



On Earth Peace

THE GOVERNMENT'S ROLE IN BUILDING PEACE

by Theo Sittler

The elections are over. A new president and Congress have been elected. President-elect Barack Obama promises change in our domestic policy and a new direction in the way we relate to our foreign neighbors, both near and far.

The challenges are vast. The U.S. is actively engaged in two wars (Iraq and Afghanistan); the financial crisis continues to deepen; millions are caught in a cycle of poverty and insecurity; and the global food crisis persists. If the United States is going to engage with the world in a meaningful, just and peaceful way, our approach must change.

One of the most powerful tools in the United States' possession is the military. The Department of Defense receives more money than any other federally funded program. U.S. policy has relied heavily on the use of force and violence in dealing with many of the world's problems and in many cases this has caused further problems.

The history of the United States is a mixture of war and peacemaking. Throughout this history many have warned about the dangers of relying on military strength for our security. President Lincoln compared military glory to a "serpent's eye that charms to destroy." President Eisenhower warned of the military industrial complex.

And General Smedley Butler who fought in wars in Latin America and World War I famously said, "War is a racket . . . It is possibly the oldest, easily the most profitable, surely the most vicious. It is the only one international in scope. It is the only one in which the profits are reckoned in dollars and the losses in lives . . . It is conducted for the benefit of the very few, at the expense of the very many. Out of war a few people make huge fortunes."

In this issue of the *Washington Memo* writers explore ways in which the U.S. can actively work for peace around the world and at home. Mary Stata analyzes U.S. budget priorities (p. 2). Rachelle Lyndaker Schlabach reflects on the role of good government (p. 4). Carl Stauffer offers a perspective on peacemaking from Africa (p. 6); Gabe Schlabach writes on U.S. gun policy (p. 7) and Tim Shenk writes on the U.S. Institute for Peace (p. 8). Additionally the Advocates' Corner features a sample letter to the president, stories of congregational advocacy and news of upcoming events (p. 10–11).

We hope that you will find this edition of the *Memo* useful and we look forward to hearing your thoughts on how the U.S. can better promote peace and security. ✨

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Sarah Adams/MCC

Development and Diplomacy: A True Defense

In Kabul, Afghanistan, children line up for lunch at a school run by an MCC partner organization.

by Mary Stata

The United States currently maintains a unique position in the world. Given its resources, the U.S. has the potential to play an important role in promoting peace and reducing poverty. However, U.S. foreign policy has often favored unilateral military action over international cooperation. Damaged relationships abroad, policies focused on short term results and a reliance on military intervention rather than diplomatic efforts, have created conflict and suffering.

U.S. military spending nearly doubled under the Bush administration. U.S. military spending accounts for 48 percent of the world's military spending. This is more than the next 46 highest spending countries combined. Forty three percent of the 2007 U.S. federal budget was allocated to the military, while roughly 1 percent was dedicated to non-military international programs and another 12 percent went to efforts to reduce poverty.

President Bush requested \$518.3 billion for the military in the FY 2009 federal budget. Congress approved a 6.2 percent increase in military spending from the previous fiscal year, \$4 billion less than the requested amount.

This number does not include \$70 billion for the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan. If the violence escalates in these countries, as is the case in Afghanistan, that number could triple.

This imbalanced emphasis of budgetary priority on military might has diminished international relationships and has exacerbated insecurity in many parts of the world. Rather than heavily investing in military efforts, the U.S. ought to invest in preventive strategies that repair broken relationships abroad and address root causes which lead to insecurity. Expanding economic aid and development, investing in diplomacy, and strengthening international organizations are three ways the U.S. can promote a sustainable global peace and increase security without resorting to costly and destructive military intervention.

Expand Economic Aid and Development

The primary law that governs U.S. foreign assistance took effect in the 1960s. The development challenges of the 21st century differ greatly from those of the 1960s, but the law remains

unreformed. Instead of fixing a broken system, the cracks of foreign aid are increasingly being filled by the Department of Defense (DOD). This militarization of aid not only highlights the lack of interest in effectively reforming the foreign aid system, but blurs the lines between the role of the military and the role of development agencies.

The U.S. has been instrumental in several development successes including smallpox eradication, river blindness control, and rural electrification efforts in Bangladesh. While these triumphs ought to be motivating forces to continue development efforts, significant challenges remain. Malaria kills an estimated one million people per year. More than 10 million children die before their fifth birthday, from preventable causes. Of the 771 million illiterate adults in the world, 64 percent are women. The current global financial crisis has resulted in rising unemployment and food prices which have already led to civic unrest and threatened security. If the United States truly seeks to promote global peace and security, it ought to start by addressing the root causes of unrest: poverty and inequality.

View from Palestine: How Can the U.S. Support Peace?

Hope for a peace agreement in Israel-Palestine is bleak right now. Yet while peace still seems distant, there are tangible steps the new U.S. administration can take to help provide an atmosphere more conducive to peace.

Perhaps the most significant step the new administration can take is to help Israel bring an end to settlements in the West Bank. There are elements of the Israeli government that recognize the danger that settlements pose to both Palestinians and Israelis. They would like to bring an end to settlements, but often lack the political will or incentive to do so.

The new U.S. administration can be most helpful in this conflict by being willing to encourage, coerce, and cajole Israel towards this end. The Israeli administration that finally carries out this necessary step will pay a high cost, but it will be one worth paying. The U.S. administration will also need to be willing to pay a price domestically, but must find the courage to do so.

Until the traffic of the settlements is removed the peace process will remain in gridlock. Today there are about 530,000 Israeli settlers living in the West Bank, including the "neighborhoods" surrounding Jerusalem (which Israel does not consider actual settlements).

In 1992 the U.S. stood firm in encouraging Israel to cease settlement expansion and was temporarily successful. The current situation in Israel/Palestine is desperate for similar courage and commitment to move the region towards the possibility of peace.

Trey Hulsey is a Peace Development Worker with MCC in Palestine.

Melissa Engler/MCC



Invest in Diplomacy

Secretary of Defense Robert Gates has argued that the U.S. spends too little on diplomacy and aid to other nations. Secretaries of State Colin Powell and Condoleezza Rice both recommended increased funding for the State Department. Budget cuts resulted in decreasing staff, therefore limiting the capacity and effectiveness of the entire department. Currently 700,000 civil servants work for the DOD, while the State Department employs 11,500.

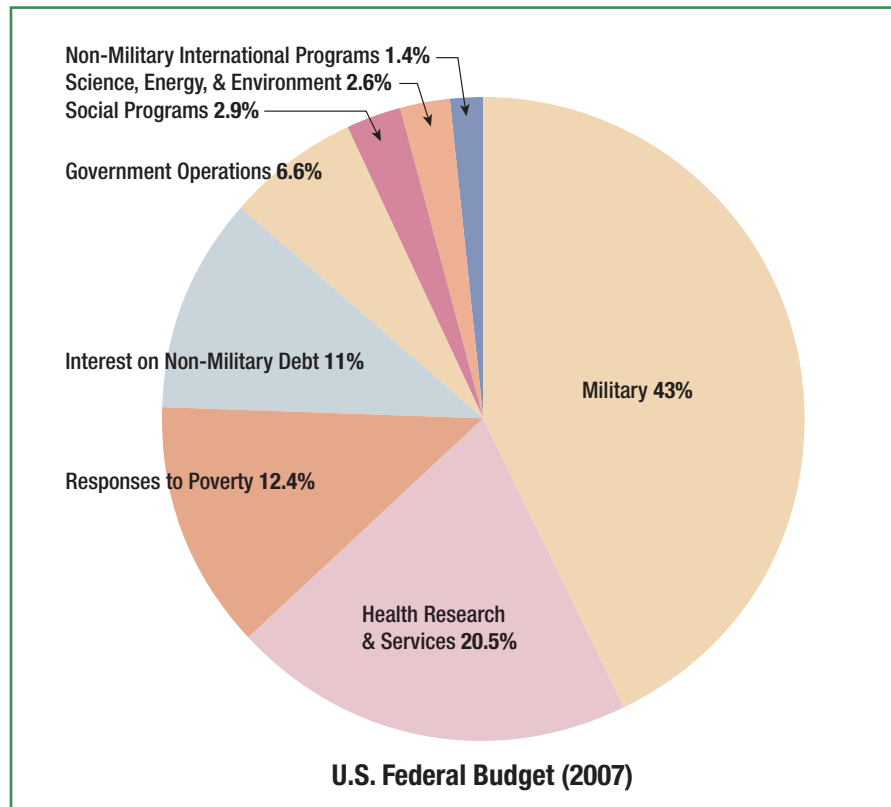
Without proper staffing and resources, the department is simply unable to analyze conflicts, respond to crises, and engage in serious diplomacy. Investing in diplomacy, which aims to prevent conflict, is more economical than the current spending in Iraq and Afghanistan. In an uncertain economic climate, mounting national debt, and massive budget deficits, the United States should pursue sustainable policies that will yield long term results and ultimately save billions. Investing in diplomacy is not only fiscally responsible, but also avoids the tremendous cost of human suffering and loss of life that occurs in violent conflicts.

Strengthen International Organizations

Unilateral and preemptive action has characterized the tone of U.S. foreign policy in recent years. As of June 30, 2008, U.S. arrears to the United Nations stood at \$1.9 billion. The U.S. should support UN post-conflict peace building, since more than half of all states emerging from conflict revert back to violence within five years.

Moreover, UN peacekeeping is a bargain. The total cost of UN peacekeeping operations and administration for 2008 is \$12.2 billion, approximately what the U.S. spends on Iraq each month. When the U.S. Government Accountability Office (GAO) compared costs for a UN peacekeeping mission to a similar U.S. operation, it found that the U.S. initiative would be twice as expensive. Reallocating U.S. military

(continued on page 8)



What Can We Expect?

An Anabaptist Perspective on Good Government

by **Rachelle Lyndaker Schlabach**

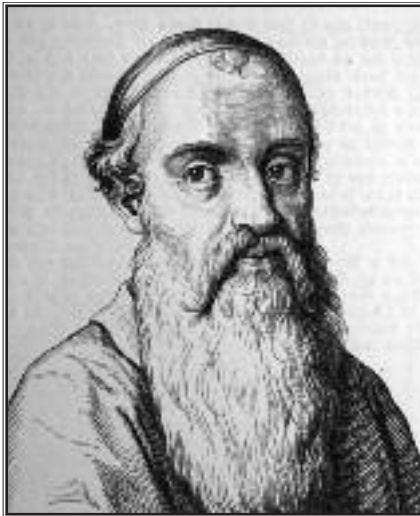
Anabaptists have always had a rather complicated relationship with government. Perhaps the best illustration of this comes from Menno Simons, the namesake of Mennonites. After becoming an Anabaptist, Menno led a life on the run, fleeing the authorities as a result of his religious beliefs. But Menno also took the time to reflect on what makes *good government*.

Throughout our history, Anabaptists have probably been more comfortable playing the role of the Old Testament prophet, decrying the injustices of government. Like all fallen human entities, the U.S. government certainly has its faults and it is appropriate to speak out against these. But it is also important to recognize, as did Menno, that government can play a positive role in society.

A modern-day Mennonite leader, Ricardo Esquivia, speaks from the context of decades-long civil war in Colombia. He is quick to point out what many U.S. Mennonites take for granted: that good government is necessary to bring order and stability to society. This is the view presented by the apostle Paul in Romans 13.

It is important to be clear, of course, that government must not overstep its bounds, nor should it confuse its role with that of the church. Nonetheless, there are some basic expectations that Christians can have of their governments, based on Scripture.

A document released several years ago by the National Association of Evangelicals called, “For the Health of the Nation: An Evangelical Call to



Civic Responsibility,” said that Christians should encourage government to:

- protect religious freedom and liberty of conscience
- nurture family life and protect children
- protect the sanctity of human life and safeguard its nature
- seek justice and compassion for the poor and vulnerable
- protect human rights
- seek peace and work to restrain violence and
- labor to protect God’s creation.

In his book, *Politics Under God*, John Redekop lists 20 expectations for

government. His list is similar to the previous one, but adds expectations such as: A government should see its role as a trust. A good government should practice procedural fairness and fiscal integrity. An inherent function of government is to regulate the exercising of power by other institutions and organizations. A government should implement fair trading laws.

As for Menno, he wrote to the authorities that they are “called of God and ordained to [their] offices to punish the transgressors and protect the good; to judge rightly between a man and his fellows; to do justice to the widows and orphans, to the poor, despised stranger and pilgrim; to protect them against violence and tyranny; to rule cities and countries justly by a good policy and administration not contrary to God’s Word, in peace and quiet, unto the benefit and profit of the common people, to rule well.”

While we might phrase some of this differently today, it is striking how applicable Menno’s words still are nearly 500 years later.

Interestingly, Menno did not die a martyr’s death, as did so many early Anabaptists. Despite having spent much of his adult life in hiding, Menno lived to the age of 65, when he died of natural causes. Perhaps some of the authorities were listening to his words after all. ✱

What do you think?

Have your Sunday School class or small group come up with your own list of what we as Christians can and should expect from our government leaders. We would be glad to receive a copy of your list.

Worship Resources: Epiphany

“They entered the house and saw the child with his mother, Mary, and they bowed down and worshiped him.” (Matthew 2:11, NLT)

Scripture text

Matthew 2:1–23

Sermon ideas: Will the real king please stand up?

The elaborate presidential inauguration ceremonies that take place every four years are about as close as we get in our democracy to crowning a king.

There are lots of kings in the story told in Matthew 2:1–23. The wise ones, or kings, from the East. King Herod (and later his son Archelaus). And, of course, the young child Jesus. Interestingly, King Herod and the kings from the East all recognized Jesus’ identity as king, but they responded very differently.

How will we respond to Jesus today? If we recognize Jesus as king, we will keep the rule of today’s authorities (political and economic leaders) in proper perspective. We will also follow the upside-down reign modeled by Jesus, who led as a servant, rather than by using coercion. In fact, Isaiah names him the Prince of Peace (9:6). In contrast, King Herod misuses his authority and resorts to violence to protect his own interests.

At this time of Epiphany and as we inaugurate a new leader for our country, it is a good time to reaffirm our own identity as “little Christs” (Christians), who seek to be like him in word and in action.

Songs and hymns

We three kings
Arise, your light is come (*Sing the Story* 30)
He came down (*Sing the Journey* 31)
The servant king

Responsive Reading

Leader: Wise ones saw he would be a king, and brought him gold.

Congregation: Grant us wisdom to recognize Jesus’ reign in our world.

Leader: Wise ones saw he would be a priest, and brought him frankincense.

Congregation: Grant us humility as we speak God’s message to the world.

Leader: Wise ones saw he would be a suffering servant, and brought him myrrh.

Congregation: Grant us courage to suffer as he did.

All: Reign among us. Speak through us. Lead us into servanthood. Amen.



Jocanie Peeters/MCC

Prayer of Intercession, based on Matthew 2:13–18

Jesus, we remember how your family fled to Egypt when you were a child.

We pray for children and families everywhere, and for all those who must flee their homeland.

(pause for silent prayer)

Lord, in your mercy, hear our prayer.

We remember the power of King Herod to affect the lives of those around him.

We pray for governing authorities at all levels—local, state and national. *(pause)*

Lord, in your mercy, hear our prayer.

We remember the women of Bethlehem, mourning the deaths of their infant sons.

We pray for those who grieve and for all those who suffer violence. *(pause)*

Lord, in your mercy, hear our prayer. Amen.



John Robinson/MCC

Daring Diplomacy

How the U.S. Can Contribute to Peace in Southern Africa

by Carl Stauffer

“Since wars are born in the minds of men, it is in the minds of men we must build the ramparts of peace.”
(Archibald McLeish)

Unearthing peace amidst the landscape of conflict in Southern Africa is a complex task. The region boasts two of the strongest economies in sub-Saharan Africa (South Africa and Botswana), five countries rebuilding after long liberation/civil wars (Namibia, South Africa, Zimbabwe, Angola and Mozambique), and two of the most destructive violent conflict sites presently active in Africa (Democratic Republic of Congo and Zimbabwe).

In working for peace in Southern Africa, international political actors should be aware of the realities of weakened nation-states, global economic interference, environmental degradation and the consequences of pandemics like HIV/AIDS.

In order to discover sustainable peace in Southern Africa, we advocate for the U.S. government to articulate a clear vision, and to shape a foreign policy that heeds the following “sign-posts”:

Demilitarization. Angola, South Africa and Zimbabwe continue to maintain sizable militaries in a region that presents no political or military threat from their neighboring states. While the “military-industrial complex” is touted to create jobs and encourage robust economies, the costs of militarization are astronomical. The current military spending could be better used to bolster much needed development programs across the region. Comprehensive legislation is also needed to curb the flow of illegal small arms that continue to feed crime conglomerates in the region.

Development. The UN Millennium Development Goals of 2015 should be promoted and supported in the region. Critical policy issues include: 1) fair trade agreements between the region and developed nations, 2) regulations on mineral wealth extraction to limit international exploitation and maximize national ownership, control, and decision-making, 3) debt cancellation and 4) increased funding for alleviation of HIV/AIDS.

Diplomacy. It is also vitally important to engage in capacity-building strategies with the Southern Africa

Development Community (SADC) and its various agencies. Diplomatic pressure could be leveraged:

- to fully implement African Union/SADC “peer-review” panels
- to improve SADC conflict early warning mechanisms
- to include civil society representation at SADC deliberations
- to establish an official portfolio for peace-building (on par with the Security Council) within the SADC system and
- to expand funding for innovative efforts that nurture and promote “citizen-to-citizen” peace initiatives across boundaries.

“Daring diplomacy” counts the costs of investing time, energy and resources into creating peace at all levels of society. Daring diplomacy reaps the benefits of involving a wide spectrum of players to construct durable peace. ✪

Carl Stauffer is Coordinator of the Regional Peace Network in Southern Africa for MCC.

Ending Violence in Our Own Backyard

by Gabe Schlabach

While U.S. public policy can positively (and negatively) impact the fires of conflict burning across the globe, it can also play a role in addressing violence in our own neighborhoods. One of the most pernicious and persistent dangers to public safety and community stability throughout the United States is gun violence, which kills 30,000 each year.

MCC service workers in Washington, D.C. have seen and heard this violence first hand. The MCC house in D.C. is located in the Trinidad neighborhood, which achieved noto-

riety last summer in the national and international press for a spate of gun violence. The most extreme event was a triple homicide, in which 35 semi-automatic shots were fired a mere three blocks from the MCC house.

Government is not responsible for these acts of violence; the men and women who pull the triggers bear that blame. But the availability of weapons to juveniles, the mentally ill and those with criminal records displays a failure of public policy.

Some policy changes, such as strengthening the ban on assault

weapons that have no legitimate civilian purposes, are appropriate at the national level.

Other changes must happen at the state level. Two such reforms could be the implementation of a “one handgun per month” rule and a requirement that police be notified within 24 hours if a gun has been “lost or stolen.”

These two policy changes would be unobtrusive for most legitimate gun owners—few people need to purchase more than 12 handguns per year, and most gun owners want to report if their firearms are stolen—and they could save lives.

Many guns make their way from gun shops to the underground market by having a qualified “straw-man” buyer purchase a large quantity of guns and sell them for a profit to an illegal dealer. If the guns are used in a crime, the original buyer can claim that the guns were “lost or stolen,” avoiding all liability and remaining free to buy and sell new weapons. Enacting these common-sense laws could break this cycle.

And this cycle must be broken. As Luke 6:41–42 notes, we must first remove the log from our own eye before helping our neighbors remove specks from theirs. The United States has little legitimacy as a peacemaker abroad when it does not address violence at home. ✱



One of the most pernicious and persistent dangers to public safety and community stability throughout the United States is gun violence, which kills 30,000 each year.

Wholtone/Wikimedia Commons

A Mennonite perspective on the United States Institute of Peace

by Tim Shenk

Several hundred members of Washington's foreign policy establishment gathered on a hillside overlooking the National Mall on June 5, 2008, to break ground for a new headquarters for the United States Institute of Peace. The \$186 million structure, with a giant, dovelike roof sculpture, is expected to raise the profile of a somewhat obscure national institution that currently resides on the second floor of the National Restaurant Association building.

The United States Institute of Peace is a federally funded institution dedicated to researching, preventing and resolving violent international conflicts. Its origins can be traced to a grassroots movement for a "National Peace Academy" in the 1970s and '80s. A group of Kansan Mennonites supported this movement by persuading their congressional representative, Dan Glickman, to propose a National Peace Academy bill, according to James Juhnke, a retired Bethel College history professor who took part in the effort.

The National Peace Academy was initially conceived as a school to train peacemakers in roughly the same way that war colleges train military officers. However, Congress followed a somewhat different blueprint when it created the United States Institute of Peace in 1984. Rather than enrolling students and conferring degrees, the institute serves as a home for more than 70 specialists who research international conflicts and promote conflict mediation and peace-building. The institute also conducts public education activities such as a National Peace Essay Contest for U.S. high school students. I attended the groundbreaking ceremony as a past winner of the peace essay contest.

The groundbreaking was a bipartisan affair that featured speeches by President Bush, House Speaker Nancy Pelosi, Senate Majority Leader Harry Reid and other dignitaries. Just as President Reagan is reported to have said at the institute's founding, "Peace through strength must be our motto,"



Chris Greenberg/White House Photo

President Bush's comments highlighted the tension between the institute's mission and his administration's hawkish foreign policy. The president credited the institute with promoting free societies and put its work in the context of an ideological struggle against violent extremism, which includes using military force to remove dangerous regimes and "deliver justice to the terrorists."

Juhnke said he continues to have a favorable view of the institute and believes it may move U.S. foreign policy in a more peaceable direction. He also suggested that Mennonites should advocate for the institute to be true to pacifist ideals.

"We ought to be, in whatever ways we can, pushing the U.S. Institute of Peace to consider more anti-military, more radical options," Juhnke said.

Tim Shenk is a news coordinator for Mennonite Central Committee.

Development and Diplomacy: A True Defense (continued from page 3)

spending to investing in the UN is economical and fiscally responsible.

Further, re-energizing U.S. participation and investment in the United Nations and other international organizations would help repair damaged relationships abroad. Building international coalitions would relieve some of the economic burden and negative perceptions the U.S. has placed on itself,

thanks to a foreign policy that favors unilateral action. In an increasingly interconnected and globalized world, the U.S. cannot afford to isolate itself by ignoring the international community.

What does current U.S. military spending say about our priorities? As Christians who are citizens of a powerful country, we have a legitimate voice to advocate for a federal budget

that values human life. Further, our budget ought to reflect a commitment to expanding aid, investing in diplomacy, and participating in the international community. Imagine what the U.S. could accomplish if it prioritized sustainable initiatives that valued development and cooperation, instead of expanding military might. ✪

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Washington Memo Blog

Visit the Washington Memo Blog at www.washingtonmemo.org for the latest information on political happenings in Washington D.C. and around the United States. The blog is a great way to stay up to date with legislative updates, news stories shaping public policy debates, publications from the Washington Office, and staff updates in the office.

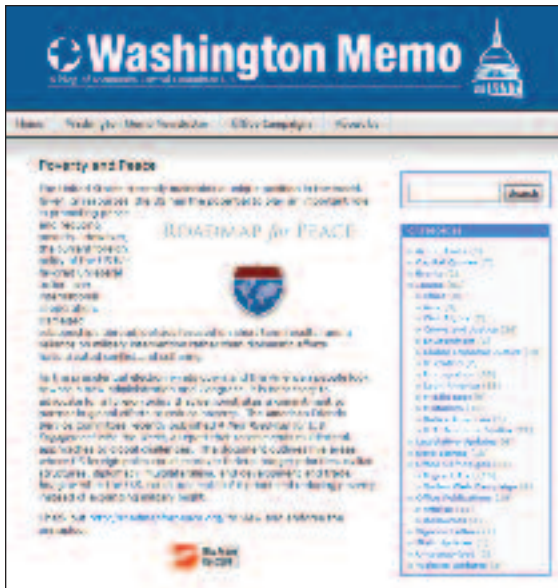
The Washington Memo Blog is updated by our staff frequently, with information like the blog excerpt below:



Poverty and Peace: The American Friends Service Committee recently published “A New Roadmap for U.S. Engagement with

the World,” a report that recommends multilateral approaches to global challenges. The document outlines five areas where U.S. foreign policy could improve: federal budget priorities, civilian structures, diplomacy, multilateralism, and development and trade. Imagine what the U.S. could accomplish if it prioritized reducing poverty instead of expanding military might.

Read the full post online at washingtonmemo.org/2008/10/15/poverty-and-peace/, and check out the full blog at washingtonmemo.org.



mcc.org/us/washington

Website Resource Highlights

The MCC Washington Office website has information on current events at the Washington Office, resources on domestic and international issues, and much more! Some highlights include:



A Compass for Colombia Policy encourages a new approach to Colombia in U.S. foreign policy. The report argues that tough and smart diplomacy, support for human rights defenders, and a firm response to human rights abuses should mark the policies of the newly elected President and Congress.

Available at lawg.org/docs/Compass for Colombia Policy.pdf.



High School Essay Contest: The 2008 MCC Washington Office essay contest has concluded! Look for the winning essays to be announced on our website in late February.



Sudan Web Campaign: Learn. Share. Advocate. The Washington Office's Sudan Web Campaign provides the resources to do all three.

You can read background information about Sudan, download resources for use at church, and find information for contacting government representatives. All at mcc.org/sudanaction.

Julius Schorzman/Wikimedia Commons



Third Way Café: Explore Anabaptist history and viewpoints at thirdway.com. The “Wider View” features articles on current events from an Anabaptist perspective, and MCC

Washington Office staff contribute regularly at thirdway.com/wv.

—Compiled by Ashlinn Sarani, intern in the MCC Washington Office.

Advocates' Corner



The Advocates' Corner highlights current advocacy work by Anabaptist congregations. Please let us know what your congregation is doing, so that we can include it in a future issue.

SAMPLE LETTER ON BUDGET PRIORITIES

Dear Mr. President-elect:

Congratulations on your historic win as the first African-American president of the United States.

I am writing because I desire to see the U.S. play a more peaceful role around the world. I am concerned that our budget priorities do not coincide with creating a more just and peaceful world. The United States stands as the biggest military spender in the world. Currently about 43 percent of our budget goes to the military, while only 1.4 percent is spent on foreign assistance. This imbalance has diminished international relationships and exacerbated insecurity in many parts of the world.

Rather than heavily investing in military efforts, the U.S. ought to invest in preventive strategies that repair broken relationships abroad and address root causes which lead to insecurity. The U.S. should expand economic aid and development, invest in diplomacy, and strengthen international organizations. These three actions would help promote peace and increase security without resorting to costly and destructive military intervention.

Thank you for hearing my views.

Name and address

Please note that letters to President-elect Obama can be sent via email at change.gov/page/s/contact. After January 20, the email address president@whitehouse.gov may be used

A longer version of this letter is available online at mcc.org/us/washington. ✪

Resources in Spanish

Our "Guide to Christian Advocacy" and "Guide to Immigration Reform" have now been translated into Spanish and are available for free. Visit mccstore.org or call 1-888-563-4676.

IMMIGRATION

While immigration reform was largely ignored during the 2008 elections, the United States' outdated immigration laws and policy continue to harm communities and hurt immigrant families (both legal and undocumented).

In October, Roy L. Brubaker of Mifflintown, Pa. had the opportunity to attend a town hall meeting with one of his senators, Arlen Specter (R-Pa.). Mr. Brubaker gave a statement and proposed a question to Sen. Specter:

I would like to speak on behalf of those who won't be present—the Hispanics of our community, many who have no legal documents. Kids who have finished high school are in limbo, without work, waiting anxiously for their future to unfold. Since their public school education was provided by the schools of this community it only seems right that they should have opportunities to continue their lives in some meaningful and useful manner. Many of these young people were brought here as small kids and don't have an available path to gain legal residency, so cannot get jobs or find higher education readily available. I would be willing to hire and train some of these youth in organic vegetable production, but cannot legally hire them.

I commend you for voting in favor of the Comprehensive Immigration Reform Bill, which unfortunately did not pass. However, you voted against the DREAM Act, which would have provided a pathway to citizenship for immigrant high school graduates who were brought here as minors. Why did you vote against this bill, and what changes could be made to earn your support?

Sen. Specter reasserted his support for comprehensive immigration reform (CIR), which the MCC Washington Office has supported. His opposition to the DREAM Act, he noted, was based on an assessment that passing piecemeal immigration bills would delay passage of a comprehensive solution. Sen. Specter stated his optimism that CIR would pass in the next Congress under a new administration.

Letter on Middle East Peace

Visit cmep.org/letter before January 16 to add your name to a letter to President-elect Obama, encouraging him to make Middle East peace a high priority.



Melissa Engler/MCC

WAGING PEACE IN SUDAN

In November, congregations across the United States participated in the *Week of Waging Peace in Sudan*, an effort to raise awareness about the situation in Sudan, to pray for peacemakers and justice seekers in Sudan and to urge the U.S. government to take appropriate action. Churches responded in many ways, including:

- The **Christ Community Mennonite Church (Schaumburg, Ill.)** held a candlelight vigil, along with a presentation on Sudan during their Sunday worship.
- The **Madison Mennonite Church (Madison, Wis.)** hosted a presentation on Sudan during worship.
- The **Manhattan Mennonite Fellowship (New York, N.Y.)** focused an entire Sunday service on the situation in Sudan, and also waged a letter-writing campaign.



Other creative Sudan advocacy activities were children-focused events, a youth letter-writing campaign, and the creation of a miniature refugee camp.

More information about the situation in Sudan, as well as recommendations for individual and congregational action on Sudan, can be found at mcc.org/sudanaction.



Valerie Smith/MCC

Spring Seminar Hunger For Justice: The Global Food Crisis

Please join us for a seminar on the global food crisis March 28–30, 2009 in **Wichita, Kansas**. The seminar will include workshops, speakers and a visit to a local congressional office. For more information, visit mcc.org/us/washington or call 202-544-6564. A similar seminar is planned for California in fall 2009. For those wishing to attend a seminar in Washington, DC, we encourage you to attend Ecumenical Advocacy Days (advocacydays.org) March 16–19.

IMPORTANT ADDRESSES

Senator _____
U.S. Senate
Washington, DC 20510
(202) 224-3121
senate.gov

Representative _____
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515
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house.gov

President George W. Bush
The White House
Washington, DC 20500
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SIGN UP!

Sign up for our e-mail action alert lists by going to mcc.org/us/washington or by contacting gschlabach@mcc.org.

UPCOMING DATES

Late February

Winners of high school essay contest announced

March 16–19

Ecumenical Advocacy Days “Enough for All”
Washington, DC

March 28–30

MCC Washington Office Spring Seminar
Hunger for Justice: The Global Food Crisis
Wichita, Kansas

April 19–20

Days of Prayer and Action for Colombia

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All biblical quotes are from the New Revised Standard Version, unless otherwise noted.



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On Earth Peace

“What does current U.S. military spending say about our priorities? Our budget ought to reflect a commitment to expanding aid, investing in diplomacy, and participating in the international community.

“Imagine what the U.S. could accomplish if it prioritized sustainable initiatives that valued development and cooperation, instead of expanding military might . . .”

Sarah Adams/MCC

Read more inside.