN General Assembly, called it a road map of peace and sign that a culture of peace was being born. When it was written, there were 51 members of the UN and now the number has grown to 191. Kofi Annan, the Secretary General of the UN, expressed deep distress about the breakdown of global consensus on major issues. The UN was grappling with the results of human rights abuses, when it should be dealing with causes and prevention. Ms. British Robinson gave testimony to the work being done by civil society groups bringing peace and unity in Africa and urged us all to be embedded peace-makers.

According to John XXIII, peace is an order founded on truth, built up on justice, nurtured and animated by charity and brought into effect under the auspices of freedom (*Pacem in Terris*, #167). He stressed that all people are equal in natural dignity and that their human

rights must be known and respected, defended and promoted, especially by civil authorities, whose sole reason for existence is the attainment of the common good. The relations between states must be based on cooperation rather than force or domination. St Augustine is quoted, "Take away justice, and what are kingdoms but mighty bands of robbers." (#92)

The prosperity and progress of any State is tied up with that of all other States, prompting the need to promote the universal common good of the whole human family. There must be a "public authority with power, organization and means co-extensive with the problems, with a worldwide sphere of activity." (#137) Then the

importance of the United Nations is highlighted and the need to "adapt its structures and methods of operation to the magnitude and nobility of its tasks."

This document gave birth to a mighty river of hope for peace.

Subsequent Catholic and other religious leaders and people of faith have been strong advocates for peace. Pope Paul VI's concern for the poor and marginalized gave rise to the slogan, "Development is the new name for peace." Pope John Paul II has evolved the ideas of non-violence and negotiations in *Pacem in Terris* and made them

a priority in his teachings, clearly protesting the preemptive, unilateral invasion of Iraq. People of faith all over the world have marched and chanted for peace, condemning the death and destruction of war.

Structures must change and hearts must be touched. As John XXIII eloquently says, "The world will never be a dwelling place of peace, till peace has found a home in the heart of each and everyone." (#167) The Church began the journey well in *Pacem in Terris*, but she a long way to go to convince U.S. Christians to know and live Gospel peace.

We must therefore consider this point most closely joined to the great tasks of magnanimous men, namely, to establish with truth, justice, charity, and liberty new methods of relationships in human society: the relations among individual citizens, among citizens and their own countries, among nations themselves, among individuals, families, intermediate associations and individual states on the one hand, and with the community of all mankind on the other. This is a most exalted task, for it is the task of bringing about true peace in the order established by God.

Commit to nonviolence, commit to human rights

A commitment to nonviolence cannot be separated from a commitment to peace. While this seems fairly apparent, when put in reverse order it is neither obvious nor, for many, acceptable. The challenge this presents is for us to deepen our understanding of nonviolence and how it connects with and affects peace at every stage and every level: personal, social and national.

Another commitment which needs to be viewed in connection with nonviolence is the obligation to human rights. Nonviolence is integrally linked with human rights. It could be said that human rights were first codified in the Ten Commandments, and, after the indiscriminate destruction and Holocaust of World War II, again in the United Nations Universal Declaration of Human Rights. They can be summed up as the right of every human person to be recognized as human and to live in dignity with all that is essential for human life.

In his book *Lest Innocent Blood Be Shed* (Harper Perennial 1979, 1994), Philip Hallie reveals how, during the Nazi occupation of France, Pastor Andre Trocme, along with his wife Magda, came face to face with the truth: *Each human life is infused with dignity.*

Pastor Trocme and his faith community in Le Chambon realized that deep respect for each human life. They addressed the crisis immediately. It was not enough for them to be “harmless”; they had to prevent others from harming those targeted by the Nazis. They refused to participate in hatred, and at the same time realized

that neutrality would mean complicity with the evil demanded by the Nazi regime. Not only did they refuse to participate in the destruction of other people, they actively resisted to keep the Nazis from using their power. All this they did nonviolently.

The present situation, with the U.S. belief that “war works” and the invasion and occupation of Iraq and even of Afghanistan, throws open the question of how the practice of the community in Le Chambon – linking nonviolence, peace, and human rights – can be replicated today.

Although nations have international laws as their guides, international courts have yet to keep pace. There is still a need for a system to implement them. This does not apply

to individuals, however, since when laws fail, as they seem to have at present, we are still answerable to the courts of our conscience. Our inner law stands, both negative: *thou shalt not kill*, and positive: *resist those who do harm, seek justice, correct oppression.*

Peace begins with understanding the *dignity of each human life*; this demands a consistent, disciplined and nonviolent response in our lives as individuals, and as both national and global citizens. Like the people of Le Chambon, it is not enough for us to be “harmless.”

Resource: Is There No Other Way? by Michael Nagler, Berkeley Hills Books, 2001.



Japan: Asians watch Koizumi's military policy

All eyes in Japan will focus on Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi after general elections Nov. 9 to see how he might strengthen the country's armed forces and promote Japan as a global political and military power.

Koizumi has asked his Liberal Democratic Party to draw up a blueprint for constitutional change by 2005. The plan sets the stage for a debate over Article 9, the “peace clause” of Japan’s Constitution, which forbids

war.

While Koizumi advocates stronger national defense and enhanced international stature, his policies could also heighten tensions in Asia. Japan has twice invaded China, and it occupied the Korean peninsula as recently as World War II.

In February 2003, Defense Minister Shigeru Ishiba said Japan was prepared to launch a first strike against North Korea if Tokyo believed its neighbor was about to

launch a ballistic missile attack against it. (North Korea test-fired a long-range ballistic missile over Japan in 1998.)

North Korea's nuclear weapons program has contributed to greater tension in Japan, the only nation to suffer a wartime nuclear attack. An advisory panel to Foreign Minister Yoriko Kawaguchi notes that Japan has promised it would "not produce, not possess and not allow nuclear weapons into the country." Yet, it says the third principle is effectively violated when U.S. ships carrying nuclear arms call at Japanese ports.

According to the *Japan Times*, the panel recommends that Japan explicitly allow such visits, given the situation in North Korea. "If North Korea develops nuclear weapons at full scale," it says, "to what extent Japan should limit (U.S. arms in Japan as a deterrent against North Korea) will be a huge issue."

Meanwhile, Koizumi -- elected party head and prime minister in 2001 and re-elected this year -- is nonetheless at loggerheads with the electorate over some of his policies.

After the U.S. invasion of Iraq earlier this year, Japan made an initial pledge of \$1.5 billion toward reconstruction. Japanese officials also promised to send hundreds of self defense forces to Iraq. However, polls indicated that most Japanese were opposed to sending military personnel.

If Japanese forces were deployed in Iraq, they would likely be confined to relatively secure parts of the country. They would deal mainly with water, sanitation and transportation systems, as well as power and energy supplies.

Japan's attitude toward peacekeeping and reconstruction has changed since 1991. After Iraq invaded Kuwait, triggering the first Gulf War, Japan gave Kuwait \$14 billion for reconstruction. Kuwait declined to thank Japan, however, because it had sent no soldiers. Since then Japanese troops have taken part in modest peacekeeping or relief missions in Cambodia, the Congo, East Timor, the Golan Heights and Mozambique.

Koizumi aligned Japan with the Bush

administration's "war on terror" after the attacks of Sept. 11, 2001. Japanese armed forces played a support role for the U.S. invasion of Afghanistan - the first armed conflict in which Japan actively participated since World War II.

President Bush has expressed gratitude to Japan for its assistance. The aid might also win crucial U.S. support for Japan in its long quest for a permanent seat on the UN Security Council. Reform of the Security Council, including possible expansion of its membership, has been discussed since 1993 by a special task force set up under the UN General Assembly. However, sharp differences remain over such thorny questions as the size of a future council and whether new permanent members should be granted veto power.

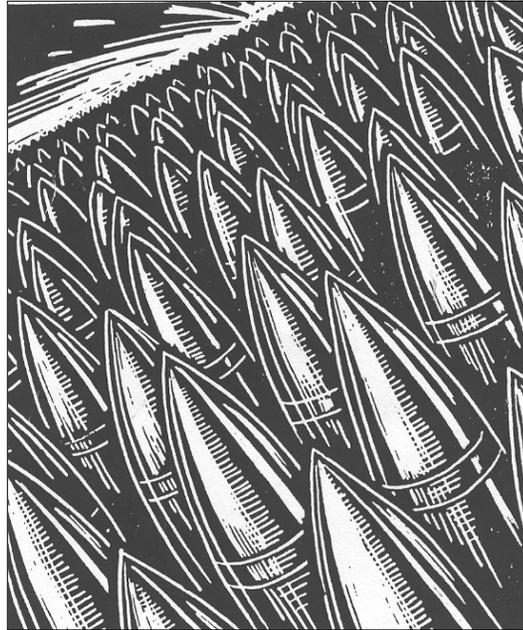
Despite the declaration in Article 9 of the Constitution that "the Japanese people forever renounce war as a sovereign right of the nation and the threat or use of force as means of settling international disputes," Japan's military budget is one of the largest in the world.

The Defense Agency requested \$42 billion for defense during the next fiscal year. The request included \$1.3 billion to begin a missile shield to be operational by 2006. The shield would include land-based Patriot missiles, and a sea-based interception system on Japan's state-of-the-art Aegis destroyers.

Less than a year after President Bush announced his National Security Strategy, he launched a pre-emptive attack on Iraq. He alleged that Saddam Hussein controlled weapons of mass destruction that have yet to be discovered.

North Korea has long been thought to have a missile under development capable of hitting the western U.S.

What is especially frightening as Koizumi's agenda unfolds is the question of whether Japan sees itself more as a U.S. partner - or a surrogate. His constituents might remind him that boosting one's international stature requires more than launching a massive pre-emptive attack against a country that is too weak to defend itself.



Cambodia: World Bank project praised

For many years, Maryknoll missionaries have been critical of macroeconomic policies promoted by the international financial institutions and by the world's most powerful nations. Based on the experience of missionaries over two decades, especially in Latin America and Africa, the Maryknoll Office for Global Concerns has facilitated dialogue, education and public action to effect radical change in the global economy toward social and ecological justice. To do that, we have worked with the Religious Working Group on the World Bank and IMF, the Jubilee campaigns, the Interfaith Working Group on Trade and Investment, the UN Financing for Development process, and many other collaborative efforts with people of faith and good will. After careful discernment, Maryknoll joined the World Bank Bonds Boycott to underscore our concerns about these systemic issues and our belief that definitive debt cancellation and the acknowledgment of illegitimate debt are essential steps toward economic health for impoverished countries. All of this work continues – as does our search for positive examples of alternative practice.

Some of the best alternatives we have seen come from local communities around the world, where people know well what they need for a dignified life. When international institutions or agencies function in ways that genuinely respect the opinion of local people, as has a World Bank education project in Cambodia, we are happy to lift up those good examples also.

The need to develop Cambodia's capacity to provide quality education – from early childhood education through the university – is acute. The devastation by the Khmer Rouge 25 years ago and the intervening years of occupation and extreme poverty have left an enormous deficit that must be filled if the majority of people in Cambodia are ever to see an improvement in their quality of life.

Since the mid-1990s, Maryknoll has been involved with the World Bank's education projects in Cambodia. Missioners there say that these programs in higher education and primary education have been characterized by:

- inclusivity – the proactive involvement of government, private sector, NGOs, other agencies (such as the World Food Program, UNICEF, UNESCO, Volunteer Services Overseas) and bilateral donors (Australia, France, U.S.) and by

- high levels of collaboration, from the institutional to the central level - with doors left open for discussion at points where closure on issues, at any given time, was not possible.

The World Bank took the lead in helping the re-emerging higher education sector to assess needs and define next steps in its development. Chief among these was a legal framework and an overarching coordinating mechanism. The work of the National Higher Education Task Force (NHETF) culminated in recommendations that were casualties of the 1997 troubles, but the processes underlying the NHETF recommendations and the policymakers formed by those processes kept working. The World Bank once again stepped in to support those efforts and subsequently provided a grant for the development of a legal framework for education. That legal framework with modification has now been passed into law. While the modification seriously affects the transparency of the accreditation committee that the law puts in place, the World Bank team quietly left channels of communication open until a new government was put in place.

In primary education, the Education Quality Improvement Project (EQIP) modeled a process of centrally funded but locally managed support of schools. School communities first created visions of the schooling that they wanted to make available to their children. Next, they assessed current realities relative to their visions. Finally, they learned to map out the steps needed to close the gap. This process resulted in proposals that, over time, developed from furniture requests to teacher training in methodology, remediation, etc. Moreover, the prompt delivery of funds to schools developed a hopefulness and excitement in a sector where much is indeed promised but rarely delivered. The Ministry of Education's Priority Action Program is modeled after EQIP.

Faith in action:

Write a letter to Chris Thomas, Cambodia Program Officer, The World Bank, 1818 H Street, N.W., Washington, D.C. 20433, thanking him for his part in managing the kind of program which we hope would become the norm for the World Bank. Be specific, based on the above information.

Vietnam: Global economy on its own terms?

A very brief visit to Vietnam offered new insights in the global debate about economic models and workplace justice. Marie Dennis, director of the Maryknoll Office for Global Concerns, spent a few days in and around Hanoi as part of her visit to Maryknoll missionaries in Southeast Asia. Excerpts from her account of that visit – and some of the insights and questions it evoked – follow.

It was raining as we left Hanoi, but the drive was absolutely spectacular – field after field of rice interspersed with irrigation canals, dikes, ponds where ducks were fenced in with chicken wire, an occasional cow and small gardens that were also flourishing. Here and there someone (often a woman) was working in the rice paddy – standing in water – a few were in water up to their necks. People later told me that the scene during planting season and the harvest is even more breathtaking – with hundreds and hundreds of people working in each field. In the larger lakes and rivers there were cement boats carrying loads under low bridges, barges, carefully set fishing nets. We saw one woman riding a bicycle piled so high with packages that it was a miracle she could ride. Everywhere people were busy making or selling or growing something.

Life in the rural areas was pretty basic – poor by our standards, but I did not see devastating poverty as I did in Cambodia. They say that there is serious poverty in Vietnam – a fairly successful period of economic growth has gone a long way to improving life for many, but not for everyone.

We visited a number of training centers, which were very impressive efforts, encouraged by the Vietnamese government, to build the skills of poor people and to prepare them to find jobs. Classes were available and well subscribed in sewing and tailoring, carpentry, welding, machinery, motorcycle and car repair, accounting, computers, etc. The impression I got in each center was of an energetic team and enthusiastic students, hopeful that their new knowledge and skills would enable them to find meaningful work.

The students of sewing and tailoring were hoping to find jobs in assembly plants. Some are a little distance

away; others are close by. A newer attraction is jobs in Malaysia, which is welcoming young workers from Vietnam and probably elsewhere. Many people feel this is an opportunity to improve their lives.

In the neighborhood of the first training center we visited, including in a nearby convent of Catholic sisters, there were other classes underway, particularly sewing classes, and some small assembly shops where workers, mostly quite young, were busy sewing together thousands of “whatevers” to fill a contract. The sisters told us

that they try to find small contracts or projects to give young people in the community a little income so they would stay in the area.

At the second large center we visited, in addition to training they have a micro-loan program. We visited a young man who had started an electrical repair business in his

home and who wanted to expand it a little. His physical disability made it difficult for him to find employment, but he was doing quite well on his own. We also visited a woman who has started a small sewing shop where she employs seven or eight young women, recent graduates of the training center. They had a big contract to make uniforms for a local school and she too was hoping to expand.

Another pastoral commitment of Maryknoll in Vietnam is the Detention Center for youth in Hanoi. At any one time, there are about 100 boys between 12 and 18 who are sentenced for up to two years to the detention center for a variety of crimes, mostly not violent. The government invited Maryknoll to work in the center; it is obviously an important ministry and a model of reform that could be useful in other countries, including the United States, where the emphasis is so often on punishment rather than on rehabilitation. The boys go to school and learn a trade. Most importantly, they have very regular attention and love. After they are released many of them go to a halfway house where they continue skills training for a number of months as they try to reinsert themselves into their families and the community.

Vietnam seems to be moving its economy down a



photo by Sean Sprague, courtesy of Maryknoll Fathers & Brothers

unique path. While it is opening the economy more and more, it seems to be trying to do so on its own terms and in a manner consistent with its cultural values and traditions.

I did see a few signs of danger, including the vulnerability of the workers, especially those who are training for jobs in assembly plants - even as I heard their excitement and hope that new-found skills would help them improve their lives and the lives of their loved ones. Will they be able to survive with dignity when the competition for jobs and contracts is so fierce? They will almost inevitably be forced to join the masses of workers moving to urban areas and across borders, accepting very low wages, few benefits and very long hours to stay employed.

In just a few days I also saw real signs of hope: a huge amount of energy, and the desire to work, being shaped by the government's commitment to training and education; a spirit of collaboration that was perhaps most evident on farms; food production that was still intrinsi-

cally connected to, and dependent on, local communities; workers maintaining a connection to family, home and local community - even when they had to move to urban areas to find work; efforts to create meaningful work in local communities; little apparent dependence on fossil fuels - thanks in part to amazing peddle power; and a capacity to celebrate beauty and relationships, including in the presentation of food - and the time with family, friends and co-workers to enjoy it.

I had no exposure to most of the Vietnamese economy. I never saw a coffee plant, for example, yet Vietnam is being blamed worldwide for following the advice of international creditors and producing a glut of coffee on the market that made prices crash. I never had a conversation with a Vietnamese economist or government official and had little interaction with local organizations. But what I saw was very different from what I have seen in many, many other poor or once-poor countries with opening economies. Will Vietnam be able to find another, more just way?

Thailand: People on the move

Even a brief visit to the International Detention Center (IDC) in Bangkok gives some sense of the global nature of migration. True, people are on the move in all directions and for a wide variety of reasons, but most of those who end up in detention centers like the one in Bangkok have hard stories to tell.

The IDC is an immigration prison where people from all over the world are held in large cells with no beds or other furniture until they can be deported to their country of origin, as Thai law requires them to be. Detainees from Burma, Laos and Cambodia are regularly bused to the border of their respective countries and deported. Other detainees - from Africa, Latin America and more distant countries in Asia - must stay in detention until they have legal documents that allow them to repatriate and the money to pay for their own travel. Some embassies in Bangkok respond immediately in a helpful way when one of their citizens is in detention. Other countries, including the U.S., offer little help.



Some prisoners stay in the detention center out of fear for their lives if they were to return to their country of origin. Most of the inmates are adults; some have children with them. A children's program, a health clinic, pastoral care and access to a phone help mitigate the circumstances of their imprisonment a bit, but their experience seems tragically similar to the experiences of millions of migrants and refugees around the world.

While the most direct impact on refugees and migrants is usually from the national policy of the country into which or through which they are moving, international factors can also have a huge impact, not only on the causes of migration, but also on the treatment of migrants in receiving countries. Increasingly among them is U.S. pressure on other countries to respond aggressively to drug trafficking and the possible spread of terrorism, themes repeated often on President Bush's recent visit to Asia.

Iraq: U.S. must reshape its foreign policy

If the Bush administration hopes to promote a credible reconstruction process in Iraq, it must be willing to tap those best able to pay – the wealthiest U.S. citizens – while benefiting those most in need, i.e., local Iraqis.

That would mean rescinding the president's recent tax cuts for the nation's wealthiest one percent, and allowing more Iraqi firms to bid on contracts to rebuild their country's infrastructure.

The U.S. should also allow the UN to direct reconstruction efforts if the U.S. hopes for more help from its friends. As of mid-October Japan had pledged \$1.5 billion and European Union foreign ministers \$233 million for reconstruction in Iraq.

Meanwhile, the UN Security Council unanimously adopted a U.S.-sponsored resolution on October 16 calling for a multinational force in Iraq under U.S. command. To win wider support, one proviso calls on the U.S.-led Coalition Provisional Authority (CPA) to set a timetable by December 15 for writing a new constitution and holding national elections.

The Security Council resolution also states that the mandate of U.S.-led troops would expire when an Iraqi government is elected. Iyad Allawi, head of the Provisional Authority's rotating leadership, said elections would be held in 2004.

Estimates for rebuilding Iraq vary widely. The Brookings Institution projects the cost at upwards of \$120 billion per year for the next several years. Clearly, the U.S. would benefit if it could share both the cost of reconstruction and the burden of maintaining troops in Iraq.

The U.S. House and Senate debated in October the president's request for \$87 billion in supplemental appropriations for military operations and reconstruction in Iraq and Afghanistan. This followed a special war appropriation of \$79 billion last spring. It is also additional to the \$400 billion military budget the administration requested for Fiscal Year 2004.

By contrast, Congress approved a \$1.4 trillion, ten-year tax cut in 1991, followed by a \$350 billion, 10-year tax cut this year.

Of the recent \$87 billion supplemental request, just \$16 billion was earmarked for reconstruction. This includes \$6 billion to repair Iraq's electrical power system. The repair will cost an estimated \$15 billion over the next several years, according to Iraq Revenue Watch, an initiative of George Soros' Open Society Institute.

The reconstruction money also includes \$3.7 billion to repair Iraq's water and sewage systems, a project that could require \$16 billion over the next few years. Iraq Revenue Watch estimates that restoring basic education will cost up to \$12 billion, health care as much as \$20 billion, and oil production \$40 billion by decade's end.



photo courtesy of www.rafah.vze.com

Reconstruction in Iraq is desperately needed not only because of the recent U.S. invasion, but also because of the 1990-91 Gulf War and 12 years of sanctions. Even potential oil revenues were overestimated. U.S. officials now project Iraqi oil income at \$12 billion in 2004, and \$20 billion in both 2005 and 2006. Iraq Revenue Watch estimates the cost of operating the Iraq government at \$15 billion annually, leaving little for the massive capital investment needed to restore basic services in Iraq.

To allay suspicion of U.S. motives, contracts for rebuilding Iraq must be transparent and open to all. Iraqi construction firms must increasingly take charge of their country's reconstruction, and they should not have to compete with Halliburton or Bechtel. Reconstruction must benefit the Iraqi economy and not U.S. corporations, which exclude local workers and local companies.

In addition, the CPA must be more transparent in its management of Iraq's public finances. Contrary to UN Resolution 1483, expenditures of the Development Fund for Iraq have been managed by a Program Review Board composed of CPA appointees, only one of whom is an Iraqi.

It is essential that Congress play an active role in reshaping U.S. policy on Iraq, Afghanistan and the

broader war on terror. Otherwise the people of the U.S. will continue to pay inordinately to keep this country on a permanent war footing, even as essential domestic programs are cut back for lack of funds.

In Iraq, the U.S. must act to counter a growing feeling of hopelessness, which can only fuel stronger resentment and resistance. “(Under Saddam Hussein) there was just one tyrant; now we are facing a tyrant country,” says Hind, a young woman. “Before, we had electricity. Yes, things have changed, but for the worse.

My country has nothing to give me now.”

Faith in action:

Contact your members of Congress and ask that far more funding be made available for reconstruction in Iraq. Urge that the U.S. give the UN greater authority to oversee reconstruction and restore security. Insist on greater transparency in awarding contracts to rebuild the country’s infrastructure, giving Iraqis priority wherever possible.

Catholic missionaries in Asia support Muslims

During a colloquium on Islam held in October, missionaries from several orders, including Maryknoll, wrote the following statement of solidarity with Muslims, especially those who have suffered injustice due to their faith.

“Allah commands you . . . [that] when you judge between person and person that you judge with justice.” (Qur’an, Surah 4:58)

“Justice, justice you must pursue, that you might live . . .” (Deut 16:20)

We are 32 missionaries from Maryknoll Missions, Quebec Foreign Mission Society, Philippine Catholic Lay Missions, Scarborough Missions and the Jesuits serving in Asia gathered in Hua Hin, Thailand for a colloquium on Islam, in order to deepen our understanding of Islam and of the concerns of Muslim people today.

As we meet, we are aware that branches of the Muslim Youth Association of Thailand are beginning a series of prayer sessions to boost the morale of Muslims who are wrongly accused of being terrorists. We wish to express that we also share their concern that injustices are being perpetrated in our name by the present United States administration against Muslim people.

We cannot remain silent in the presence of what appears to be an ongoing situation of injustice against the Islamic community. Specifically the situation of people being detained as a result of the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq are a cause of great concern to us. At the time of the invasion of Afghanistan, Taliban prisoners died of suffocation while in transit. Today Muslim detainees continue to suffer abuse from unjust and unlawful treatment and detention. Those of us that have seen the images or read



of the conditions of detainees at Guantanamo Bay are outraged. The situation at Guantanamo Bay is damaging to U.S. integrity and to the rule of law which is sacred to us as U.S. citizens and citizens of the world. The actions of the U.S. government towards these detainees are in direct violation of both U.S. Constitutional law and the international standards set by the Geneva Conventions.

In trying to raise their voice against injustice, [members of] the Muslim community in the United States are at great risk of further persecution. We, therefore, wish to be a voice on behalf of these detainees — our Muslim brothers and sisters. We ask that the U.S. Catholic Conference of Bishops and the Leadership Conferences of Religious Men and Women take a more public stance in insisting that the administration of the United States, which must remain accountable to its citizens, desist from further abuse and unlawful detention of those people being held at Guantanamo Bay and other military or civil detention centers. We want our leaders in the Catholic community to call for the right of the major human rights organizations, such as Amnesty International and Human Rights Watch, to be granted access to the prisoners held at Guantanamo Bay. At this time in our history it is imperative that Catholic Church be at the forefront of demanding that the United States honor its commitment to uphold the basic human rights articulated in the U.S. Constitution and in the Geneva Conventions.

Burma: Military continues using forced labor

As its official orders "prove," Burma's State Peace and Development Council (SPDC) provides its people with all that a government should. Except peace and development.

Take forced labor, for example, which reportedly is widespread in Burma. Pressure from the International Labor Organization (ILO) led the junta in May 1999 to issue Order No. 1/99, which bans the practice.

The SPDC later issued two further orders to outlaw all forms of forced labor. However, human rights groups and labor organizations say that Order 1/99 still is little known, especially in ethnic minority areas, and is rarely enforced.

EarthRights International (ERI) interviewed 10 village heads in eastern Burma to ascertain the current status of forced labor in an active conflict zone. The interviews disclosed ongoing, systematic and violent labor abuse by the Burmese military. (See the report at www.earthrights.org/news/entrenched.shtml.)

ERI learned that the military routinely sends out written orders demanding labor, materials and money from villagers. Each letter has a stamp of authorization, showing military officers' pivotal role in organizing forced labor. Often an order is clearly threatening - for example, by sending several bullets along with it.

Forced labor in the small, rural area studied is never properly compensated, yet refusing to work invites punishment. Even complaining about forced labor can result in retaliation, according to the village heads. Those who do not follow orders can be punished with rape, torture or even death.

In one of the most dangerous tasks, villagers are forced to check the roads for landmines - sometimes by hand or with the use of hoes or long bamboo sticks. Essentially, finding a landmine means being injured when it explodes. Villagers must also act as sentries along main roads and report any rebel activity to the military.

Other duties are also demanded regularly. One headman said his village had to send 13 people with rations to three military camps every two weeks. Another leader said his village had to send a bullock cart and two porters to a military camp every month.

With so many orders to work, gather building materials or serve as porters for the military, villagers often cannot properly attend to their own farms. One

village head said he spends half of his time working for the military. Yet a farmer could lose an entire crop if he is away from his fields at critical times or for extended periods.

In the past 15 years, large infrastructure projects have also led to massive labor violations in Burma, according to Amnesty International. The U.S. Labor Department reports that "(t)he total number of people affected by demands for forced labor appears to reach easily into the hundreds of thousands, and perhaps millions."



EarthRights International cites the 40-mile Yadana gas pipeline from Burma to Thailand as an example. ERI says a transnational consortium of Burma's military regime and two transnational corporations, Unocal from the U.S. and TotalFinaElf from France, built the pipeline using the forced labor of rural villagers.

The U.S. and several allies have imposed economic sanctions on Burma to press Rangoon to implement human rights reforms. Meanwhile ERI, which has offices in the U.S. and Southeast Asia, offers several recommendations.

ERI urges the SPDC to disseminate information about Order 1/99 more widely, to establish credible investigative mechanisms, and to prosecute those who violate the order. It also calls for the protection of those who allege violations or try to enforce the order, and it recommends that complaints from non-governmental organizations be accepted as credible allegations.

EarthRights International also urges Burma's neighbors to allow international agencies and non-governmental organizations to operate in those countries to monitor the issue of forced labor and other alleged human rights violations in Burma.

ERI also calls on the international community to continue to press the SPDC to eradicate forced labor, and to oppose large infrastructure projects in Burma until it is clear that such projects would not lead to labor abuse. ERI further urges international support for a process of national reconciliation in Burma to help end human rights violations in the country.

Bolivia: Protests lead from chaos to hope

Just before the former president of Bolivia, Gonzalo Sánchez de Lozada (Goni), resigned from office late on October 17, 2003, Maryknoll missionaries in Bolivia had reported that despite an extremely tense and dangerous situation there, the people were conveying their demands for economic and social justice with enormous energy and in countless positive ways: Nonviolent demonstrations, prayer vigils and services for peace were ongoing. Human chains had been formed of people from various ethnic groups and classes. And hundreds of people were participating in hunger strikes in different parishes in La Paz and throughout the country.

For weeks, violence continued to escalate as the Bolivian military responded to street blockades by firing into crowds of demonstrators, who, with few exceptions, were either unarmed or armed only with sticks and stones. In total, 74 people were killed and 400 were injured. The people demonstrating, who had been trying to initiate meaningful dialogue with the president over the issues that brought them out *en masse*, began to say that they could never dialogue with an assassin – and to demand Goni's resignation.

Although the issue of immediate contention was an agreement to export gas to and/or through Chile, mainly to the United States and Mexico, there were many critical issues fueling such an emotional and forceful public outcry, including deep poverty and marginalization in many rural communities and urban neighborhoods, and the on-going loss of control by the Bolivian people over their own natural resources and economy to transnational corporate interests.

This is not the first demonstration of its kind in Bolivia. Indigenous groups in the altiplano, for example, have blocked roads at least three times in recent years – one time for three weeks.

In February 2000, massive street demonstrations erupted in Bolivia over who would control the water system of Cochabamba (see *NewsNotes* May-June 2000). Immediately after taking control of the city's water system, an international conglomerate that included California-based Bechtel had dramatically increased water bills for poor families.

The last serious social eruption, which resulted in 33 deaths, was in February of this year over the

government's implementation of an IMF agreement.

Repeated clashes over coca have also taken place in Bolivia in recent years. Coca, a basic ingredient of cocaine, is used traditionally by indigenous peoples in the Andean region to stave off hunger, for tea, for medicinal purposes etc. Absent the development of viable alternatives, coca is almost the only lucrative crop for poor farmers. It is also the target of an intense, U.S.-initiated eradication campaign to which Bolivia was obligated in order to receive any U.S. aid.

After Goni's resignation from office, Vice President Carlos Mesa Gisbert, the constitutionally-designated successor, was sworn in as president of Bolivia as an

independent. He began his inaugural speech with a moment of silence for "the men and women of Bolivia who gave their lives fighting for democracy and justice." He expressed the three sentiments he felt: "Dolor, esperanza, y fortaleza del espíritu" (pain, hope and strength of spirit) and stressed the need for unity in diversity, for the "refounding" of Bolivia through a new political structure and the reestablishment of peace. He committed to a binding popular vote on the proposed gas deal, pledged a government in

which corruption would not be tolerated and agreed to a popular constitutional convention in which even the issue of his own length of service as president would be up for discussion.

Mesa's cabinet, sworn in on October 19, was formed of independents in an effort to avoid controversy between political parties vying for ministerial positions.

Political analyst Jim Shultz wrote from Bolivia, "The issue now is - are those empty promises or are they real? It will be up to social movements to hold the new president to them... This last month has been a painful, sorrowful, violent, and tense time in Bolivia. While there is still much to be seen about whether the departure of one president and the arrival of a new one will actually make a difference, this bloody month did end up with something many did not expect - hope."



photo by Eric Wheeler, courtesy of Maryknoll Fathers & Brothers

Faith in action:

Throughout the crisis, the U.S. Embassy expressed its support for the president (Goni) and for democracy, never publicly criticizing the use of deadly force against unarmed people. As the deposed president was fleeing his own country on a plane headed north, the embassy, according to Shultz, proclaimed, "We commend ex-President Sanchez de Lozada for his commitment to

democracy and to the well being of his country." Write a letter or send a fax to David Boyle, Bolivia Desk, U.S. Department of State (fax: 202-647-2628), asking for an explanation of U.S. failure to denounce the human rights violations committed against his own people by the former president of Bolivia and urging the U.S. to give President Carlos Mesa sufficient political space to respond to the will of his own people.

Venezuela: The other president

On September 12, Venezuela's newly appointed Consejo Nacional Electoral (CNE) [National Election Board] ruled that the signatures collected by President Hugo Chavez's opposition could not be used to call a revocatory referendum. The Coordinadora Democratica (CD) had collected the signatures in early February at the end of the two-month strike and business lockout that battered the economy but failed to force Chavez to resign.

The CNE said the signatures were invalid because they should have been collected after August 19, the halfway point of Chavez's current term. On September 25, election officials approved rules for a possible referendum on his mandate. Venezuela's constitution requires the signatures of at least 20 percent of registered voters - 2.4 million signatures - to trigger a referendum. The CNE ruled that the opposition's petition drive for a recall referendum should be held on November 28 to December 1 and set a maximum timetable of 155 days for the whole referendum process.

As the debate about a potential recall in Venezuela continued and demonstrators in Bolivia called for the resignation of the president there, Maryknoll lay missionary Sami Scott in Venezuela wrote a reflection comparing the two situations. Excerpts follow:

"As things develop in Bolivia I can't help but reflect how similar yet how different the situation is to what is happening in Venezuela. In both countries there is a demand from a large sector of the population for the president to resign. This demand is, or has been, backed up by street demonstrations and a general strike. But that is where the similarities end.

"In Bolivia, it is the poor, the indigenous, the common worker who is demanding that the president step down. It is the people who have nothing and thus

have nothing to lose who are leading the protests. The general strike which is in process is exactly just that, a strike, lead by the workers.

"In Venezuela, it is the rich, the business owners, people with strong ties to the U.S. who are demanding that the president step down... The 'strike' last December was not truly a strike but a management lock-out. The workers were not asked if they wanted to go on strike, they were simply not allowed in to work.

"The two presidents in question couldn't be more different. One is criticized because his first language is not Spanish but English. The other is criticized because his Spanish is, at times, more the language of the street and not the boardroom. One was not elected directly by the people but was elected in a run-off in Congress. The other was elected in the first round by an overwhelming majority. One has not honored election campaign promises made to the poor but has acted more to benefit the U.S. The other is honoring, because it is not a one-time shot but a long-term process, his promises, has instituted many social programs which directly and indirectly affect the poor and has refused to bow down to the U.S.

"The Venezuelan government and armed forces have acted with marvelous restraint. Despite provocation by the opposition, they have not acted with force... In Bolivia, on the other hand, the death toll is rising...

"I am frustrated with the press in Venezuela because they are the main force behind the opposition and have undertaken a massive campaign to create a virtual country. They only give one side of the story and seem to believe that if you repeat a lie often enough it becomes true... It is interesting to note that in Bolivia two newspapers have been confiscated and a TV station has been closed. In Venezuela, not one newspaper or TV station has been closed. Despite claims to the contrary,

Globovision has not been closed and has legal equipment and authorization to use microwave frequencies. What was confiscated was some equipment for which they had never requested permission.

“In one case the U.S. appears to be helping the current government maintain itself in power and in the other, it appears to be working with the opposition to overthrow the current government. In Venezuela, some

member organizations of the Organization of American States have been threatening with enacting the Carta Democratica to resolve the situation while in the case of Bolivia, they are noticeably quiet.

“I ask myself how I can support one president and hope for the defeat of his opposition and pray for the resignation of the other president and victory for his opposition. I guess that it is a matter of justice and faith.”

Chile: Military officer held liable for crimes

On September 22, the civil trial of former Chilean military officer Armando Fernández Larios began in a Miami courtroom. Fernández faced charges filed by the family of 28-year-old Chilean economist Winston Cabello, who was killed in Chile in 1973 by the notorious “Caravan of Death.” Fernández was previously convicted in the U.S. courts for his role in the 1976 car bomb assassination of Chilean diplomat Orlando Letelier and U.S. American Ronni Karpen Moffitt.

On October 15, the civil jury found Fernandez guilty of torture, extrajudicial killing, cruel and unusual punishment, and crimes against humanity and awarded \$4 million in compensatory and punitive damages to the Cabello family.

Winston Cabello was killed on October 17, 1973 almost 30 years ago to the day before the jury’s decision that found Fernandez liable in his role as a member of the “Caravan of Death,” a military squad acting under orders from Chilean dictator Augusto Pinochet. The Caravan of Death traveled through Chile by helicopter to different towns within weeks after the 1973 Pinochet-led coup d’etat ordering the deaths of political prisoners detained by Pinochet’s military junta.

The suit was initiated by the Center for Justice & Accountability (CJA), a San Francisco-based human rights organization that works to end the impunity of perpetrators of human rights abuses by, among other means, bringing civil lawsuits against perpetrators who live in the United States. Plaintiffs in the case are Elsa Cabello and Zita Cabello-Barrueto, Karin Moriarty and Aldo Cabello, Winston Cabello’s mother, sisters, and brother.

According to CJA, the trial marks the first time any Pinochet operative has been tried in the U.S. for their role in human rights abuses committed in Chile, as well

as the first jury verdict for crimes against humanity in the U.S.

“This is a victory, not just for our family, but for all the families and victims of the Caravan of Death,” said the Cabello family, “While we believe that Fernandez should be tried on criminal charges in Chile, we are happy that this case has disrupted his ability to live with impunity in the United States.”

A Chilean amnesty law prevented Fernandez’s prosecution in Chile, and U.S. criminal laws do not permit prosecution for summary killings committed abroad, or for torture committed abroad before 1994. However, two federal statutes, the Alien Tort Claims Act (ATCA) and the Torture Victim Protection Act (TVPA) (see *NewsNotes* September-October 2003), permit human rights victims or surviving relatives to bring civil claims against perpetrators from other countries who are found in the U.S. The civil suit brought by Cabello family, therefore, was the only avenue available to them to pursue justice against Fernandez.

Fernandez came to the U.S. in 1987 after reaching a plea agreement with federal prosecutors in which he pleaded guilty to covering up the responsibility of the Chilean secret service in the 1976 assassination of former Chilean ambassador Orlando Letelier and his U.S. American assistant Ronni Moffitt. After serving a five-month federal prison term, Fernandez moved to Miami-Dade County. Argentina has also sought the extradition of Fernandez for his alleged role in the assassination of Chilean General Carlos Prats in Buenos Aires.

For additional information see “Pinochet Watch,” c/o Stacie Jonas, Institute for Policy Studies, 733 15th St. NW, #1020, Washington, D.C. 20005, phone: (202)234-9382; fax: (202)387-7915; email: Stacie@ips-dc.org.

Honduras: Children, youth still at grave risk

After witnessing the constant murders of children and youth in Honduras, Casa Alianza, an NGO serving street children and promoting their rights, began to record the murders in January 1998. From that time through the end of June 2003, the records indicate that the murder of children and youth under 23 had reached 1,905. The victims come from poor families and communities in this country of 6.3 million people. For more information contact Casa Alianza at info@casa-alianza.org or go to www.casa-alianza.org. See also the May-June 2002 NewsNotes.

Honduras' President Ricardo Maduro promised in his electoral campaign to implement a "zero tolerance" policy regarding this violence and to provide the necessary resources to address it. Despite some signs of good will, after 20 months into the presidency, he has been unable to reverse the situation, as the number of murders of children and youth has been growing. In recent months, an average of two young people are murdered every day in the streets, mainly in the biggest cities of Tegucigalpa and San Pedro Sula. New, disturbing information indicates however that the violence is spreading in the country, reaching smaller towns and municipalities. At the end of 2002, Casa Alianza's records indicated that less than four percent of these crimes had come to trial with sanctions for those responsible; it requested that the government double the number of investigators from five to 10.

No clear answers exist regarding circumstances of the murders. The victims, 18 years old or younger, are shot in the head, stabbed and hacked to bits. Most of the murders are attributed to rivalry among gangs, in an attempt to control territories and drugs business. But private guards, vigilante groups, and the police themselves are also responsible for a number of the crimes. President Maduro presented a report for the same period covered by Casa Alianza with more conservative figures: 574 murders of minors were admitted in his report, with the police responsible for at least 23 cases.

The government policy of "social cleansing" does not help to stop the violence, but rather exacerbates it.

Police, with a total lack of professionalism, harass children and youth in the streets, and they have murdered innocent children. They act with total mistrust of youth in general, seeing them as dangerous. Policewoman Maria Luisa Borgas decided to speak out and in a recent interview to CBC radio said: "We found out there were 20 teams of police killing members of gangs by superior orders. But when somebody receives an order like that it is very difficult to control. So they have killed students, children that have never been members of gangs..." She added that she had prepared a report which included the involvement of police and sent it to government authorities, but none of them has acknowledged the report.

In August 2001, this ongoing situation prompted a 10-day visit to Honduras by Asma Jahangir, the United Nations Special Rapporteur on Extrajudicial, Summary or Arbitrary Executions. Her report reaffirmed the participation of police and citizen militias in the killing of children, with the tolerance of government authorities.

Historical and social structural facts throw light on this violence: Honduras is one of the less developed countries in the Americas. Half of its population is under 18, and many seek survival in the streets, especially after the social and economic devastation of the country wrought by Hurricane Mitch in 1998. Estimated unemployment rates are 60 percent. Families have been abandoned by the governments: hunger, lack of running water and sanitation, health problems, and illiteracy are what they have inherited from social and economic policies of this country, and that is what they can pass on to their children.

In Honduras a rule of fear by paramilitary militias

Maryknoll in Honduras

In the poor neighborhoods of San Pedro Sula, Maryknollers work to prevent and address young violence through concrete programs: soccer leagues that include gangs members, discussions on ethical values, the "Teacher at Home" program to instruct young people excluded from formal education. In direct work with youth involved in gangs, the Maryknoll program "Goodbye Tattoo" has removed 6,000 tattoos, a first step in helping youngsters find a job. In addition, education and skills training are promoted. However, the main challenge remains the lack of job opportunities, which reaffirms the link between violence and social-economic policies.

is not new. They were known to repress and murder students, indigenous and union leaders. In the 1980s the U.S. poured millions of dollars into this small country to combat guerilla movements and quash social movements. The proliferation of small arms in the country - estimated from 600,000 to one million - began at this time, and currently the illegal arms trade continues to provide small and sophisticated weapons that circulate freely among gangs and the paramilitary. Under a new law that makes military arms illegal, and under the leadership of Oscar Alvarez, the new minister of Public Security, the national police force has the duty to collect the weapons. Results of these measures must be evaluated in the near future.

Studies indicate that in Honduras and other Central American countries, some gang groups have ties with gangs in U.S. Alvarez blames U.S. immigration policies

for the proliferation of gangs in Honduras. In the 1990s, according to Alvarez' declaration to CBC radio, the U.S. started to send gangs members back - with no trial- to their original countries.

Alvarez, acknowledging the social situation behind the gang problem and the violence, said, "It goes to the deepest roots of society. No one would disagree. It is time to invest in the Honduran people, especially its children, and in so doing to invest in peace."

Faith in action:

Write expressing your concerns to the Honduran Embassy in Washington: srembhondu@aol.com with a copy to the Honduran Mission to the OAS: Honduras@oas.org. Write your congressional representative, requesting an investigation of Honduras violence against children and youth.

Guatemala: Law to abolish EMP falls short

The Estado Mayor Presidencial (the Presidential Guard), known as the EMP, has been implicated in many high profile human rights cases in Guatemala, including the assassination of Monseñor Juan Gerardi, April 24, 1998. When the 36-year civil war ended with the signing of the 1996 Peace Accords, abolition of the EMP was seen as a necessary step in demilitarizing the country. Over five years later, the Guatemalan Congress passed a law (September 24, 2003) to abolish the EMP and transfer its legitimate functions to the "Secretariat of Administrative Affairs and Security of the Presidency" (SAAS). Amnesty International and other human rights groups are concerned about various shortcomings in this new legislation.

The official role of the EMP was to provide security to the president and the vice president, but in practice the EMP served as one of the most notorious military intelligence agencies. Amnesty International welcomed the new law that abolishes the EMP as "a crucial first step in dismantling the military intelligence structures responsible for the violence and repression that have gripped Guatemala for so long." At the same time, Amnesty International cautioned that the legislation alone is not enough.

Amnesty International sites several weaknesses in the legislation. First, it sets no end date for the full transfer of the EMP to the SAAS. Considering that it took

the congress five and a half years to pass the law, the complete transfer can be an equally low priority.

Secondly, while the law establishes the SAAS as an institution of civilian nature (*"de naturaleza civil"*), it does not include concrete means to safeguard against its militarization. There are no provisions for civilian oversight of the SAAS. This is of grave concern because the director of the SAAS will be appointed at the president's discretion, and the president is not limited to appointing a civilian. Further, the legislation provides no guarantees that the abuses of the past will end - as it currently stands, EMP officers implicated in human rights abuses could possibly be "recycled" into the new SAAS, or other government agencies.

Thirdly, Amnesty is concerned that the legislation provides few mechanisms to ensure accountability for the EMP's involvement in past human rights violations. Specifically, the clandestine intelligence activities formerly carried out by the EMP may crop up elsewhere - in the SAAS, or in a military unit. Without significant reform of the military and military intelligence - specifically defining structures, tasks and limits and subjecting these redefinitions to Congressional oversight, Amnesty is concerned that "replacing the EMP with a new agency may amount to little more than window-dressing."

Now more than ever, Amnesty International en-

courages the international community to closely monitor the transition process of the EMP's legitimate functions to the SAAS and to push for real reforms to military intelligence structures in Guatemala.

Faith in action:

Amnesty International urges you to write to Presi-

dent Alfonso Portillo Cabrera and ask him to pave the way for a real intelligence reform in Guatemala. Sample letter and addresses are available at Amnesty International Legislative Office; Amnesty International USA; 600 Pennsylvania Ave. S.E., 5th Fl.; Washington, D.C. 20003; phone: (202) 544-0200; or on their website: www.amnestyusa.org.

El Salvador: Presidential campaign begins

Hector Silva, a popular former mayor of San Salvador, has joined the field as a presidential candidate in El Salvador's March 21, 2004 elections, according to NotiCen (9/4/03) source of the following article. He accepted the nomination of a recently formed centrist coalition of the Partido Demócrata Cristiano (PDC) and the Centro Democrático Unido (CDU).

A Boston-born physician, Silva was mayor of San Salvador from 1997 to 2003, elected then as a candidate of the Faribundo Martí para la Liberación Nacional (FMLN). In a dispute over his agreement to help President Francisco Flores resolve a health-workers strike last year, Silva was ejected from the FMLN (*NotiCen*, 11/2/02). Since then he has run and been elected to the Legislative Assembly as a CDU candidate.

Silva has proven to be one of the most electable people in El Salvador and is likely to change significantly the dynamic between the FMLN and the Alianza Republicana Nacionalista (ARENA), the party now in power, during the campaign leading up to the March 2004 elections. Already, polls have yielded conflicting results between the other two parties – one showing the ARENA candidate, Antonio Saca, with a large lead over the FMLN's Schafick Handal and another, taken immediately prior, showing exactly the opposite.

CDU leader Ruben Zamora said that the coalition platform amounts to a “second transition” since the 1992 peace accords in the way government functions. “We’re going to go from a ‘patrimonialist’ state to a modern state; our model will not be based on attracting investments, but on developing a productive economy.” Further, said Zamora, under a coalition presidency, the country would “pass from a socially stingy state to a state that provides the population with services like health, education, and housing.”

Positioning himself at the center between the

FMLN and ARENA, Silva has been meeting with representatives of various social and economic sectors and has been said to be listening to the business sector. Outreach of this kind will be broadened to other sectors in a national consultation seeking recommendations that will, spokespersons for the coalition say, add planks to the coalition platform.

In contrast, the FMLN platform, as articulated at the party's 17th national convention, calls for an end to privatizations and for selective reversal of some privatizations that have already taken place under ARENA governments.

Many important issues are on the agenda for debate among the candidates. High on the list of concerns is the Salvadoran economy – whether or not the rural economy will survive, the role of the private sector, including small businesses and foreign investors, and how El Salvador relates to the regional and global economies through, for example, the proposed Central America Free Trade Agreement and Free Trade Area of the Americas.

Other major concerns are gangs, street violence and delinquency, and the future of Salvadoran youth. A recent Legislative Assembly debate likely to have ramifications in the campaign was initiated by ARENA President Flores' introduction of “anti-gang” legislation (*NotiCen*, 8/28/03). A centrist coalition that joined together the CDU-PDC and the Partido Conciliación Nacional (PCN) over how the government should relate to troubled youth countered the ARENA legislation with a proposal to limit the sale of alcohol from midnight to 6 a.m., prohibit the carrying of weapons on public streets, punish young people who drive irresponsibly, and punish parents “who materially abandon their children.” The FMLN thus far has opposed the ARENA plan, but has not offered an alternative to the other two proposals, giving the centrist coalition more visibility in the debate.

Mexico: U.S. lawmakers visit Ciudad Juarez

In October, four U.S. representatives visited Ciudad Juarez to investigate the unsolved murders and disappearances of hundreds of young women over the past decade. The delegation was organized by the Mexico Solidarity Network in conjunction with the Latin America Working Group and the Washington Office on Latin America. The delegation included Representatives Hilda Solis (D-CA), Luis Gutierrez (D-IL), Ciro Rodriguez (D-TX), and Silvestre Reyes (D-TX), as well as Chicago Alderman Daniel Solis and Dolores Huerta of the United Farm Workers.

Over 300 young women have been killed and hundreds more disappeared in the state of Chihuahua since 1993 (see *NewsNotes* May-June 2003), according to Esther Chavez Cano, director of Casa Amiga, a group representing the families of victims. The women who have been victims of these crimes are overwhelmingly workers in Ciudad Juarez's assembly plant industry, are generally between the ages of 15 and 29, and often disappear during their commute to or from work.

To date only one person has been convicted in any of the cases, and the conviction came early in the string of murders, leading many families to accuse local officials of incompetence or complicity. Two men were arrested in 1999 for the murders of 20 women. In 2001, two more men were arrested for the murders of eight additional women. All six men allege that their confessions to the crime were forced under torture. There is no evidence,

other than their confessions, linking these suspects to the alleged crimes.

In February 2002, the defense lawyer for one of the suspects was shot dead by police, who claimed that he was mistaken for a drug trafficker. In February 2003, one of the suspects was found dead in prison under mysterious circumstances.

The investigation into the murders of women in Ciudad Juarez is under the jurisdiction of the Chihuahua State Police. In 1996 the U.S. Federal Bureau of Investigation studied the pattern of these crimes in Mexico and issued a series of recommendations on how to proceed with the investigation. To date, the State Police have not met any of these recommendations. Currently, the U.S. FBI is providing training assistance to the Chihuahua police. In December 2002, President Vicente Fox indicated that the Federal Investigative Agency (AFI) of Mexico would assist the State Police with training and technical assistance. Mexican activists involved are requesting that President Fox move jurisdiction for these cases to the AFI. To date, President Fox has been unwilling to do so.

The Congressional delegation visited the families of victims, toured working class neighborhoods and maquiladoras where most of the young women lived and worked, and met with Mexican federal and state officials. A full report on the findings of the delegation is expected soon.

Colombia: Accord with U.S. over International Criminal Court

Colombia recently signed a Bilateral Immunity Agreement with the United States that will exempt U.S. Americans in the South American nation from prosecution before the International Criminal Court.

The U.S. had set a deadline of July 1 for countries receiving U.S. aid to reach such an agreement and, in fact, stopped \$48 million in aid to 35 countries in Africa, Europe, Asia and Central and South America, including Colombia, after they failed to meet the deadline.

According to Associated Press, the U.S. suspended about \$5 million of the \$600 million promised to Colom-

bia this year. Since 2000, the U.S. has given Colombia nearly \$2.5 billion to fight drug trafficking and the guerrilla movements. Failure to reach an agreement with Washington could jeopardize a significant portion of the \$575 million requested for Colombia for FY 2004.

The United States is concerned that U.S. soldiers and other personnel could be subject to politically motivated prosecutions. Ninety-two countries have ratified the treaty establishing the court, but as of mid-September, 63 countries had signed side agreements with the United States.

DRC: International Criminal Court set to investigate crimes

On September 8, Luis Moreno-Ocampo, chief prosecutor of the International Criminal Court (ICC), reported to the second assembly of states parties to the Rome Statute of the ICC that his office would investigate the role of European, Asian and North American businesses in fueling crimes against humanity in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC).

In his statement, Moreno-Ocampo points out that the crimes affecting Ituri, a northeastern district of the DRC, “are not only being committed within the province.” He continued, “...crimes reportedly committed in Ituri appear to be directly linked to the control of resource extraction sites.” Moreno-Ocampo indicated that those who direct cobalt, col-tan, diamonds and gold mining operations and launder money to provide weapons to combatants “could also be authors of the crimes, even if they are based in other countries.”

The ICC is authorized to prosecute individuals, not states, for war crimes, genocide and crimes against humanity committed after July 1, 2002 (the date it entered into force) on the territory of states that are party to the treaty. The Court, based in The Hague, is expected to be ready to hear cases by the end of this year.

Civil society organizations and human rights groups estimate that an estimated 2.5 to 3.3 million people have died in the Congo’s five-year conflict. These deaths include those directly caused by the fighting as well as those indirectly caused by starvation, landmines, untreated injuries and diseases (including the transmission of HIV/AIDS through rape). In his statement to the second assembly, Moreno-Ocampo remarked, “[t]hese figures make this conflict the most devastating to civilians since the Second World War.”

The Ituri region of the DRC, bordering with Uganda, has seen the most intense fighting in the country this year. AP and Reuters report that 50,000 people have died and 500,000 have been displaced in Ituri since the most recent war in the country erupted in August 1998, due mostly to economically-motivated ethnic-based violence.

The chief prosecutor of the ICC selected the situation in Ituri, DRC as the first meriting his office’s close attention. Moreno-Ocampo was moved by the UN

Human Rights Rapporteur’s report on the DRC indicating that the Ituri crimes could potentially constitute genocide, crimes against humanity or war crimes. He noted that dimensions of the illegal exploitation of natural resources are being analyzed by a UN panel of experts, and although it has not completed its work, the panel’s reports do link the continuation of the conflict with resource extraction.

Because the Ituri referral was made by nongovernmental organizations and not by a state party to the Rome Statute nor by the UN Security Council, the chief prosecutor must conduct a preliminary examination to find a reasonable basis to proceed with an investigation. The Rome statutes of the ICC permit the prosecutor to launch an investigation only if the state party is unable or unwilling to conduct its own prosecution. Moreno-Ocampo expressed his hope that the DRC’s peace process would “bear fruit” so that national courts could investigate and prosecute the crimes. If not, he said, “I stand ready to seek authorization for a Pre-Trial Chamber to start an investigation...”

Expectations for the peace process in DRC were diminished in early October when UN peacekeepers discovered the remains of 67 civilian children, women and men believed to have been massacred. This occurred after the ethnic Hema and Lendu militia leaders promised to honor a truce while the UN peacekeepers (deployed to try to stop ethnic clashes) were being positioned at the beginning of September. The October 6 massacre was the first reported large-scale killing in Ituri since the strengthened UN forces replaced the French-led emergency force.

Faith in action:

For more information on the criminal court see:

- The International Criminal Court: www.icc-cpi.int
- World Federalist Association: www.wfa.org/issues/wicc/wicc.html

For more information on the DRC see:

- Amnesty International: www.amnestyusa.org/amnestynow/congo.html
- The UN’s MONUC program: www.un.org/Depts/dpko/missions/monuc/

Africa: Hopeful signs about small arms

The image of Africa is that of endless wars and rising social chaos, which are fueled by 100 million small arms to insurgencies, rebel movements and criminals, giving rise to a feeling of despair. A recent survey by the Small Arms Survey (www.smallarmssurvey.org) indicates the number of illicit small arms is closer to 30 million among the 44 countries of sub-Saharan Africa.

The survey has some interesting, approximate figures, for three east African countries (p. 84).

Country	Troops	Military small arms	Civilian pop	Civilian firearms
Kenya	24,000	54,000	31,000,000	430,000-860,000
Tanzania	107,000	241,000	36,000,000	500,000-1,000,000
Uganda	120,000	270,000	22,000,000	310,000-620,000

Population and military manpower are the most important factors for the number of arms, according to this survey. Kenya's 10,000-20,000 armed insurgents and ethnic groups have between 12,000 to 24,000 small arms, and Uganda's 12,000-22,000 have 15,000 to 27,000 arms, causing devastating harm.

This lesser number is a source of encouragement, but we don't want to grab onto it like a drowning person might grasp a passing twig and expect to be saved. Even by its own admission, the 2003 survey is fraught with incomplete data and educated guesses, due to a lack of

governmental and other resources to gather accurate figures. If the number of illicit arms is truly declining, there are a number of people and groups who have made this happen.

There are some tentative, promising phenomena taking place. First, several peace agreements were signed in 2002 indicating a reduction of armed conflict across the continent. There is the apparent resolution of civil war in Sierra Leone and Angola, with planned disarmament of 80,000 UNITA soldiers in the latter

country. The warring parties in the Sudan have agreed to a security agreement, an important step toward a future peace settlement. Adversarial faction leaders of Somalia are inching toward a settlement. If Liberia receives enough international support for long-term peace and reconciliation, this would not only give respite to its citizens but would positively influence the whole region.

Secondly, in many African countries religious communities and other civil society groups are cooperating with governments to promote programs to surrender illegal, unsafe and unwanted firearms, and involved in awareness campaigns to de-legitimize the possession of weapons. Regional agreements like that of Southern

"I will feed them with justice": Ecumenical Advocacy Days for Global Peace with Justice March 5 - 8, 2004, Washington, D.C.

People of faith are invited to participate in the second annual ecumenical gathering in Washington, D.C., concerning urgent global issues.

Tracks include: Africa, Asia (Korea), Latin America, Middle East (Israel and Palestine, Iraq), Jubilee and economic justice (debt and trade), and nuclear disarmament.

The event will offer challenging speakers, issue briefings, and advocacy training workshops.

Comprehensive briefings will help you prepare for effective visits with your senators and representatives, or their key foreign policy staff. There will also be time for fellowship and networking, a keynote address and banquet dinner, and a special ecumenical service of worship for participants and the public.

Registration is \$125. Inquire about scholarships. Contact the Washington Office on Africa for more information: 212 East Capitol Street, N.E., Washington, D.C. 20003; 202-547-7503; or email advocacydays@earthlink.net. Check the website for regular updates: www.advocacydays.org



Africa and other governmental measures play a role in decreasing the flow of small arms. Much more has to be done to significantly lessen the killing and maiming, the refugees and displaced people and the destruction of infrastructure. The major exporters of small arms continue to be the five permanent members of the UN Security Council, and the U.S. has the infamous distinction of leading the way.

Faith in action:

Join the Control Arms Campaign, sponsored by Amnesty International, the International Action Network on Small Arms (IANSA) and Oxfam, urging tougher arms control measures on all level - community, national and international - at www.controlarms.org, or contact the Maryknoll Office for Global Concerns for more information.

Sudan: Major step to peace

The international community has warmly welcomed an historic security agreement between the Sudanese government and the Sudan People's Liberation Movement / Army (SPLM/A). United Nations Secretary General Kofi Annan urged the parties to continue the current pace of the talks taking place in Naivasha, Kenya, and reach a comprehensive "speedy settlement of the conflict." The U.S. State Department praised the "extraordinary courage" of Sudanese Vice President Ali Osman Taha and the SPLM/A chairman John Garang and pledged itself to working with the parties on the remaining issues (IRIN News). The European Union and individual European countries offered encouragement and support to resolve the conflict.

This significant security agreement, signed on Sept. 25, 2003, established the size and deployment of military forces allowing both sides to retain separate armed forces. These forces will proportionally be downsized during the six-and-a-half year interim period. Two and a half years is allowed for the disengagement, separation and redeployment of the forces and will be internationally monitored. The Khartoum government will withdraw its forces from the south and the SPLA from the north.

Joint Integrated Units (JIU), made up of equal numbers of government and SPLA forces, will also exist. The JIU will serve as a symbol of unity and sovereignty during the interim period. They will be deployed in southern of Sudan (12,000 from each side), in Nuba Mountains (3,000 each), in Southern Blue Nile (3,000 each), and in the capital Khartoum (1,500 each). A "Joint Defense Board" will be established to coordinate the two separate armed forces and to command the JIU.

While we fully celebrate this agreement and rejoice with our Sudanese colleagues, there is need to be cautious. First, many political parties and armed forces in

the south and north were not part of agreement. It appears that neither the people in the north or south were even properly informed about these developments, and there are serious tensions between different groups on each side of the border. There is need to bring all the people and factions into the discussion of the meaning and implications of this agreement.

Secondly, there is deep suspicion and mistrust of the northern government by southern people, based on past experience. International forces must be deployed quickly with greater effectiveness and resources than the performance of the present current international monitoring bodies. (*Africafiles*, Oct. 1, 2003) The U.S. State Department apparently has not requested any new funds for this purpose for the Sudan in the new fiscal year, even though they are asking \$50 million for research into an Iraqi postal system.

Thirdly, there are major contentious issues yet to be resolved, like power-sharing, wealth-sharing and the status of marginalized areas. It is not clear how many Sudanese share the views of Archbishop Paulino Kukudu of Juba that the oil in the south "should be utilized to elevate the quality of life of all Sudanese and lift us from the misery afflicting us for years. We all contributed to devastating this land. Now is the time that we all participate in rebuilding it." (Interview with Jerema Rone, Sept. 3, 2003, available at Human Rights Watch's website: www.hrw.org)

Faith in action:

Contact the State Department and ask them what role the U.S. will play in funding peace-keeping and the immediate humanitarian and reconstruction needs of Sudan after a peace agreement has been signed.

Patents: New agreement wraps red tape around access to medicines

The protection of patents and providing of access to affordable medicines have been intensely debated among member countries at the World Trade Organization (WTO) for the past two years. An agreement reached on August 30, 2003 determines how countries with little or no manufacturing capacity could make use of WTO's flexibilities under its Trade Related Aspects of Intellectual Property Rights (TRIPS) agreement to provide greater access to medicines for their people. The following article analyses the new agreement and its difficulties.

Under the WTO, patent issues fall under the TRIPS Agreement, and its corresponding TRIPS Council. In 2001, at the WTO's fourth ministerial held in Doha, Qatar, member states issued a declaration on the TRIPS agreement and public health, clearly stating that TRIPS "does not and should not prevent Members from taking measures to protect public health." While it reaffirmed the right of countries to take full advantage of the flexibilities available under the TRIPS agreement to promote access to medicines for all, it referred specifically to compulsory licenses (issuing licenses to manufacture generic versions of needed drugs).

The sixth and last paragraph of the declaration left an item of "unfinished business" for the TRIPS Council to decide by December 2002. To be determined was how WTO members with insufficient or no manufacturing capacities in the pharmaceutical sector could make effective use of compulsory licensing under the TRIPS agreement. Discussion on this paragraph lingered for a year and a decision was reached just prior to the WTO fifth ministerial in Cancún. Although the new agreement claims to make it easier for countries to access less costly generic medicines, the Nobel Peace Prize-winning group Doctors Without Borders (*Médecins Sans Frontières* [MSF]) believes that the complex rules of the agreement "may actually hamper access to medicines."

Health advocates criticize the new agreement as weighing down an already complicated compulsory license process with even more "red tape." A text proposed for agreement in December 2002, requiring importers and exporters to issue compulsory licenses on a country by country, drug by drug basis, was rejected by the U.S. pharmaceutical industry as "too lenient." The

new agreement starts with the 2002 proposal and adds to it an "understanding" responding directly to pharmaceutical companies' concerns. It asserts that the TRIPS flexibilities are to be used in good faith to protect public health, and not for industrial or commercial policy objectives. It also emphasizes a need to prevent diversion – in other words, drugs intended for poor countries should not be resold in the EU or U.S.

The agreement elaborates on trade diversion prevention measures including the requirement that generic companies vary the color, size and shape of the generic drug being sold. This adds significant cost and therefore reduces incentives for generic manufacturers. A cumbersome "notification and review" process was also added where countries that say they need to import generics due to insufficient manufacturing capacity in the pharmaceutical sector must prove and defend their "insufficient capacity." This introduces a huge risk for generic producers who could face a patent-holder lawsuit if a country receiving their exported medicines does not pass an "insufficient capacity" test.

The real problem with the new agreement will be seen in 2005 when countries like India and China are required to become fully TRIPS-compliant. Currently they can and do manufacture patent protected generic versions of drugs that are exported to countries that lack manufacturing capacity, mostly least-developed countries (LDCs). Under WTO standards, LDCs do not have to hold drug patents until 2016 and therefore do not need to issue compulsory licenses to import drugs. But after 2005 there will be very few countries in a position to export manufactured generic drugs to them.

This is why public health advocates, including MSF, claim that it is "...now imperative for countries to put the TRIPS agreement to the test" to increase access to medicines for their populations. At the same time MSF warns that wealthy countries must "stop eroding the Doha Declaration on TRIPS and Public Health by seeking bilateral and regional trade agreements...that impose intellectual property provisions on developing countries that limit their ability to implement the Doha Declaration and safeguard public health."

World Trade Organization fails in Cancún

While some mourned that the Cancún ministerial of the World Trade Organization (WTO) fell apart, others cheered. The following article explores what happened and its future impact. For a report on the WTO meeting in Cancún and Maryknoll's participation see: <http://www.maryknollogc.org/ecojustice/wtosome.htm>; scroll to the bottom to link with photos, interviews and declarations made by Maryknoll participants present in Cancún.

The WTO is a young organization. It evolved from the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT), formed in the late 1940s, which provided the basic rules for multilateral trade in goods. In 1994 the GATT party nations established the WTO, which then came into force in January 1995, as a framework outlining the rights and obligations for international trade in goods, services and certain aspects of intellectual property.

Since its establishment there have been five WTO ministerial conferences (Singapore 1996, Geneva 1998, Seattle 1999, Doha 2001, Cancún 2003). Ministerial conferences set the trade agenda for the subsequent two to five years. They also serve as an opportunity to critically assess internal processes at the WTO and its ongoing negotiations.

Internally, the WTO's "green room" process, where a number of country delegates are called into a room to negotiate when consensus is difficult, has been critiqued as one of the WTO's most undemocratic and less than transparent processes. Who is invited, what is discussed and how (some negotiations are said to involve "arm-twisting" tactics) are questioned and resented by impoverished countries unable to send large delegations to such conferences.

Although this process was used again in Cancún, the African Union (AU), the African, Caribbean, Pacific (ACP) group and some Asian nations agreed that no matter who among them was called into a "green room" meeting, s/he would not act as a representative of any other country and no commitments would be made until the negotiator involved discussed the matter with heads of delegations of the AU, ACP, and other countries. This significantly changed "green room" dynamics.

In terms of the content of the negotiations, the meeting in Cancún was to be the mid-point in the "development" round, launched at the fourth ministerial,

held in Doha, Qatar in 2001, as a framework for countries to address development and trade issues. The Doha work program set deadlines for decisions to be made on the topics of agricultural trade and access to affordable medicines well before the September 2003 Cancún ministerial.

Although a decision on access to affordable medicines was reached eight months past the Trade Related Aspects of Intellectual Property Rights (TRIPS) council's original deadline (see this issue of *NewsNotes*, p. 22), all other deadlines were missed before September (see *NewsNotes* Sept-Oct 2003.) Ministers from impoverished countries were already disappointed by slow progress on issues vital for their economies. When they arrived in Cancún, they found a draft text that left out their major concerns and reflected an agricultural agenda put forth by the U.S. and EU, and their frustration grew exponentially.

In Cancún, empowered by their resistance to traditional "green room" negotiating tactics, a number of similar interest blocs were formed among countries. These groups helped fend off Quad country pressure in the negotiations. (The Quad countries are the U.S., Japan, the European Union and Canada, the most economically elite members of the WTO.) Most significantly, the Group of 20 plus (G-20 plus) went toe to toe with the EU and U.S. on agricultural issues. And a bloc of over 70 countries stuck together in opposing Japan's stubborn insistence to commence negotiations on investment, competition, transparency in government procurement and trade facility, otherwise known as the "Singapore" issues (only because the possibility of adding these issues to the international trade agenda came up at the 1996 WTO ministerial held in Singapore). It was these country blocs opposing Quad country positions that led the chair, Mexican Minister Luis Ernesto Derbez, to lose hope for any consensus and draw the meeting to an abrupt close.

It is encouraging that country blocs held together in an attempt to tip the balance of power at the WTO, but whose loss was it when the meeting fell apart? Jesús Leon, one of three official NGO delegates representing the Maryknoll Office for Global Concerns at Cancún ministerial, stated, "... it is not clear who came out the winner or the loser. I don't think we can say we won

because we face strong challenges when we talk about bilateral or regional trade agreements like the FTAA and the free trade agreements that are now being signed all over the place. In the WTO there was this bloc of developing countries that supported one another in resisting the pressure of the developed countries. It will possibly be more difficult to negotiate one on one with bilateral treaties without the support of the blocs that came about in Cancún.”

In fact, the United States made it clear in Cancún that the meeting’s strongest bloc, the G-20 plus, would not be tolerated. Sen. Charles Grassley (R-IA), chair of the Senate Finance Committee, singled out G-20 plus members involved in the Central American Free Trade Agreement (CAFTA) as threatening CAFTA’s progress. Even before the meeting ended, El Salvador backed out of the G-20 plus and only a week after U.S. Trade Representative Robert Zoellick stepped in to personally

oversee CAFTA negotiations, Guatemala and Costa Rica backed out as well. Peru and Colombia have also broken with the G-20 plus and Ecuador’s absence at a mid-October meeting may indicate that an intended U.S.–Ecuador free trade accord is in the balance.

In some ways, the country blocs (and the AU, ACP and Asian countries’ challenge to “green room” negotiations) helped to chip away at democracy and participation issues inside the WTO. Still, powerful countries like the U.S. always seem to get their way. As the U.S. presses forward in regional and bilateral agreements binding poor countries to steeper obligations than those proposed and enforced by the WTO, one can’t help but wonder whether the breakdown in Cancún was what the U.S. hoped for. Since the U.S. has a tendency to “go it alone,” Cancún’s demise may play into a U.S. goal to shape its most ideal trade agreements country by country and region by region.

Outside the WTO’s ministerial conference, issues of democracy and participation played themselves out in the streets of Cancún as members of civil society tried to make their voices heard in spite of the reinforced steel walls that kept them and their activities nine kilometers away from the official negotiators. The moving self-immolation of Lee Kyung Hae, a Korean farmer who acted out of deep frustration over trade policies’ impacts on rural farmers, penetrated the walls of the official meeting reminding negotiators that they were discussing are life and death issues.

Faith in action:

While its exact impact on the world’s marginalized peoples is still unknown, the failed Cancún ministerial saw the emergence of some new voices that demanded a fair and democratically negotiated trading system for the world. Join the Maryknollers who participated in Cancún in the following commitments:

1. to educate ourselves and others on trade issues that promote alternatives for a more human and participative world;
2. to support the G-20 plus position as a more positive alternative for impoverished countries; and
3. to work towards a deeper integration of groups and movements involved in resisting the WTO and other undemocratic models of decision-making about issues that impact the world’s impoverished people.

G-21 members at the close of the Cancun ministerial on September 14. Note the countries highlighted are currently in negotiations with the United States on bilateral or regional trade agreements:

Argentina *Free Trade Area of the Americas (FTAA)*

Bolivia *FTAA*

Botswana *Southern African Customs Union-Free Trade Agreement (SACU-FTA)*

Brazil *FTAA*

Chile *FTAA*

China

Colombia *FTAA*

Costa Rica *Central America Free Trade Agreement (CAFTA), FTAA*

Cuba

Ecuador *FTAA*

Egypt

Guatemala *CAFTA, FTAA*

India

Mexico *FTAA*

Pakistan

Paraguay *FTAA*

Peru *FTAA*

Philippines

South Africa *(SACU-FTA)*

Thailand

Venezuela *FTAA*

P&G offers fair trade coffee

Over 25 million coffee growers and their families face starvation due to a severe drop in coffee prices (more than 50 percent) over the past three years. Last year Oxfam America launched a coffee campaign in response to this crisis (see NewsNotes November-December 2002). Some of Oxfam's suggested campaign actions are now paying off. The following article analyzes a significant recent gain and suggests further action.

In September, Procter & Gamble, one of the largest U.S. coffee companies, announced that it would introduce Fair Trade Certified™ coffee products through its specialty coffee division, Millstone. The company responded to pressure from people of faith and others' letters of concern for small farmers around the world, who, unable to cover their costs of production, are left without adequate incomes to feed their family, send their children to school, purchase essential medicines, and stay on their land.

In December 2002, Domini Social Investments and the Center for Reflection, Education and Action (CREA), shareholders in Procter & Gamble, led a coalition of investors holding more than 500,000 shares of P&G in a dialogue with the company about purchasing Fair Trade coffee. In April 2003, the shareholder coalition filed a resolution addressing the coffee crisis with P&G. Once P&G announced its decision, shareholders withdrew the resolution and advocacy groups have agreed to suspend their letter writing campaigns against the corporation.

In an Oxfam publication, Sr. Ruth Rosenbaum, executive director of CREA, remarked, "P&G's action is an excellent example of what can be accomplished through the collaboration of shareholder activists and nonprofit organizations. It's a win-win for the world's small-scale coffee farmers, for the environment, and for P&G itself."

Fair Trade Certified™ coffee guarantees farmers a minimum of \$1.26 a pound which more than doubles small farmers' incomes. Last month, the International Coffee Organization's (ICO) average price for green (unprocessed) coffee was 52 cents a pound.

The fair trade system only certifies marketers and producers who can offer employees opportunities for advancement; provide equal employment opportunities for all people; engage in environmentally sustainable

practices; open themselves to public accountability; build long-term trade relationships; provide healthy, safe working conditions within the local context; and provide financial and technical assistance to producers whenever possible.

P&G, one of the four largest coffee companies in the world, is now one of over 200 coffee companies that currently offer Fair Trade Certified™ coffee in the U.S. Procter & Gamble's Millstone will immediately offer fairly traded coffee to wholesale accounts (universities, restaurants, etc.) and to consumers through its website www.millstone.com. P&G has also committed to build significant consumer demand for Fair Trade Certified™ coffee. With greater consumer demand, projected purchases could lift small coffee farmers out of very desperate situations.

Oxfam's Liam Brody remarked, "Procter & Gamble's decision is a critical step to help make trade fair for the world's 25 million coffee-growing families..." Oxfam continues to challenge global giants Kraft and Nestlé, as well as the U.S. government, to take immediate steps to address the structural inequities that impoverish coffee farmers.

The ICO could play a central role in developing solutions to the global coffee crisis. But the world's largest coffee consuming country, the U.S. withdrew from the ICO in the 1990s, limiting the scope and power of this international organization.

Faith in action:

Write President Bush and tell him that the U.S. should adopt a global strategy to respond to the coffee crisis that includes re-joining the ICO. If you have access to the internet, go to the Oxfam America website to send this message to President Bush via email: www.oxfamamerica.org; click on **advocacy**.

Use your consumer power to demand Fair Trade. Urge your supermarket to carry Fair Trade Certified™ Coffee. If you shop at national chains like Safeway, Albertsons, Jewel-Osco, or Dominick's, you have a unique opportunity to help poor coffee farming families. Go to www.maketradefair.com to send a message.

For more ideas on using consumer power, go to www.maryknollogc.org and then click on **economic justice**.

Corporations seek control of planet's water

"Water promises to be to the 21st century what oil was to the 20th century: the precious commodity that determines the wealth of nations," said Fortune Magazine in May 2000. Living beings have no alternative to water; water can't be left to market forces. The privatization of the planet's water is of growing concern to both local communities and socially responsible investors.

According to the United Nations, 1.3 billion people in the world today lack access to clean water while 2.5 billion do not have adequate sewage and sanitation. Over 30 countries are considered to be in water-stressed areas. Worldwide demand for water is doubling every 20 years, twice the rate of population growth. By the year 2025, demand for fresh water is expected to outstrip global supply by 56 percent.

Water companies are finding ways to profit in the crisis. An investigation by the International Consortium of Investigative Journalists showed that world's three largest water companies — France's Suez and Vivendi Environnement, and Thames Water, owned by Germany's RWE AG — have expanded since 1990 throughout the planet. Three other companies, Saur of France, and United Utilities of England working in conjunction with Bechtel of the United States, have also secured major international drinking water contracts.

While private companies still run only about five percent of the world's waterworks, their growth over the last 12 years has been enormous. In 1990, about 51 million people got their water from private companies, according to water analysts. That figure is now more than 300 million.

The investigation showed that these companies have often worked closely with the World Bank, lobbying governments and international trade and standards organizations for changes in legislation and trade agreements to force the privatization of public waterworks.

So far, privatization has been concentrated in poorer countries where the World Bank has used its financial leverage to force governments to privatize their water utilities in exchange for loans.

In South Africa, Argentina, Philippines and Indonesia, the World Bank has been advising the leaders to "commercialize" their utilities.

In the past few months, there have been strong

reactions by people in Honduras, South Africa and Peru against plans to grant private water companies concessions in the public water sector.

The water companies are also expanding into the United States. In recent years, the three large European companies have bought some of the country's largest private water utility companies, including U.S. Filter and American Water Works Co. European companies have privatized waterworks in several mid-sized U.S. cities, including Indianapolis and Camden, N.J.

The world's largest beverage companies are also finding water to be a profit-maker. Where and how they get the water to take to market is having negative effects on local communities.

Four years ago, Coca Cola opened a bottling plant in Kerala, India. Since then local people have been reported as saying the company has soaked up excessive water and that water has turned foul and impossible to drink, cook with or bathe in.

For the past three years, residents of Nottingham, New Hampshire have been fighting a plan by USA Springs to withdraw over 300,000 gallons of water each day from the town's three wells to be used for the company's water bottling plant.

Religious institutional investors are working to challenge corporations to see water not as a commodity but as an essential public good. They are urging corporations to affirm access to clean water as a human right and take action on that affirmation such as protecting or restoring the water supply and minimizing the use of water in manufacturing processes. Their shareholder advocacy will center on holding corporations accountable for the use, protection and restoration of the water they use.

For more information:

- *Water for Life! In defense of our "Sister Water":* This excellent resource gives clear information on issues related to water. Created by the Ecology Working Group of the Franciscans' Justice, Peace and Integrity of Creation promoters, the booklet is available in different languages at www.ofm-jpic.org/aqua. Contact jpicclimatechange@yahoo.co.uk for information.
- *Public Citizen's "Water for All Campaign"* www.citizen.org/cmep/Water/new/index.cfm

Resources

1. *Hoping, Seeking and Demanding Justice: Reflections for Advent 2003*: Pax Christi USA presents this year's Advent booklet, written by Beatrice Parwatikar, with poetry by Jean Stokan and illustrations by Erica S. Brath. 43 pages. Copies are \$2.50; bulk orders are available. Contact Pax Christi USA, 532 W. Eighth Street, Erie PA, 16502-1343; phone: (814)453-4955; fax: (814)452-4784; info@paxchristiusa.org; www.paxchristiusa.org
2. *Challenging Conventional Wisdom: Debunking the Myths and Exposing the Risks of Arms Export Reform*: Edited by Tamar Gabelnick and Rachel Stohl, this collection of essays on the arms industry dissects the notions and arguments used to justify policy changes that would weaken controls on dangerous military technology. It probes the justifications for major changes to the export system; examines the potential risks associated with these changes; and provides suggestions to strengthen the arms export control system. 223 pages; \$29 plus shipping. Contact the Center for Defense Information to order: (800)CDI-3334 or (202)332-0600. www.cdi.org
3. *Faith in Practice: Connecting the Dots for Global Economic Justice*: Cancelled due to Hurricane Isabel, this conference, sponsored by the Religious Working Group on the World Bank/IMF, has re-scheduled this conference for **December 8-9**, to be held in Washington, D.C. Come explore the connection of faith and our work for a more just global economy. Discern with others appropriate next steps for communities of faith — ways to better collaborate, to support each other's work on these interconnected issues. For more information, go to www.sndden.org/rwg, or call Susan Thompson at (703)624-1454.
4. *The Wall in Palestine: Facts, Testimonies, Analysis and Call to Action*: Edited by the Palestinian Environmental NGOs Network (PENGON). To date, some 300,000 people are affected by the land confiscation, tree uprooting and inaccessibility to lands and water due to the caging off of their communities, throughout the northern West Bank, Jerusalem and Bethlehem, with concrete walls and electric fences. This book is critical in surfacing what the Wall is, its shocking impacts, and its re-shaping of the entire West Bank. It includes photos, detailed reports, resources and an anthology. A comprehensive section on the Wall and international humanitarian and human rights law provides an important gateway into the illegality of this offensive. This book is a great tool for learning about and taking action on the issue of Palestinian rights. 199 pages. To order a copy, please contact PENGON at The cost of the book is \$20, including shipping costs.
5. "Coming to Say Goodbye": From Maryknoll World Productions, this documentary is about courageous people living with HIV/AIDS in Kenya and Tanzania. Their stories are a personalized journal of the spread of this modern plague. Included are commentaries by church workers, medical professionals, social workers, and educators who stand by those suffering, especially the thousands of children orphaned by AIDS. The video leads to reflection on the personal and structural aspects of the AIDS pandemic in Africa: poverty, lack of access to treatment, and the extraordinary social cost. A study guide is also available. \$14.95, 30 minutes. Contact Maryknoll World Productions at (800)227-8523.
6. *Suggested books for background and information on the U.S.'s past involvement in "regime change"*:
 - i. *Bitter Fruit: The Story of the American Coup in Guatemala*, by Stephen C. Schlesinger, Stephen Kinzer, John H. Coatsworth and Richard A. Nuccio. 374 pages. \$19.95 ISBN: 0-674-07590-0; Harvard University Press; www.hup.harvard.edu
 - ii. *All the Shah's Men: An American Coup and the Roots of Middle East Terror*, by Stephen Kinzer. 272 pages. \$24.95. ISBN: 0-471-26517-9; Wiley Publishers; www.wiley.com
 - iii. *The Pinochet File: A Declassified Dossier on Atrocity and Accountability* by Peter Kornbluh. \$29.95. ISBN: 1-56584-586-2; The New Press Publishers; www.thenewpress.com.