

Maryknoll Office for Global Concerns

NewsNotes

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Sabbath: Synergy of forces during the Jubilee

“We envision a world in which external debt no longer impoverishes nations and peoples by diverting resources from health, education, and the environment to pay rich countries and financial institutions, a world in which families and communities have a voice in economic policies and decisions that affect their lives, a world where right relationships are restored between nations. We respond to the call for Jubilee found in Judeo-Christian scripture; where those enslaved because of debts are freed, lands lost because of debt are returned, and communities torn by inequity are restored.” (Jubilee USA Network Vision Statement)

In fact, the cornerstone of Jesus' work was the liberation of all oppressed and impoverished people. As a sign of this he announced a Jubilee, a year of the Lord's favor, the spirit and meaning of which were well understood by the people of his time.

Presently, the vision of society captured in the Jubilee concept has come to an historical moment that holds potential for fulfillment on a scale previously unknown. This is so because the 2007 Sabbath year coincides with the halfway mark for achieving the United Nations Millennium Goals (MDGs), the articulation of the eight most pressing needs of the human community throughout the world. Seemingly God's unifying Spirit is at work within the world today through this great endeavor spearheaded by the United Nations, gathering in the religious conviction, the political force of government and the determination of civil society, in order to move more surely toward the fullness of life.

Aside from this, another aspect of modern life that supports the Jubilee call is technology. For a profound change in human society to take place moral conviction, civil good will and government determination must be accompanied by the appropriate technology for responding to the magnitude of change required. For example, today we have the capacity to end human hunger because we have both the quantity of food necessary and the technology for transferring it rapidly to those in need. May our technology be placed freely and truly at the disposition of life at all levels of existence!

In the U.S. the effort to carry forward the Jubilee hope and the MDGs is captured in a highly practical action, the introduction in Congress of the

Jubilee Act HR 2634. This bill will cancel the debt of approximately 67 impoverished countries allowing country funds to be used for meeting basic needs of people in keeping with the MDGs instead of using the funds to pay crippling debt. This follows a pattern of recent years where partial debt cancellation has been effective in achieving poverty alleviation for selected countries.

The immediate objective for the current year is a hearing of the bill in the House and Senate this fall. In addition to canceling the debt of impoverished nations, the bill removes economic conditionalities from the cancellation process; mandates transparency and accountability from governments and international financial institutions; and moves forward with more responsible lending practices.

As a sign of solidarity with impoverished people throughout the world Jubilee USA is calling for a 40-day fast during the time that the bill is being considered in hearings. The fast will begin on September 6 and end on October 15.

While the idea of Jubilee is of the Judeo Christian heritage, fast is a practice that resides at the center of each of the world's great religious traditions. For those of us who are of the Christian tradition, we remember that Jesus fasted for 40 days and nights before commencing his public life. Moses of the Jewish tradition fasted for 40 days before receiving the tablets of the Ten Commandments. Fast is also a vigorous annual part of the Islamic tradition, and indeed the Jubilee Fast coincides this year with the 30 day fast of Ramadan, from September 13 to October 12. Within the Buddhist tradition fasting is also practiced, in order to be in solidarity with those who are hungry and in compassion with those who suffer. Lastly, a modern Hindu leader who fasted in order to bring his nation to independence and a new level of national identity was Mahatma Gandhi. Indeed, in fast and in simplicity of life style, Gandhi found himself to be not only a Hindu but in his heart a Christian, a Muslim, a Buddhist and a Jew.

Let us all embrace the vision of a world integrated through common spiritual practice and common vision and work to accomplish the Millennium Development Goals by the year 2015. Canceling debt from impoverished countries is fundamental to this process. In this Sabbath Year, in the spirit of Jubilee, let us pray and fast and advocate for this end!

Burma: New constitution, same old repression?

Burma's ruling junta resumed its long-running constitutional convention July 18. Government leaders said the current session could lead to drafting a constitution, holding a national referendum to endorse the document and scheduling elections for a future People's Assembly. However, a new constitution as proposed would probably do little more than add a veneer of legality to Burma's repressive military rule. Its widespread human rights violations and denial of basic freedoms would likely continue. (See "Burma: Junta sends mixed signals on rights" in November/December 2006 NewsNotes.)

Burma has been under military rule for decades. The governing State Peace and Development Council (SPDC) canceled the 1990 elections won by Aung San Suu Kyi's National League for Democracy (NLD). In 1993 the SPDC launched a constitutional convention to convince Burmese citizens and the international community it was serious about reform and a return to civilian rule. About one percent of the delegates were elected; the others were handpicked.

Over the past 14 years the government has arrested members of political parties and enforced strict rules that limit challenges or dissent by convention delegates. In 1995 the NLD walked out of the convention, citing unfair working provisions. A year later, the military government passed a law making it a criminal offense to criticize the constitutional convention.

Constitutional provisions already agreed to by the SPDC would reserve 25 percent of future parliamentary seats for military officers. The charter would require the president to have had military experience, and it would award the ministerial portfolios of Defense, Home Affairs and Border Areas Administration to military officers.

The constitution would also prohibit spouses of foreign nationals from holding seats in parliament, a move intended to bar Suu Kyi, a Nobel Peace Prize winner, from office. (Her British husband died in 1999.) Suu Kyi remains under house arrest in Rangoon despite widespread calls for her release.

The convention reconvened in an isolated facility north of Rangoon. Delegates are prohibited from speaking with members of the press. Many delegates – particularly those from ethnic minorities that have been engaged in armed conflict with the government, such as the Mon, Wa and Kachin – have voiced dissatisfaction with the operating provisions and principles that will entrench the military's control over a future civilian government.

An estimated 500,000 persons, mostly ethnic minorities, have been displaced by fighting, and many have sought refuge from soldiers in border areas. "Repeated abuses committed against men, women and children living along the Thai-[Burmese] border violate many provisions of international humanitarian law," says Jakob Kellenberger, president of the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC). He says ICRC activities in Burma have been circumscribed since late 2005, especially in areas where thousands of civilians were being forced to support the army in military operations. He also criticizes the military for "large-scale destruction of food supplies and the means of production."

Human Rights Watch (HRW) says many in Burma believe the future constitution has already been written, and the convention is only window-dressing to head off public protests. There are also concerns that the entire process may be part of preparations to transfer power to the Union Solidarity and Development Association (USDA), a military-created "social welfare" movement with 23 million members, many of whom are civil servants, teachers and students who were coerced into joining.

HRW says some USDA members have been involved in attacks on grassroots human rights defenders and opposition political figures including Suu Kyi. The USDA seems to have the same aims and political objectives as the military. Its large and increasing administrative, economic and coercive power throughout Burma since 1993 has made it a likely candidate as the appointed civilian face of future military rule.

"The generals who run Burma have trumpeted the convention as a vehicle for a return to civilian rule and the rule of law" says Brad Adams, HRW's Asia director. "But they have engineered the outcome to ensure the military remains in control and excluded the people of Burma from the process."

"Delegates who are critical of the process face an invidious choice," he adds. "Either they can keep silent in hope of gaining some positive results for their communities, or stay out of the process and get nothing. This is not 'disciplined democracy' as the military terms it, but continuing repression by generals who refuse to allow Burmese to decide their own future."

Cambodia: Tuol Sleng director headed for trial

The head of the notorious Khmer Rouge prison Tuol Sleng, or S-21, could go on trial in early 2008 for alleged crimes against humanity. The 64-year-old Kaing Guek Iev, also known as Duch, directed the prison in Phnom Penh during the Khmer Rouge regime from 1975 to 1979. An estimated 16,000 persons were sent to the facility; about a dozen are known to have survived.

Duch is to be tried at a special tribunal known as Extraordinary Chambers in the Courts of Cambodia. Tribunal judges said in a detention order July 31 that Duch acknowledged he headed S-21 and was “ready to reveal the crimes committed by the Khmer Rouge.” Prosecutors allege he presided over abuses against civilians that include “arbitrary detention, torture and other inhumane acts [and] mass executions ... and constitute crimes against humanity.” Under tribunal rules, the maximum penalty for conviction is life imprisonment.

Duch has been held for eight years at a military prison in Phnom Penh on separate war crimes charges. He is the only Khmer Rouge in custody on charges stemming from the regime’s actions. (See “Cambodia: Time running out to try Khmer Rouge” in September/October 2006 *NewsNotes*.)

Like other former Khmer Rouge figures, Duch says he was simply following orders from the top to save his own life. “I was under other people’s command, and I would have died if I disobeyed it. I did it without any pleasure, and any fault should be blamed on the (Khmer Rouge leadership), not me,” he told a government interviewer after his arrest in 1999. He claimed he was not a “cruel” man, but “an individual with gentle heart caring for justice ... since childhood.”

The Khmer Rouge overthrew the Lon Nol regime in 1975 and set about trying to create an agrarian utopia. They emptied Phnom Penh and marched its two million residents to rural communes, where forced labor was widespread. The Khmer Rouge abolished banking and currency and closed schools, hospitals and factories. Civil servants, members of the merchant class and intellectuals were shot. In all, an estimated 1.7 million Cambodians – about a quarter of the population – were executed or died of starvation, disease or overwork over four years.

A decade ago Cambodia asked the UN to help set up a special tribunal to try former Khmer Rouge officials. Negotiations dragged on for years amid charges of government interference. Agreement was finally reached on an international panel of judges, a majority of whom are Cambodian. However, wrangling continued this year over

procedural matters, including how much foreign attorneys would have to pay to participate.

Prosecutors have recommended that four other Khmer Rouge leaders also be indicted. Their names have not been released, but local media suggest the following might have been named: Nuon Chea, the movement’s chief ideologue and second in command to the late Pol Pot; Khieu Samphan, the regime’s head of state; Ieng Sary, the Khmer Rouge foreign minister; and his wife, Ieng Thirith, who served as minister of social affairs. Pol Pot died in 1998 at the age of 73 in his forest hideout.

“We hope that charging Duch is the start of real progress on the trials,” says Brad Adams, Asia director for Human Rights Watch. “But it was impossible not to charge him, as he was already in custody and has confessed to his crimes in media interviews. The first real test is whether Nuon Chea, Khieu Samphan, Ieng Sary, and Ieng Thirith are soon charged and arrested.”

The U.S. so far has not contributed directly to the tribunal’s \$56 million budget. Piper Campbell, the chargé d’affaires at the U.S. Embassy in Phnom Penh, says the tribunal’s work has not reached a point where the State Department can assess whether it meets international standards.

There is hardly one Cambodian family that did not lose a member under the Khmer Rouge. However, many young people (half the population is under 15) don’t believe the killings took place. Teaching about the Khmer Rouge period is virtually absent from school curriculums.

Youk Chhang, director of the Documentation Center of Cambodia – which houses nearly one million pages of documents on the Khmer Rouge – says he fears the tribunal risks ignoring the victims. The center has guided more than 3,000 Cambodians through Tuol Sleng and the tribunal’s courtroom. About half have been rank-and-file members of the Khmer Rouge who were forced to carry out orders to kill. “Here, we are all victims,” he says.

If the tribunal is to contribute to national healing after nearly three decades, it will have to address doubts. As a 74-year-old farmer puts it, “It is none of my business ... It won’t make any change in my life.” More profoundly, the tribunal will have to answer a basic question raised by an elderly villager: “You say this will bring justice, but what does that mean for us?”

East Timor: PM named after indecisive election

East Timor President Jose Ramos-Horta named Xanana Gusmao as the country's prime minister Aug. 6 after no party won a majority in parliamentary elections. Gusmao's CNRT party (National Congress for Timorese Reconstruction) captured 18 of the unicameral's 65 seats in June, second to the Fretilin party's 21.

In East Timor the president appoints as prime minister the leader of the majority party or coalition in parliament. After the June elections Ramos-Horta urged a unity government, but both the CNRT and Fretilin (National Council of Timorese Resistance) tried to assemble a coalition instead. Ultimately the CNRT formed an alliance of parties holding 37 seats.

The CNRT-Fretilin contest for prime minister reflects divisions during presidential elections earlier this year in the multiparty democracy. In April Ramos-Horta, an independent, placed second to Fretilin's Francisco Guterres, whose party then held a two-thirds majority in parliament. Ramos-Horta won a runoff election in May.

Tensions rose in August after former Prime Minister Mari Alkatiri, a Fretilin member, announced he would stand as his party's candidate for his old position. In March 2006 Alkatiri had sacked 40 percent of the armed forces after 400 military personnel from the western part of the country protested alleged discrimination and poor

working conditions. (See "East Timor: Can election winners trump poverty?" in May/June 2007 *News-Notes*.) The dismissals sparked violence in which at least 37 persons died, and Alkatiri resigned. Ramos-Horta, a Nobel Peace Prize recipient, became prime minister, while Gusmao held the largely ceremonial position of president.

East Timor – officially Timor Leste, or Timor of the Rising Sun – has a tumultuous political history. Indonesia invaded the territory in 1975 after Portugal, its colonial master for more than three centuries, pulled out. Insurgents fought Indonesian rule for 24 years in a struggle that left as many as 200,000 dead. East Timor voted to separate from Indonesia in a 1999 referendum and declared independence in 2002. In the three-year interim, Indonesian troops and their proxies went on a killing spree and razed the capital of Dili.

The country's one million citizens face an uncertain future. Per capita income is \$400. Unemployment stands at 50 percent and literacy at 48 percent. A fifth of the population faces potential food shortages due to crop failures. The country is trodding a new path of self determination, but no political party has convinced a majority of voters that it can show the best direction.

East Timor: UN opts out of Truth Commission

The UN has barred its officials from testifying before a truth commission set up to establish a "shared historical record" of human rights violations before and after the 1999 referendum in which East Timor (Timor Leste) voted for independence from Indonesia.

The UN says terms of reference for the Indonesia-Timor Leste Commission for Truth and Friendship (CTF) include the option to offer amnesty even for serious violations of international law. The UN "cannot endorse or condone amnesties for genocide, crimes against humanity, war crimes or gross violations of human rights, nor should it do anything that might foster them," UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon said in a statement July 26.

The East Timor and Indonesia Action Network (ETAN), a U.S.-based advocacy group, praised the UN decision, noting the CTF "can only offer a watered-down 'truth' about the horrific actions of the Indonesian military" during its long presence in East Timor.

ETAN says the commission lacks legitimacy because of "the perception that the CTF was established

to avoid calls for an international criminal tribunal to try those accused of crimes against humanity in Timor-Leste in 1999; the failure to address crimes committed before 1999; and the amnesty provision, which would allow perpetrators of serious crimes to avoid accountability."

In May three dozen human rights organizations, including the Maryknoll Office for Global Concerns, urged the presidents of Indonesia and East Timor to close the CTF.

Faith in action:

To learn more about the struggle to bring Indonesian military personnel to justice in East Timor, see "Open Letter to the Presidents of the Republics of Indonesia and Timor-Leste" (May 23) on the ETAN website at www.etan.org and "Justice for Timor-Leste Remains an Unfulfilled International Obligation" (April 27) at www.laohamutuk.org (International Crimes, LH briefing 4/07)

Japan: Voters scrutinize U.S. military alliance

The U.S. can no longer take for granted Japan's unconditional support for its military involvement in Iraq and Afghanistan following July 29 elections in Japan. Prime Minister Shinzo Abe's ruling Liberal Democratic Party lost its majority in the 242-seat upper house of parliament. Some consider Japanese military assistance to the U.S. in Iraq and Afghanistan unconstitutional, and leaders of the newly ascendant Democratic Party of Japan say they might try to suspend Japan's military aid.

The Liberal Democrats and their coalition partners dropped from 134 seats to 105 in the House of Councilors, while the Democratic Party led the former opposition bloc to 137 seats, a gain of 29. However, the Liberal Democrats still control the more powerful lower house, which chooses the prime minister. Abe is not required to call elections for the lower house for another two years.

Ichiro Ozawa, head of the Democratic Party, says he might seek legislation to stop Japan's air force from transporting coalition personnel and supplies from Kuwait to Iraq. He also says he opposes extending a naval mission to the Indian Ocean to provide logistical support for U.S. operations in Afghanistan. That mission, which Japan's parliament approved under a special law, expires in November. The Liberal Democrats want parliament to extend the law, perhaps for another year.

Ozawa says Japan's international efforts should be channeled through the UN, not the U.S. In addition, Democratic Party leaders and others say the missions to Iraq and Afghanistan violate the nation's peace constitution, which prohibits the use of force to resolve international disputes.

After the elections for the upper house, U.S. Ambassador Thomas Schieffer urged Japan to continue providing fuel and other support to U.S.-led forces in Afghanistan past November. If the mission is not extended, he said, "I think it would have a really negative message not only to the United States but the rest of the international community."

In Washington, D.C., State Department spokesman Tom Casey seemed to temper confidence with hope when he told reporters, "I think the Japanese government certainly understands that Japan is a potential victim [of a terrorist attack]. There's no question in our mind about the commitment of the Japanese government and the Japanese people to work with us on counterterrorism issues."

Analysts predict Abe's pro-U.S. party will have to

make concessions to the Democratic Party over such issues even though his ruling bloc dominates parliament's lower house. In any event, the Democratic Party is not expected to totally wean Japan from its reliance on the U.S. Japan remains heavily dependent on the U.S. for security, with some 50,000 U.S. troops deployed across the country under a mutual security pact. Japan's Self-Defense Forces are strictly limited by the country's peace constitution.

After he assumed office last September, Abe won praise for his efforts to improve relations with China and South Korea. He also worked hard to rewrite the country's peace constitution and expand the role of Japan's armed forces. (See "Japan: Amending Constitution spurs arms race" in May/June 2007 *NewsNotes*.) In July, however, the electorate cast their votes on domestic pocketbook issues: stagnant wages, a job shortage for young people, rising health care costs and uncertainty over pensions.

The Democratic Party of Japan, founded in 1998, won with promises of a reliable pension system, checks on political financing, a higher minimum wage, help for farmers and a \$220 monthly allowance per child. The party also questioned what it says is the Liberal Democrats' blanket support of U.S. foreign policies that has committed troops to back U.S. operations in Afghanistan and Iraq.

"Our diplomacy should not be subservient to the U.S.," says Yukio Hatoyama, Democratic Party secretary-general. "We should express Japan's position more assertively through our diplomatic and defense policies."

After the election Abe resisted pressure to resign, saying, "I cannot run away now. We cannot afford a political vacuum. Japan is in the midst of reforms that must be carried forward." In contrast, Chiaki Yoshii, who stumped for the Democratic Party, describes reform in terms of changing a political dynasty and more closely reflecting the popular will.

She helped Yumiko Himei, a 48-year-old woman, defeat veteran 72-year-old Toranosuke Katayama, the top Liberal Democrat in the upper house. "It's all about the change of power from man to woman, from old to young," Yoshii says. "The world of politics is going to change to something that's closer to everyday people."

Nepal: Constituent Assembly to weigh monarchy

Voters in Nepal are preparing to elect a Constituent Assembly in November to write a new constitution and decide the future of the monarchy. At the same time, the country is grappling with demands from women and minorities seeking fair representation in the government. The country also faces the issue of 100,000 Bhutanese refugees who have languished in camps for 17 years. Eight political parties, including former Maoist insurgents, are contesting the Nov. 22 elections.

The Royal Nepalese Army and Maoist rebels signed an accord last November to end 10 years of bloodshed that had claimed 13,000 lives. A temporary government quickly limited the powers of the king and began planning for the 2007 election (see “Nepal: Peace accord ends 10-year insurgency” in January/February 2007 *NewsNotes*).

The Maoists, who were fighting to overthrow the monarchy, agreed to abide by the Assembly’s decision, even if it decided to keep a ceremonial monarch. At a recent plenum, the Communist Party of Nepal-Maoist said it would seek consensus with the other seven parties to declare a republic even before the Assembly polls, but agreement seemed unlikely. Meanwhile, political parties devised a formula to ensure proportional representation in the upcoming Assembly both for women and for minorities, including *dalits* (lower caste citizens), *janjatis* (indigenous ethnic communities living mostly in the hills) and *madhesis* (Indo-origin citizens on the southern plains).

Fair treatment might come none too soon for the madhesis, who live in the fertile flatlands of Terai on the Indian border. They comprise a third of Nepal’s population of 28 million but occupy only 15 percent of the seats in parliament. Protests against the discrimination that has largely excluded them from public life turned violent at times this year, and dozens have been killed. Some madhesi activists are demanding greater autonomy for their region.

With comparatively good infrastructure, agriculture, industrial development and access to India, the Terai is crucial to Nepal’s economy. It is also an area of great political importance, both as a traditional base for the mainstream parties and as the only road link between otherwise inaccessible hill and mountain districts. Yet, madhesis are ethnically, culturally and linguistically closer to people living in the neighboring Indian states of Bihar and Uttar Pradesh than to Nepalese living in the hills and mountains.

“The Terai disturbance is more dangerous than the Maoist insurgency,” says Jaya Raj Acharya, Nepal’s Permanent Representative to the UN from 1991 to 1994. “The ongoing violence may turn into a festering wound if it is not addressed immediately,” he says, “so early diplomatic initiatives must be made together with India to deal with the security situation in the Terai, which is a common concern because of the open border.”

The Nepalese government also faces the sensitive issue of some 100,000 Bhutanese refugees living in seven camps in eastern Nepal. In 1985 the government of Bhutan set eligibility requirements for citizenship in its “one nation, one people” policy of cultural assimilation. The new rules effectively disenfranchised many ethnic Nepalese, depriving them of their citizenship and civil rights. In December 1990 Bhutan announced that those who could not prove they were residents of the country before 1958 had to leave. Tens of thousands soon fled to Nepal and the Indian state of West Bengal.

The refugees are split over their future. Some are willing to be resettled in third countries, while others are holding out to return to Bhutan. (Some refugees might prefer to integrate in Nepal, but there has been no official commitment from the Nepalese government on the issue.) In May a “Long March to Bhutan” began as an estimated 15,000 refugees tried to return to Bhutan via India, but Indian authorities stopped them at the border. For six days the refugees blocked the Mechi Bridge, a major passage between Nepal and India, which has been reluctant to mediate the issue.

Meanwhile, rather than maneuvering to secure influential posts, *The Rising Nepal* in Kathmandu urges political parties to focus on substantive issues such as redressing the grievances of the marginalized, reforming the security sector and establishing a Truth and Reconciliation Commission, which the November 2006 accord calls for.

Journalism student Amit Pyakurel urges the country not to lose sight of its unique identity in the process. “We’ve been recognized as a nation of unity within diversity, thus representing a beautiful garden of flowers with different fragrances and colors,” he says. “Let’s earnestly bear in our hearts and minds that we are Nepali before we are Pahade or Madhesi, Bahun or Tamang, a man or a woman.”

South Korea: Crisis, opportunity precede election

South Korea voters will choose a successor to President Roh Moo-Hyun in December. Although his popularity is slipping, Roh hopes to stave off a conservative victory. John Feffer offers the following analysis, "Seoul Searching," at Foreign Policy in Focus (www.fpif.org).

Poor Roh Moo-Hyun. The South Korean president's popularity rating has dipped as low as 10 percent recently. His backers on the left have savaged him for pushing a free-trade agreement with the United States. With only a few months remaining in his term and the presidential elections coming up in December, he faces a likely victory by the conservatives.

And now he finds himself caught between Kim Jong Il and the Taliban.

The news that Roh will go north to Pyongyang for a second summit with North Korean leader Kim Jong Il at the end of [August] has generated faint praise. At home, the South Korean media has chided the president for trying to boost his party's chances in the December elections. "Summit of folly," the centrist newspaper *Joongang Ilbo* has declared. A columnist in the more conservative *Chosun Ilbo* has called the upcoming meeting a "political deception."

In the U.S., news of the summit failed to make the headlines. The Bush administration has quietly voiced its concerns that Roh will give away the shop to the North Koreans. The multi-party talks to resolve the ongoing nuclear standoff are proceeding step by step. North Korea shut down its nuclear reactor in July and has received some heavy fuel oil in return. But Pyongyang has yet to give a full inventory of its nuclear program as the next step toward complete nuclear disarmament, and Washington doesn't want anything to preempt this process.

Roh promises to press Kim Jong Il on the nuclear issue. There may also be a compromise on the long-disputed maritime boundary. But most likely the focus will be on the economy. North Korea has a big wish list, and Roh Moo-Hyun, as Santa Claus of the South, has a big bag of potential goodies: two million kilowatts of electricity, the renovation of a key highway going from the DMZ to Pyongyang, the construction of a 330,000-ton fertilizer plant, expansion of the Kaesong industrial zone, and so on. Some analysts in South Korea have put the value of this bag of goodies at \$9 billion.

Leading up to the summit, North and South Korea have already been strengthening economic ties. South Korea has pledged to improve the North's mining operations and light industry. In June, the first high-voltage

power line began to connect the two halves of the Korean peninsula. In May, two trains made a test run across the reconnected train line between North and South.

But any major expansion of economic cooperation will require the support of Roh's successor. Contrary to some U.S. analysis, the conservative party in South Korea has largely backed the same approach to North Korea as Roh's party, so this might not be as difficult as it sounds. More challenging perhaps will be getting U.S. support for the international loans that any mini-Marshall Plan for North Korea will require.

Ordinarily, the upcoming summit would be the singular focus of the Korean government and the Korean media. But that distinction belongs to the hostage situation in Afghanistan. [In July], the Taliban kidnapped 23 South Korean church workers on a misguided mission to the country. The militants have demanded the release of their own prisoners. The Afghan government, with strong U.S. support, has refused to deal. So far the Taliban has killed two of the hostages. [As of late August], as a good-will gesture, the Taliban released two. But 19 South Koreans remain in limbo.

For refusing to barter with terrorists, the United States has come under a lot of fire in South Korea. "Totally ignoring the Taliban will not help settle the matter," editorialized the *Korea Times*. "The U.S. tacitly approved the swapping of an Italian female journalist for five Iraqi prisoners. The U.S. started the war in Afghanistan and induced South Korea to join it. So it needs to feel a strong sense of responsibility for this recent case. Saving innocent people is more important than ideologies or principles regarding war."

If Roh can pull off a successful summit with North Korea and extricate the remaining hostages from Afghanistan, he will rescue his presidency. Ultimately, though, he remains dependent on Washington – to support any economic deal with the North and to show some flexibility toward the Taliban. After several years of demonizing Kim Jong Il, the Bush administration reversed its policy and has begun to negotiate in earnest.

The question is, after several years of strained relations between Seoul and Washington, will the Bush administration do a similar about-face and throw a lifeline to Roh Moo-Hyun?

Middle East: Arms sale risks democratic reform

The proposed sale of billions of dollars worth of U.S. arms to Egypt, Israel and Saudi Arabia flies in the face of diplomatic initiatives in the Middle East. The proposal, announced in July, would require Congressional approval, and the House has called for a detailed briefing in September. The full version of Matthew Duss' analysis "Gasoline for the Fire," excerpted below, can be found at Foreign Policy in Focus (www.fpiif.org).

Like a gambling addict who has to keep betting more to cover his previous losses, the Bush administration's recently announced plan to provide some \$65 billion worth of advanced weapons to Saudi Arabia, Egypt and Israel over the next 10 years represents a reckless, poorly considered attempt to mitigate the consequences of its ill considered invasion of Iraq. The deal also represents an admission of failure of several of the key elements of U.S. security policy in the Middle East, and, perhaps most significantly, it represents a clear abandonment of President Bush's democratic reform agenda in the region.

Bush's plan to increase arms to the region is an admission of failure on several fronts. The first, and most obvious, is the failure of the invasion of Iraq and removal of Saddam Hussein to have any positive effect in the region. ... It was always a fantasy that a democratic, Shia-dominated, Iraq would tilt toward the Sunni Arab world and Israel, rather than Shia Iran. Yet this was the imagined outcome for the neoconservative planners of Bush's Iraq policy. Reality has proved otherwise.

The militarization of the region through the proposed sales represents, to some extent, a repudiation of the principle of nuclear deterrence, specifically in regard to Israel. Though it has never officially admitted having nuclear weapons, it is understood that Israel does, in fact, have nuclear capability. It's unclear how providing \$30 billion of sophisticated new weaponry would enhance Israel's security in a way that a nuclear arsenal could not. As Zbigniew Brzezinski asked at a security conference this June, "If the Israeli nuclear arsenal—some 200 weapons capable of destroying Iran if Iran were to attack Israel—is not a sufficient and credible deterrent, than what is it for?" ...

Having upset the balance of power in the region by removing Saddam Hussein, empowering Iran by removing the most significant check on their regional hegemony, and having transformed Iraq into a terrorist training ground, the United States now proposes to supply new weapons to its allies in the region to help them deal with the new security environment which it created.

In Iraq, the U.S. is arming Sunni forces against Iranian-backed Shia militias, and Shia forces against Sunni insurgents and al-Qaeda elements, based upon dubious assurances that our Iraqi allies will not turn their weapons against each other. Whatever the strategic justifications and short-term advantages of arming the various factions within Iraq ... [i]t's hard to imagine a better way to cultivate hatred of the U.S. than announcing that we intend to essentially reproduce this strategy throughout the region. ...

Finally, and most significantly, the arms deal represents a repudiation of the democracy agenda that President Bush insisted would be central to his Middle East policy after 9/11. In response to questions about the deal, Secretary of State [Condoleezza] Rice said that the U.S. is "working with these states to give a chance to the forces of moderation and reform." One might ask, as is surely being asked by those who suffer under these regimes: Where? In Saudi Arabia, a kleptocratic monarchy that supports its own illegitimate rule by buying off its extremist religious establishment, a religious establishment which exports a violent anti-Western ideology? In Egypt, where democratic activists and critics of the regime such as Ayman Nour and blogger Abdel Kareem Soliman sit in prison, and authoritarian president Hosni Mubarak, after more than two decades of "emergency" dictatorial powers, is finally preparing to leave the presidency — to his son, as an inheritance? In Israel, where a brutal 40 years-long military occupation, the construction of illegal settlements, and the destruction of Palestinian homes and lives by American-made bombs and bulldozers, continues? ...

A responsible new policy would promote the measured opening of political systems in the Middle East. Rather than simply strengthening regimes that were themselves responsible for the radicalization of many of the Islamic militants we are now fighting, we should strengthen political freedom, and encourage the participation of groups from across the political spectrum, even groups hostile to the United States. Most importantly, we must show ourselves willing to support a results-oriented process through which Arabs can develop their unique cultural and political identities. It will be difficult, and it will take years. But it's surely a better plan than adding gasoline to an already raging fire.

Iraq: Harsh daily struggle is often overlooked

While much of the aid to Iraq is focused on reconstruction and development of political institutions, the harsh daily struggle for survival is often overlooked. Humanitarian agencies in Iraq say as many as eight million of the country's 27.5 million people need emergency assistance. An estimated four million lack food security. Nearly half the population is unemployed and living in absolute poverty. Some 50-70 percent lack adequate water supplies, and child malnutrition has risen to 28 percent.

Violence has displaced an estimated two million Iraqis, mostly women and children, yet security concerns make it difficult for the government or NGOs (non-governmental organizations) to deliver humanitarian aid. A political solution to the conflict must be found as soon as possible, but Oxfam International and NCCI, a network of aid organizations working in Iraq, meanwhile have called on all armed groups to respect civilian life, property and infrastructure.

Iraq: U.S. Catholics urge summit, economic aid

A growing number of Catholics are calling for an end to U.S. military action in Iraq. Catholics for an End to the War in Iraq has posted a petition calling for diplomatic efforts, responsible withdrawal and funding for reconstruction at www.catholicsforanend.org. The Catholic Social Justice Lobby NETWORK, a petition co-sponsor, as is Pax Christi USA, spells out its view of the best way forward below (the complete text can be found at www.networklobby.org).

The UNITED STATES needs to make clear that it does not intend to have permanent military bases in Iraq or to control the Iraqi oil. The U.S. must also begin to end the occupation in the near future.

IRAQI PEACE CONFERENCE: Only through a meeting of all factions in Iraq can there be a negotiated settlement to the civil war. This Peace Conference should be encouraged by the U.S., hosted by the UN or other international body utilizing the services of skilled negotiators who know the reality of the Middle East.

REGIONAL DIPLOMACY must be continued by the United States and all of the countries in the region. It is in all nations' interests that the civil war be ended and peace negotiated.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT is the only realistic way forward. Through local development and micro en-

In their report "Rising to the Humanitarian Challenge in Iraq" (see www.oxfam.org), the humanitarian groups fault invading coalition governments for not anticipating emergency needs. They note donor assistance for development and reconstruction in Iraq rose 922 percent from 2003 to 2005, while funding for humanitarian assistance declined 47 percent. Yet in 2006 alone \$26 billion for reconstruction projects went unspent for security reasons.

Oxfam and NCCI appeal to the Iraqi government, international donors and the UN to do more to help meet basic human needs and prevent further destabilization. They call on the Iraqi government to extend its food parcel distribution program, increase emergency cash payments and decentralize aid delivery. They urge an increase in humanitarian aid by foreign governments – particularly those that have not sent troops to Iraq. They also urge the UN to better coordinate humanitarian aid with the Iraqi government and NGOs.

terprise it will be possible for the Iraqis to reclaim their country. The U.S. should fund these efforts.

RECONCILIATION will only be possible when Iraqis work together in their neighborhoods across sectarian lines. Organizations such as the Community Action Programs have proven effectiveness and should be fully funded by the U.S.

REFUGEES and **INTERNALLY DISPLACED** are at crisis levels. The United States needs to fully fund the UNHCR and NGO response to this extreme dislocation of an estimated 18 to 20 percent of the Iraqi population. Additionally, the U.S. should speedily accept Iraqi Refugees into the country, especially those who are in danger because they have worked with the U.S. forces since the invasion.

Faith in action:

Read news and analysis on Iraq at the Education for Peace in Iraq Center (www.epic-usa.org) or the Institute for Policy Studies (www.epic-dc.org/iraq). Sign the petition sponsored by Catholics for an End to the War in Iraq at www.catholicsforanend.org. Write to your lawmakers in Washington, D.C., and urge a responsible withdrawal from Iraq and funding to help reconstruct the country.

Zimbabwe: Famine and manipulation of food aid

In an effort to slow inflation, which is now the highest in the world, Zimbabwe recently began circulating a new 200,000 Zim dollar note. The new note can buy a little over two pounds of sugar. Food and fuel shortages have become commonplace as the government relies more heavily on imports, pushing prices to new heights. The official annual rate of inflation in Zimbabwe is nearing 5,000 percent. The new note is worth US\$13 at the official exchange rate or \$1 on the black market.

Critics blame President Robert Mugabe's policies, especially the seizure of white-owned farms, for ordinary Zimbabweans' hardship, and recently even Vice President Joseph Msika admitted that the government's land reform program was chaotic and had destroyed commercial agriculture. Msika said that the land reform was not implemented as outlined in the land reform policy document. He also said dairy farming had collapsed due to poor management and that this has left the country facing milk shortages.

The UN World Food Program (UNWFP) estimates that about 2.1 million Zimbabweans will face serious food shortages by the third quarter of 2007 due to crop failures and escalating poverty in both rural and urban areas. UNWFP expects 4.1 million people – a third of the population – to require food aid during the first three months of 2008. Most of it will be provided by the United Nations, but so far the government is said to be in a state of "denial," refusing to make the obligatory appeal to the UN to allow it to institute an international appeal for assistance.

According to the Famine Early Warning System Network (FEWSNET), a USAID-initiated and funded program which monitors hunger, food availability and shortages across the globe, Zimbabwe is facing its worst food shortages yet, with this harvest having only met just above 30 percent of national requirements.

The most seriously affected provinces are Masvingo, Midlands and Matabeleland North and South. In Matabeleland South, members of the San community, who still survive as hunter gatherers, are reportedly the hardest hit. Acting Tsholotsho District Administrator, Lydia Ndethi-Banda, warned recently that the San would die of hunger if donors did not intervene urgently.

Meanwhile the government scoffed at food aid pledges by the United States and Canada last week, saying they were meant for opposition parties.

Minister of Agriculture Rugare Gumbo said the government was still carrying out an assessment of the food situation before making a formal appeal to the UN,

but the world body warned last week that time was running out to launch a major appeal. Zimbabwe requires about two million tons of its main staple, maize, for annual consumption but estimates show that this year Zimbabwe harvested a mere 400,000 tons of maize.

The failure of the Zimbabwe African National Union – Patriotic Front (Zanu PF) government to take action in the face of a looming crisis, combined with policies which actively reduce food supplies even further, is a cause for major concern.

In 2004, Amnesty International (AI) documented the political manipulation of food aid, noting that "food aid was often withheld from those who did not hold a Zanu PF loyalty card, and was used in attempts to influence election results."

In 2007, AI found that "the manipulation of food distribution persists, particularly of GMB (Grain Marketing Board) maize sold in rural areas...The government of Zimbabwe has permitted discriminatory distribution of maize in the rural areas as part of its strategy to retain its political support base since the emergence of the main opposition party, the Movement for Democratic Change (MDC)."

Over the last seven years, Zanu PF politicians have used maize sold through the state-owned GMB as a tool to silence perceived opponents. In order to buy maize from the GMB, needy households in rural areas are registered at the local level. The registration process is conducted by councilors who are, in the majority of cases, members of Zanu PF. These councilors omit names of perceived and known MDC supporters, reportedly stating that the "government should not be feeding its enemies."

AI also reports about women human rights defenders who have been labeled MDC supporters and are discriminated against in the sale of GMB maize. AI pointed to the violations of the economic and social rights of these women and urged the government to "ensure that food is distributed to all on the basis of need, irrespective of real or perceived political affiliation, or any other factor or criteria."

The full Amnesty International report is available at <http://web.amnesty.org/library/index/engaf460172007>. For additional information, visit www.sokwanele.com, a civil action support group which promotes nonviolent principles to achieve democracy in Zimbabwe.

AFRICOM: Mixed response to U.S. military command

In mid-July, the State Department announced the nomination of Army Gen. William E. Ward to be the first chief of the new U.S. Africa Command (AFRICOM). AFRICOM (see NewsNotes March/April 2007) will coordinate security cooperation with African nations and consolidate U.S. government humanitarian, health and development programs in Africa. Its staff will include specialists from the State Department, the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) and other federal agencies. Ward's nomination must be confirmed by the U.S. Senate.

A dialogue on "What Does AFRICOM Mean for Africa?" hosted by the Brenthurst Foundation (<http://www.thebrenthurstfoundation.org>) and the African Center for Strategic Studies from July 15-17 in South Africa described some of the reactions in Africa to AFRICOM. In their paper, authors Greg Mills, Terence McNamee, Mauro De Lorenzo, and Matthew Uttley wrote:

"Resistance to the idea is fuelled primarily by fears that it could lead to the militarization of American foreign policy towards Africa. Of its numerous critics, South Africa has been especially vocal. Yet in other parts of Africa there is a cautious optimism based on the hope that Washington is finally taking the relationship between African security and development seriously...."

"That AFRICOM will have such a significant civilian component does not impress many African observers, for whom even the word 'command' suggests malign intentions. In Africa the view is widespread that AFRICOM is a tool to secure better access to Africa's natural resources, erode China's growing influence on the continent, and establish forward bases to hunt and destroy networks linked to Al-Qaeda.

"Moreover, by emphasizing AFRICOM's role in development and humanitarian tasks, U.S. officials may have actually amplified African concerns. The fear is that, henceforth, the main lens through which development efforts in Africa are perceived will be the Pentagon's.

"Washington has underestimated how deep-rooted and ideological African assumptions about U.S. aims can be. To many, AFRICOM is, along with Iraq and Afghanistan, another sign that the U.S. is seeking to reassert American power and hegemony globally.

"But not all African perceptions of AFRICOM are negative. President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf of Liberia spoke for those who feel well-disposed to the initiative when she wrote in June 2007: 'AFRICOM should be seen for what it is: recognition of the growing importance of

Africa to U.S. national security interests, as well as recognition that long-term African security lies in empowering African partners to develop a healthy security environment through embracing good governance, building security capacity, and developing good civil-military relations. ... AFRICOM is undeniably about the projection of American interests but this does not mean that it is to the exclusion of African ones.'"

In testimony before the House Committee on Foreign Affairs, Subcommittee on Africa and Global Health on August 2, Dr Wafula Okumu, head of African Security Analysis Program, Institute for Security Studies, Pretoria, South Africa, identified several reasons why Africans are reluctant to embrace AFRICOM (see AfricaFiles 8/2/07). Among them:

- Any country hosting the command will be criticized for violating Africa's common positions on African defense and security, which discourages the hosting of foreign troops on the African soil.
- Africa's colonial history was characterized by military occupations, exploitation of its natural resources and suppression of its people. After testing decades of independence, these countries are now jealously guarding their sovereignty and are highly suspicious of foreigners, even those with good intentions.
- When Africans reflect on the continent's relations with the U.S., they see ambiguity, neglect, and selective engagement. AFRICOM might be viewed more positively if it primarily seeks to strengthen the capacity of the African Union and other African organizations to implement Africa's development, peace and security agendas.
- Africans are concerned that AFRICOM will sanction the militarization of diplomacy and severely undermine multilateralism on the continent.
- There are feelings in Africa that AFRICOM is a U.S. attempt to ensure that the aspiration for African Unity is checked by a heavy U.S. military presence on the continent. Is Africa to become merely another theatre of operations in which winning the "hearts and minds" forms an essential component of a "security" driven agenda?

- Africans were never consulted during the conceptualization of AFRICOM. Rather AFRICOM was announced and has been presented as a fait accompli.
- There is also a concern that AFRICOM will suffer from mission creep by being transformed from engagement in humanitarian missions to an interventionist force.
- Africans are wary of the U.S. record in Iraq and concerned that the Pentagon is taking the lead role in the promotion of U.S. interests.

He concluded his testimony in the following way: "The hostility that it has faced so far points to the fact that AFRICOM could turn out to be an expensive en-

deavor, both in terms of resources and long-term U.S.-Africa relations. It should not come as a surprise that Washington's designs for Africa are now viewed with skepticism. Oil, China and terrorism are being seen to be the principal concerns of the U.S. initiative. If the coordination of a securitized development policy for Africa is part of the U.S. strategy, then it is seen by many local observers as essentially secondary and subordinate to the main aim."

For additional information see www.africa-files.org and <http://www.aei.org/publications>.

Namibia: Russia offers nuclear energy aid

The following article in Ecumenical News International (AfricaFiles 8/8/07) reported on the reaction of the general secretary of the Council of Churches in Namibia to a Russian offer to help Namibia build floating nuclear power plants. Namibia is rich in uranium and has urgent electricity needs, yet deep concerns persist about the environmental consequences of nuclear power and the difficulties disposing of nuclear waste.

The leader of the Council of Churches in Namibia has expressed concern about environmental problems that could be created if the uranium-rich southern African country accepts an offer by Russia to help build floating nuclear power plants.

"We are the custodians of instructions from God to look after the environment," the Rev. Phillip Strydom, general secretary of the church council, told Ecumenical News International on August 6. "That duty is an order from the Creator, but here we have not been told how the environment will be affected."

During a visit to Namibia in March, Russian Prime Minister Mikhail Fradkov offered to assist the country in building off the coast a floating nuclear power plant, which is still new and untested technology. Fradkov made the suggestion during talks with Namibian President Hifikepunye Pohamba. The president later described the plan as a solution to self-sustaining electricity generation for Namibia.

Namibia imports the bulk of its energy requirements from neighboring South Africa, which has warned of power shortages as it struggles to supply its own domestic market. A floating plant requires the construction of a power unit in coastal waters not far from the recipients of the power supply.

"In itself, a nuclear power station is not a bad idea but what we have not been told is how the waste will be disposed of. We have not been told where the dumping areas will be located, and the levels of pollution," said Strydom. He added, "We need to be concerned about the people and our fragile environment. The effect won't be felt now but in the long run."

Namibia's National Society for Human Rights has objected to the proposal, and accused Russia of having a "poor nuclear safety record."

"When the Russians are involved in these matters, then what immediately comes to mind are their nuclear catastrophes, such as Chernobyl in 1986, during the Soviet era; and the several fire fiascos on board nuclear submarines like the Komsollets (in 1989), the Kurst (in 2000) and St. Daniil Moskovsky (in 2006)," said the human rights society executive director, Phil ya Nangoloh. "Will Namibia be in a position to handle such disasters?" asked Nangoloh.

The environmental group Earthlife Namibia said the Russian plan would put "coming generations into serious jeopardy," and called on the Namibian government to come up with safer and sustainable options like solar and wind energy.

Namibia produces eight percent of the world's uranium requirements, and is the world's fifth-biggest producer of the resource, after Canada, Australia, Kazakhstan, Niger and Russia, according to the London-based World Nuclear Association.

For additional information see www.africa-files.org.

Kenya: Curbing small arms proliferation

A recent exhibit entitled “Crush the Illicit Trade in Small Arms” at the UN complex in Nairobi brought attention to the tremendous number of illegal weapons circulating in Kenya, as in the rest of the region, and the need for effective local, national and international measures to curb their proliferation. During the exhibit, Peter Munya, Kenya’s assistant minister for internal affairs, singled out Somalia as one of the sources of these weapons, but emphasized the fact that the arms originate in Europe and the Middle East. In addition to Somalia, guns are entering Kenya from the Sudan, Uganda and Ethiopia. (IRIN 8/10/07)

The “Crush the Illicit Trade in Small Arms” exhibit was one result of regional efforts to develop enforceable mechanisms for small arms control. For example, according to Sarah Meek, previous head of the Arms Management Program at the Institute for Security Studies in South Africa, the New Partnership for Africa’s Development (NEPAD), particularly its Peace and Security Agenda, “provides an important framework in Africa for combating the proliferation of small arms and light weapons, proliferation in general and the regulation of brokers and brokering activities in particular.”

Another effort, the Common African Position on Small Arms (the Bamako Declaration, adopted in December 2000), recommends that African Union (AU) member states should “encourage the codification and harmonization of legislation governing the manufacture, trading, brokering, possession and use of small arms and ammunition. Common standards should include, but not be limited to, marking, record keeping and control governing imports, exports and the licit trade.”

The Nairobi Declaration (2000) and the Nairobi Protocol for the Prevention, Control and Reduction of Small Arms and Light Weapons in the Great Lakes and the Horn of Africa (2004) oblige member states - Kenya, Tanzania, Ethiopia, Uganda, Eritrea, Rwanda, Burundi, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Djibouti, Seychelles, Sudan and Somalia - to criminalize illicit trafficking, manufacturing, possession and misuse of small arms and light weapons.

The Nairobi Protocol underscores the problem in the Great Lakes Region and the Horn of Africa and the devastating consequences small arms have had in “sustaining armed conflict and armed crime, degrading the environment, fuelling the illegal exploitation of natural resources and abetting terrorism and other serious crimes.” It also said, “[T]he problem of proliferation of illicit small arms and light weapons in the region has

been exacerbated by internal political strife, terrorist activities and extreme poverty. ... [A] comprehensive strategy to arrest and deal with the problem must include putting in place structures and processes to promote democracy, the observance of human rights, the rule of law and good governance, as well as economic recovery and growth.”

Kenya – where armed crime, urban and pastoral violence, cattle rustling, poaching and trafficking are common problems – has adopted a National Action Plan (NAP) for controlling illicit small arms and light weapons. Other states, including Uganda and Tanzania, have done likewise.

However, a recent article by Fr. Joachim Omolo Ouko of People for Peace in Africa (PPA) (www.peopleforpeaceafrica.org) describes controlling illegal arms as one of the most impossible missions in Kenya. The police are often ill-equipped and not properly trained. They lack proper communications equipment, vehicles and uniforms. And they are trained to subdue and to force compliance, so they often encounter a negative attitude of people towards their work.

Last year, in response to a rising crime rate, the military were deployed in western Kenya to seize illegal firearms from communities involved in cattle raids. But many of the people possessing illegal arms fled across the border, taking their animals and weapons with them – unwilling, according to PPA, to “surrender their livelihood or, as they would argue, their only means of defense.”

On the other hand, Kenyan President Mwai Kibaki recently commended the armed forces for participating in disarmament efforts in the North Rift. Kibaki claimed that 2,400 illegal arms, 5,000 rounds of ammunition and 859 anti-personnel mines were recovered.

Even gun control advocates and human rights groups have found it nearly impossible to stop the trade in illegal arms, which is part of a lucrative global business worth billions. Effective international cooperation will be absolutely necessary to make a difference in Kenya and the rest of Africa. Hopes were raised last year when 139 nations, including major arms producers with the exception of the U.S., agreed to begin work towards a binding instrument on arms trade.

For additional information see the Arms Transfer Project of the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (www.sipri.org).

Kenya: New ruling on death of John Kaiser

Catholic Information Service for Africa reported in early August on the ruling of Nairobi Chief Magistrate Maureen Odera that Fr. John Kaiser whose body was recovered in Naivasha, Kenya seven years ago, was murdered.

Giving her ruling after a four-year public inquest in which 111 witnesses testified, Chief Magistrate Odera said that despite claims that Kaiser was mentally unstable and committed suicide, no tangible evidence was tabled in court to back the claims.

“This court has no hesitation concluding that based on the facts availed before it, Fr. Kaiser met his death as a result of culpable homicide in the hands of a third party,” the magistrate said in a 72-page ruling.

The packed courtroom included a Catholic bishop, several missionaries, Kaiser’s family, friends and human rights activists. Kaiser was a Mill Hill priest who had served Kenya for almost 40 years,

The magistrate, however, said she could not - on the basis of evidence tabled before her in the inquest - point out with certainty who the priest’s killers were. “This court, therefore, recommends that fresh investigations be immediately instituted by the police in order to fill

the blanks . . . in order to determine conclusively the identity of those who killed Fr. Kaiser.”

Reacting to the ruling, Bishop Peter Kairo of Nakuru Diocese, also the chair of the Catholic Justice and Peace Commission (CJPC), said that the church was happy that the truth had finally come out. “But the government should still launch investigations so that the exact killers are known,” he told CISA.

Kaiser’s body was found on the morning of August 24, 2000, at the Morendat junction on the Nakuru-Naivasha highway. His head was partly blown off with a shotgun, which lay nearby.

Kenya’s chief government pathologist and a pathologist from an independent human rights organization present at the autopsy thought Kaiser was killed from a muzzle distance of about three feet. However, FBI experts, who did not examine Kaiser’s body, concluded that Kaiser had committed suicide on the basis of photographs and interviews with a few people.

See Maryknoll *NewsNotes* May/June 2003, May/June 2001, January/February 2001 and September/October 2000.

Tanzania: Refugee camps to close

A recent article by Wildfred Edwin in The East African (7/3/07) reports that Tanzanian President Jakaya Kikwete has announced the closure of all refugee camps in Tanzania by January 1, 2008.

According to the article, Tanzania “hosts one of the two largest refugee populations in all of Africa, rivaling that of Chad. Confined mostly to camps in the northwest of the country, the vast majority have fled instability and violence in neighboring Burundi and Democratic Republic of Congo. [In one day at the height of the 1994 genocide in Rwanda, 250,000 refugees crossed the border in what UNHCR called ‘the largest and fastest refugee exodus in modern times.’]

“It is now feared that repatriation of the 484,642 refugees remaining in the country and the subsequent closure of 10 camps and settlements established in 1993 will also spell the end of business for about 15 relief organizations that have been the implementing partners of UN agencies operating there.” Between 1,500

and 2,000 people have been employed by these organizations.

The negative impact on the local economy of their departure will be tremendous. For example, local households will lose income from the sale of fish and goat meat. Free access to water, electricity and health services may end. Good will contributions from the aid agencies to local schools will disappear.

On the other hand, John Mongella, District Commissioner for Kigoma, told *The EastAfrican* that, “if there is any benefit in the refugees’ presence, it cannot in any way begin to offset the rate at which, for instance, the environment has been damaged and security compromised . . . [H]e said that, on average, a refugee consumes two kilograms of firewood per day, which costs about \$10. ‘If you calculate the consumption of say a minimum of 500,000 refugees for the period they have been here, it’s enormous; they have inflicted damage beyond repair,’ he said.”

Latin America: Will anti-terrorism laws grow?

In what could be the beginning of a regional trend, several Latin American countries have passed or are considering significant “anti-terrorism” laws. Unfortunately, in the same way that Latin American governments once took advantage of the Cold War to label protestors as “communists,” today they use the “war on terror” to jail movement leaders and stifle public protest. Luckily, strong popular reaction, both within the countries as well as internationally, indicates an unsure future for these laws.

Perhaps the most worrisome example is El Salvador, which passed an anti-terrorism law in September 2006 inspired by the U.S. Patriot Act. The first arrests under this law were of street vendors who protested a post-CAFTA law forbidding the sale of pirated CDs. Vicente Ramirez, one of the leaders of the vendors, was arrested under the terrorism law and threatened with a long prison sentence. In the end, the charges were reduced to aggravated damages, but only after he spent five months in prison. Other street vendors have been arrested under the law and are awaiting trial.

More recently, on July 2, dozens of social movements blocked a road to the town of Suchitoto in order to prevent President Antonio Saca from unveiling his “National Decentralization Policy,” which most see as a way to privatize water resources. Fourteen activists were arrested; 13 of them were charged under the new anti-terrorism law. The fact that they face possible sentences of up to 60 years has sparked an international campaign to free the activists and rescind the anti-terrorism law.

In the late 1990s, Paraguay passed a number of changes to its penal code including a system of precautionary or “alternative” measures which have been used against thousands of protesters. The measures effectively depoliticize citizens by conditioning their freedom on their not participating in public or private meetings of their organizations or any protests. Now, the Paraguayan Congress is considering an anti-terrorism law that threatens civil liberties due to its lack of clarity as to what constitutes a terrorist act. Behavior which could be considered terrorism include “dangerous interventions or

obstacles on public roadways,” “noise pollution” and other actions which “intimidate Paraguayan citizens.” The law defines sentences from 10 to 30 years for committing an act of terrorism and from five to 15 years for financing or even being associated with “terrorists.” Especially telling is the fact that the law increases the penalty for land occupations to five years in prison. Traditionally, that penalty has been a simple fine. This is a provision that clearly has nothing to do with terrorism, but is instead aimed at poor people. In a positive sign, the lower house of Congress passed a version of the law which removed the more egregious changes, but the law will still be voted on in the Senate, so it is unclear what the final law will contain.

Finally, Mexico has been negotiating with the U.S. for a multi-million dollar anti-narcotics program that many fear will be similar to Plan Colombia which dramatically increased the firepower and spying capabilities of government forces without addressing the corruption within those forces. The potential of initiating a program like this has sparked concerns from social movements who worry that the added powers of the armed forces will not only be used against criminals, but also against peaceful protestors.

Before his assassination in March 1980, El Salvador’s Archbishop Oscar Romero said, “It frightens me, brothers and sisters, when repressive laws and violent attitudes remove the legitimate ways people have to express themselves.” Vigilance is necessary to guarantee that governments do not use the threat of terrorism to quiet public opinion.

Faith in action:

To help stop the “anti-terrorism” law in El Salvador, contact Jeremy Cornforth at the U.S. State Department’s El Salvador desk (202-647-3505) and ask for the U.S. to call for the terrorism charges to be dropped. Also call your legislator to make sure they are aware of what is going on in El Salvador. Go to www.share-elsalvador.org or www.cispes.org for more information.



Photo of Salvadoran police by Linda Panetta, www.opticalrealities.org

Brazil: Plebiscites used for education, mobilization

During the first week of September, millions of Brazilians will vote in a popular plebiscite (a type of referendum) about the machinations of the Vale do Rio Doce mineral company, one of the largest in the world. The company was privatized in 1997 under questionable conditions (see September/October 2006 NewsNotes). This will be the third such plebiscite organized by a vast coalition of students, unions, churches, landless farmers, and other movements. They use these plebiscites to raise the awareness of Brazilian people about issues important to their lives often overlooked by mainstream media. Similar plebiscites have been used in the past to increase public consciousness about the effect of public debt and trade policies on Brazilians' everyday lives. Although they do not have any legal standing, the plebiscites have been invaluable tools in educating Brazilian society about the causes of their countries' social problems.

The most visible aspect of the plebiscite is during the week of voting, when tens of thousands of volunteers print up ballots and place boxes in heavily trafficked areas like schools, bus and metro stops, churches, shopping centers, etc. for people to vote. Yet the more important part of the plebiscite is the massive popular educational campaign that takes place in the months beforehand. All of the participating organizations train their own members on the essential issues brought up in the questions of the plebiscite and then motivate them to educate their families and neighbors as well. The questions in the plebiscite are specifically designed to allow the movements to instruct people about issues they define as critical.

In 2000, over six million people voted on questions around the problem of public debt payments. They chose this theme because even though the media had dropped the topic of debt from their agenda, the weight of debt payments continued to drain scarce resources away from needed public investments in order to further enrich transnational banks. In that plebiscite, over 96 percent voted for the government to break its accord with the International Monetary Fund and hold a public audit of the debt.

Again in 2002, as the negotiations for the Free Trade Area of the Americas (FTAA) heated up, the coalition organized a plebiscite on the issue of free trade. In January 2002, it was unlikely that even one percent

of the Brazilian population had even heard of the FTAA, much less understood its effects. Yet after months of a popular education campaign led by members of the social movements, by September of that same year, over 10 million people voted on the FTAA with over 98 percent voting for Brazil not to sign on to the agreement. This result helped President Lula da Silva maintain a stronger position in trade negotiations with the U.S. and effectively halted the negotiations altogether.

This year's plebiscite aims to educate on four different issues to help get them into the political agenda. The first question asks if the Vale do Rio Doce company should continue in private hands or be renationalized. The second focuses again on debt payments asking if the government should continue to prioritize those payments over needed social investments. The third question asks if the voter agrees with the fact that ordinary Brazilians pay up to eight times more for energy than large companies. Finally, the last question refers to proposed social security reforms that would take away historical rights for workers.

While the result of the plebiscite, set to be divulged on September 20, will be an important display of public opinion, it does not have any legal standing nor will it require elected officials to act. Only an official plebiscite called for by Congress, which so far has refused to do so, would hold such legal power. But the plebiscite-organizing coalition plans to use the results to increase mobilizations around these issues to influence public policy. Thanks to this plebiscite, President Lula should expect heightened public protests during his second term.



Amazon deforestation slows

According to Brazil's Environmental Ministry, Amazon deforestation decreased by 25 percent from August 2005 to July 2006, compared to the previous 12 months. It reported that 8,774 square miles, almost the size of New Hampshire, were cut down, compared to 11,745 square miles the year before. This is the second consecutive year of reduced deforestation in the Amazon.

Costa Rica: Referendum on CAFTA

On October 7, Costa Ricans will have the opportunity to vote on whether their country should join the Central American Free Trade Agreement (CAFTA). While every country in the European Union had official referendums to decide which countries would join the union, no country has held a popular vote on its trade agreements with the U.S.

Thanks to mass mobilizations, Costa Ricans have won the right to directly make the decision. Social movements were planning to collect the 135,000 signatures (five percent of voters) that the Constitution requires to initiate an official referendum. This would have taken up to nine months, so President Oscar Arias accelerated the process. Congress and the Supreme Electoral Tribunal (TSE) agreed to hold a referendum and set the date. It was a huge victory of the social movements. In the lead up to the referendum, President Arias, who almost lost in the elections because of his stance on CAFTA, has spent public money buying pro-CAFTA TV and radio ads and billboards, while disallowing others to speak out against the agreement.

On June 12, the TSE declared that public universities would no longer be allowed to use public resources to hold debates or write opinions about CAFTA. Most, but not all, studies by Costa Rican universities have recommended against CAFTA. Universities have complained of the unfairness of the TSE decision in that it ignores

the much larger sums of money being spent by the government for a “yes” vote in the referendum. They say they will not follow the tribunal’s decision and will continue to hold debates and publish papers on the issue. Meanwhile, several government officials have been criticized for promising housing credits, scholarships and other benefits in exchange for a “yes” vote in the referendum, and some businesses have also been cited for spending more than they are allowed in the pro-CAFTA campaign more than a month before the actual vote. Mark Langdale, the U.S. ambassador to Costa Rica, has also repeatedly spoken out in favor of CAFTA despite local laws prohibiting foreign officials from pronouncing on internal political issues.

Polls on the issue have shown mixed results with some showing a majority in favor of the agreement with others showing that the population will reject it. With most of the government, business and U.S. influence working outwardly for a “yes” vote, those opposed to the agreement face an uphill battle, but they continue a strong grassroots campaign, as they know that this historic vote will send a strong message to the entire world. If the Costa Rican people reject CAFTA, it will be a significant step in strengthening world opinion in favor of changing trade policies.

Panama: Noriega to be released from U.S. prison

Manuel Antonio Noriega Moreno, the former dictator of Panama from 1983-89, is set to be released from a Miami prison on September 9 after serving 18 years of his 30 year sentence for drug trafficking. A legal battle has begun over where he will go after release, as both Panama and France have requested his extradition.

While in prison in Miami, Noriega was tried in absentia in Panama and France. In Panama, Noriega was sentenced to 60 years in prison for corruption, embezzlement and murder. In France, the courts found him guilty of laundering some \$3 million through the purchase of luxury apartments and sentenced him to 10 years.

According to Noticen, Noriega and his attorneys believe that his chances for leniency are stronger in Panama. They contend that he is considered a prisoner of war under the Geneva Conventions and, as such, should be returned to his home country. Although Panamanian

courts sentenced him to 60 years in prison, the law would only allow a maximum of 20 years, plus the 18 years he has already served in the U.S. could be subtracted. Panamanian law also allows anyone over 70 to request house arrest, a benefit that 72-year old Noriega will likely use. Also, since his sentencing, Panamanian law has been changed and now forbids trials in absentia, which could open the door for Noriega to contest the original sentence.

Public opinion in Panama is divided about Noriega’s fate. A poll commissioned by the newspaper La Prensa showed that 47 percent of respondents want him imprisoned in Panama with 44 percent want him sent to a third country. With a margin of error of three percent, this result is statistically dead even. Regardless of where Noriega ends up, he will face serious charges and will most likely find himself enduring more time behind bars.

U.S. moves toward “weaponizing” space

The following article is written by Tim O’Connell, a former Maryknoll lay missionary who is a member of the peace advisory committee for the Maryknoll Global Concerns office.

On October 4, 1957 the Soviet Union launched Sputnik, the first satellite to orbit the earth. In January 1958, the U.S. responded, launching Explorer I. The space age had begun and the world was changed forever. Today outer space remains a frontier with limitless possibilities. It can be a realm of cooperation that benefits humankind or it could become just another piece of strategic real estate. Unfortunately, as we approach the 50th anniversary of Sputnik, we are moving ever closer to the latter.

The military uses of space have always been apparent. Intercontinental Ballistic Missiles (ICBMs) move through space en route to their destinations. Satellites detect missile launches and guide missiles to their targets. These capabilities have transformed warfare.

Satellite surveillance has had an even greater and at times positive impact. Satellites traverse a country’s territory outside the atmosphere, without violating its airspace. This makes it possible to monitor activities on the ground providing the confidence necessary for arms control agreements. This capacity for “peaceful over-flight” has done much to promote international security.

Along with military uses, there has always been a sense, enshrined in treaties, that space should be used to benefit all people rather than narrow national interests. Billions of people now rely on satellites for communications, financial transactions, weather forecasting, and more. Accordingly, it is important to protect satellites.

Almost all countries want to secure space assets through international agreements. Eight treaties govern the use of outer space including the Outer Space Treaty, which prohibits the deployment of weapons of mass destruction in space. However, none bans deployment of all weapons in space. Each year at the United Nations a resolution is proposed for the Prevention of an Arms Race in Outer Space (PAROS) agreement to accomplish this. PAROS resolutions enjoy wide support including from Russia and China.

However, the U.S. and Israel abstain from voting on the resolution. In 2005 the U.S. voted “no,” indicating its preference to pursue military instead of diplomatic options to guard space assets. The U.S. says there is no reason to negotiate agreements to address space weapons

because none exist. At the same time the U.S. spends billions researching space weapons.

The U.S. further argues that power projection is necessary to protect space from those who seek to damage global commerce, communication and international security. The U.S. wants to serve that function. However, it lacks the trust of the international community and cannot unilaterally appoint itself celestial policeman.

While the security of space assets is a legitimate goal for any country, the U.S. has moved beyond this in their research and development efforts. President Bush withdrew the U.S. from the Anti-Ballistic Missile Treaty that had limited the deployment of national missile defenses. This paved the way for erecting new missile defense sites where interceptors meant to destroy incoming ICBMs are now deployed, even though they do not work. Quitting the ABM treaty moves us closer to weaponizing space. The Bush administration is now free to build a multi-layered missile defense system, which would deploy test interceptors in space by 2012, if Congress authorizes the money.

The U.S. is interested in using outer space for more than defensive systems. The Air Force’s Vision 2020 and President Bush’s revised space policy make it clear that the goal is “full spectrum dominance,” or military superiority everywhere, land, sea, air and space. Military planners and their civilian supporters view outer space as a natural extension of the battlefield and the ultimate high ground. They envision orbital weapons capable of striking targets anywhere on earth within minutes.

The U.S. is not alone in the new space race. Several countries have research programs though their efforts are small compared to those of the U.S. These same countries, including Russia and China, have stated their preference for a PAROS agreement. In January, China tested a ground based anti-satellite weapon, successfully destroying one of its own satellites. The test demonstrates that research and development are far ahead of diplomacy needed to restrain these efforts.

Space assets such as satellites are important to all countries and need to be protected. It would be logical and cost effective to pursue agreements that prevent the deployment of space weapons and prohibit ground-based anti-satellite weapons. Spending billions of dollars to construct a new

category of weapons to “hold at risk” the lives of billions of people would be irresponsible and dangerous. Neither approach guarantees success, but weaponizing

space will never make us safe and would be one giant leap backward for humankind.

Faith in action:

Participate in Keep Space for Peace events Oct. 4-13, 2007, co-sponsored by Women’s International League for Peace and Freedom and the Global Network Against Weapons & Nuclear Power in Space. For more information visit: <http://www.space4peace.org/actions/ksfpw07.htm>.

UN secretary general prioritizes climate change

United Nations Secretary General Ban Ki-Moon has given top priority to climate change. This is due to the urgent need for decisive political action that views this issue as a call for an integrated worldwide response. In order to give this topic the attention it merits, the Secretary General called for a special two-day conference of the General Assembly, in the form of a thematic debate, held July 31-August 1, during which experts from around the world urged immediate and dramatic action, noting the existence of unequivocal scientific evidence justifying grave concern for the totality of life on Earth.

Highlighting the call for action Ban Ki-Moon announced that the conference itself was the first carbon neutral conference to be held by the UN. To this effect Ban explained that the emissions from the air travel to bring exper

ts to the debate and the entire carbon-dioxide emissions of the UN headquarters during the conference were offset by investment in a biomass fuel project in Kenya.

In addition, Ban inspired the assembly with the following words: “I am convinced that this challenge, and what we do about it, will define us, our era and, ultimately, our global legacy. It is time for new thinking.”

Three of the most eminent speakers were Sir Nicholas Stern of Great Britain, John Holdren of the U.S. and Sunita Narain of India.

Stern, who gained world fame one year ago with the publication of the Stern Review on the Economics of Climate Change, claimed that the terms global warming and global climate change do not capture what is happening. He challenged the audience to think in terms of water. Water is the issue that connects all other issues. Delay in implementing adaptive measures before inevitable rising waters, violent storms and severe drought

is dangerous and will become ever more costly as each day passes. As an example of the type of necessary action, Stern pointed to construction projects in London to build bigger sewers, condition the subways and in general fortify the city.

In terms of mitigating the effects of climate change other actions are unquestionably required. It is essential to level off carbon dioxide emissions and reduce them by 50-75 percent by the year 2050. Inaction on the part of governments, civil society and business will choke off economic

growth. Stern pointed to the state of California that is on track for achieving an 80 percent carbon emission reduction. We have the technology to do what is needed, what is required is determination and leadership. Stern also advocated for strong programs to strengthen and protect forests as fundamental to the process of mitigating the present crisis and for the future regeneration of life.

John Holdren placed before the assembly his conviction that business as usual is untenable before the global climatic disruption already engulfing the planet. Immediate attention must be given to reducing carbon emissions and deforestation.

Sunita Narain spoke in behalf of the peoples of the Earth who are not responsible for the present crisis but who are experiencing its most severe consequences. She called for radical cooperation among nations built on fairness and justice in order to provide for adaptation and mitigation that is globally integrated, attending to those in most pressing need first.



UN Secretary General Ban Ki-Moon

UN Millennium Assessment: Vatican responds

The Vatican has announced that it is quickly moving to become the first “carbon neutral state” with its recent plans to switch the Paul VI audience hall to solar power and to plant a forest in Europe. The Holy See says that it will create a forest that will offset all of its carbon dioxide (CO₂) emissions for the year, according to the eco-restoration company Planktos that is working to help the Holy See achieve what it calls a “historic goal.” (Catholic News Agency, July 13.)

“The Holy See’s increasingly creative environmental leadership is both insightful and profound,” said Russ George, CEO of Planktos Corporation and managing director of its Hungarian forest subsidiary, KlimaFa. In recognition of its leadership, the KlimaFa is donating the resources to help the Vatican plant the forest and become the “first carbon neutral sovereign state” in the world.

The Vatican is the first among States not only to assume a radical position but to take a radical step before the convincing findings of scientists and environmental experts relative to global warming and the climate change crisis. Recent UN publications have removed all doubt about human responsibility for alterations in weather patterns, the diminished capacity of Earth to overcome the toxic effects of pollution and the rapid rate of species extinction.

Prior to the reports released in the past year, the UN, in 2005, made public its assessment concerning global eco-systems (Millennium Ecosystem Assessment or MA). While this assessment dealt with four main findings, one finding is worth examining here due to its relevance in relationship to the Vatican announcement cited above.

In finding #2 there is a reference to the degradation of many eco-system services. Precisely, what are eco-system services? A good answer to this question is

found at www.greenfacts.org

Ecosystem services are the benefits obtained by people from ecosystems. These include:

- provisioning services such as food, water, timber, fiber, and genetic resources;
- regulating services such as the regulation of climate, floods, disease, and water quality;
- cultural services such as recreational, aesthetic, and spiritual benefits;
- supporting services such as soil formation, pollination, and nutrient cycling.

Given this information, we can do no less than congratulate the Vatican in arranging to create a forest for a forest does much more than offset carbon emissions. A forest provides all the services listed above, services that have been depleted on Earth and which are absolutely necessary if future generations of people will find the means of living with dignity and promise.

The installation of solar panels in the Vatican Paul VI audience hall is also significant. Both these measures can hardly be underestimated in their witness value. UN Secretary General Ban Ki-Moon has cited the need for world leaders to guide nations into an age of environmental responsibility rooted in bold and immediate action for the renewal of the Earth’s life support systems.

Faith in action:

Contact your parish, diocese or religious community and encourage them to make efforts to follow the Vatican’s environmental leadership. Visit the U.S. Catholic Bishops’ Environmental Justice Program at <http://www.usccb.org/sdwp/ejp/>.

The four main findings of the Millennium Ecosystem Assessment (MA, 2005):

1) Over the past 50 years, humans have changed the structure and functioning of the world’s ecosystems more rapidly and extensively than in any period in human history ... [resulting] in a substantial and largely irreversible loss in the diversity of life on Earth

2) Approximately 60 percent of the ecosystem services evaluated in this assessment (15 out of 24) are being degraded or used unsustainably.

3) [In] four plausible futures scenarios ... , growing pressures on ecosystems during the first half of

this century could result in significant growth in consumption, continued loss of biodiversity, and further degradation of some ecosystem services.

4) ... [T]he five indirect drivers of change: population change (including growth and migration), change in economic activity (including economic growth, disparities in wealth, and trade patterns), socio-political factors (ranging from the presence of conflict to public participation in decision-making), cultural factors, and technological change. ...

From www.greenfacts.org

Resources

- 1) *20/20 Vision: Is the future ours to see:* This new book, written by Maryknoll Affiliate Alice Vandenoever, uses a “hybrid” approach to teach about economic globalization and its effects of the current global economy. The 70-page appendix is a concise, well-researched, historical overview and includes resources for further study and reference. The book’s first 220 pages is a novel, set in 2025, about young people living in a New York City squatter area. They try to understand and cope with the difficult economic situation in which they find themselves, and try to solve the mystery of the economic decisions made in past decades. \$7 plus \$4 for mailing in the U.S. For more information or to order, email: acvan@optonline.net or write to Alice Vandenoever P.O. Box 543 Boonton NJ 07005; phone: 973-257-1789.
- 2) *To Walk Humbly:* Stories and activities for teaching compassion and justice: This new resource from Anne E. Neuberger is for ages 10-13 (grades 5-8). Published by 23rd Publications, this book offers 55 stories from around the world to help young Catholics connect with the social, environmental, and economic problems of children around the globe. It encourages them to accept and think of these children as family. Story topics include school life, child labor, cultural and religious celebrations, hunger, racism, poverty, sharing, generosity and lifestyles. It is also a primer on Catholic social teaching and how its principles can be lived out in daily life in simple and doable ways. 96 pages; \$14.95. For more information, contact 23rd Publications, P.O. Box 6015, New London CT, 06320; www.23rdpublications.com. (Use “search” toolbar; type in “to walk humbly.”)
- 3) *For You Were Once a Stranger: Immigration in the U.S. Through the Lens of Faith:* Recognizing the desire of many in the religious community to become engaged in the ongoing debate on our nation’s current immigration policy, Interfaith Worker Justice (IWJ) has created a comprehensive educational resource for use in congregations of all traditions. Developed in 2007, *For You Were Once a Stranger: Immigration in the U.S. Through the Lens of Faith* is a comprehensive immigration toolkit that helps people of faith reflect on what their religious traditions say about immigrations and engage in meaningful action for creating a just and humane immigration program. IWJ calls upon our religious values in order to educate, organize, and mobilize the religious community in the U.S. on issues and campaigns that will improve wages, benefits, and working conditions for workers, especially low-wage workers. Available on the IWJ website at <http://www.iwj.org/actnow/imm/immigration.html>, or contact IWJ at 1020 W. Bryn Mawr Avenue, 4th Fl., Chicago, IL 60660; phone: (773) 728-8400; fax: (773) 728-8409.
- 4) *CDI’s 2007 Military Almanac:* The Center for Defense Information has just released its latest guide to U.S. military, defense and policy issues, the 2007 Military Almanac. The publication includes detailed information on military forces, personnel, budgets, deployments and security arrangements for the U.S. and other global forces; provides a new, supplemental section of CDI analysis on major international and national security issues; and compiles data from various sources including governments, think tanks, and other open sources, to provide a comprehensive picture of U.S. and global military forces. \$45. To order, call the Center for Defense Information at (202) 332-0600. Please be prepared to provide credit card order information. Also available online at www.amazon.com. Mail payment to: World Security Institute, CDI’s Military Almanac 2007, 1779 Massachusetts Ave. N.W., Suite # 615, Washington, D.C. 20036-2109. Please make any checks payable to World Security Institute.
- 5) *SOAW organizing packet:* This year’s annual vigil to close the School of the Americas/WHINSEC will be held Nov. 16-18 in Columbus GA. The November Organizing Packet is a great resource for you and your community as you spread the word about the SOA/ WHINSEC and as you make plans to attend the vigil. In it, you’ll find information about what to expect at Ft. Benning, logistical information to assist your trip planning, media, legislative, fundraising and outreach tips and resources, and flyers you can reproduce and use in your community. Download the packet at www.soaw.org, or order a hardcopy for \$3 from SOA Watch, P.O. Box 4566, Washington, D.C., 20017.