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THE WAR ON TERROR

A Five-Year Retrospective

The (Disastrous) Rise of (Misplaced) Power

BY LORA STEINER

Since Sept. 11, U.S. military spending has risen so much that it now accounts for half of all global expenditures for war preparations.

In his farewell speech in 1961, President Dwight D. Eisenhower warned of the dangers of a permanent military establishment. Noting the recent rise of both a large standing army and an arms industry, he said that its influence—“economic, political, even spiritual”—was being felt everywhere in the United States.

Forty-five years later, Eisenhower’s words still ring true: since Sept. 11, 2001, U.S. military spending has risen so much that it now accounts for half of all global expenditures for war preparations. The Bush administration is considering plans to develop a new generation of nuclear weapons, and U.S. troops and bases are being moved to new locations predicated on U.S. strategic interests. While demanding that some countries (like Iran) eschew a nuclear program, the United States is supporting others (such as India) in the development of their programs.

During a recent hearing, Rep. Henry Hyde (R-IL), who is the chair of the House International Relations Committee, offered this caution: “It is a truism that power breeds arrogance. A far greater danger, however, stems from the self-delusion that is the more certain companion.” Hyde, who is Catholic and has been in Congress since 1975, added, “For individuals and countries alike, power inevitably distorts perceptions

of the world by insulating them in a cocoon that is impervious to what scientists term ‘disconfirming evidence.’”

In this issue, we include a tribute to Delton Franz, the first director of the Washington Office (pg. 2); Angong Acuil explains how military bases have affected the environment (pg. 3); Peter Dula writes about the U.S. bases being built in Iraq (pg. 4); Daryl Byler examines the tension between the United States and Iran (pg. 5); and Lora Steiner writes about relations with Latin America (pg. 6), while Ed Martin analyzes the nuclear deal with India (pg. 7). We’ve also included several graphs which look at U.S. spending trends for war and the military.

How are the priorities of the U.S. government affecting its people? How are they affecting our relationship with the rest of the world? What would be the most appropriate response on the part of the U.S. government?

Eisenhower didn’t believe that the development he observed was inherently bad, but said, “We must not fail to comprehend its grave implications . . . We must guard against the acquisition of unwarranted influence, whether sought or unsought, by the military industrial complex. The potential for the disastrous rise of misplaced power exists and will persist.” ■

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BY J. DARYL BYLER

The best tribute to Delton might be to renew our commitment to advocate for just and compassionate policies that help communities around the world to flourish.

A Tribute to Delton

Delton W. Franz opened the MCC Washington Office in July 1968 and served as its director until December 2003. Delton died on March 6, 2006, after a long struggle with Alzheimer's disease. A memorial service was held on Capitol Hill on June 3.

Long before talk of the United States as empire became popular, Delton was writing about this theme and calling for a less domineering U.S. foreign policy—one rooted in the practice of justice and concern for vulnerable people.

In offering an alternative witness in Washington, Delton was not discouraged by the small size of the Anabaptist community. "The insignificance of our small numbers need not deter us if the authenticity of our servant role in the world represents the ground from which we speak," he wrote in 1978.

Indeed, Delton held deep convictions about the significance of the faith community's voice. "Our call is no less important than that of the ancient prophets in warning Israel's kings of the folly of pursuing war at the expense of justice to the poor and oppressed in their midst," he stated in 1975. "In so doing, we reaffirm our commitment to the King of Kings."

Delton's vision for prophetic witness was contagious. As I have traveled across the church these past dozen years, many persons have told me how their lives have been touched and changed by attending one of the seminars that Delton helped organize in Washington, D.C.

Delton was a founding member of Churches for Middle East Peace and attended the Oslo agreement signing ceremony at the White House in 1993. He worked tirelessly on U.S. policy affecting Latin America and built relationships with many congressional offices.

John Stoner, who was executive secretary of the MCC U.S. Peace Section during part of Delton's tenure, remembers Delton as "prophetic and courageous." Delton "was patient with people, but also wonderfully persistent on the task and the goal," says Stoner. For Delton, writes Stoner, "the first move of political action was always to clarify and deepen the church's understanding" of an issue. Only then could the church give "witness to that understanding to the powers in Washington."

In the early 1990s, Keith Graber Miller, professor of religion at Goshen College, wrote his doctoral dissertation on the work of MCC's Washington Office. "In my 18 months of research, combing through Delton's files and closets, interviewing dozens of people with whom he worked," Graber Miller writes, "I heard repeatedly from (Hill) staffers and colleagues . . . about Delton's gracious, prodding spirit, his authenticity, and his integrity."

Perhaps the best tribute to Delton's life is to renew our commitment to advocate for just and compassionate U.S. policies that help communities around the world to flourish. ■

WASHINGTON MEMO is written by Mennonite Central Committee U.S. Washington Office staff. It interprets national legislation and policy, seeking to reflect biblical concerns for justice and peace as represented in the work and statements of MCC U.S. and Mennonite and Brethren in Christ churches. All biblical quotes are from the New Revised Standard Version, unless otherwise noted.

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Militarism and its Environmental Effects

BY ANGONG ACUIL

Military bases have always provided an economic boost for the area around them, but when those bases are closed, the closure not only has an economic impact but also has an environmental impact. Recovery is difficult—bases frequently leave behind contaminated water, unexploded munitions and asbestos-ridden soil, making cleanup costly and time-consuming.

In 1980, Congress enacted the Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation and Liability Act (CERCLA)—more commonly known as the Superfund program—as a way to curb uncontrolled and abandoned hazardous waste.

The Superfund has a National Priority List (NPL), which lists the most contaminated areas in the United States and its territories. Since 1988, more than 34 closed bases have been added to the list, and not one has been completely cleaned up.

However, the problem isn't just domestic: in the 1980s, the General Accounting Office found the U.S. military to be one of the worst violators of environmental laws. The Filipino American Coalition for Environmental Solidarity (FACES) says that the U.S. military "produces environmental contamination in every major domestic and foreign base."

In the last two decades, legislation has been passed and programs initiated to minimize the damage from military bases. In 1996, the Pentagon even issued a directive which vowed to "display environmental security leadership within [Department of Defense] activities worldwide."

But in December 2004, officials from the Department of Defense (DOD) sought waivers on environmental rules. It wasn't the first time. (According to *Greenwatch Today*, in the last several years Congress has granted exemptions to compliance with laws such as the Endangered Species Act, the Marine Mammal Protection Act and the Migratory Bird Treaty Act.) Officials argued that the restrictions infringed on national security. They requested expansion of military exemptions to include several environmental and public health regulations. The War on Terror has been used as an excuse to get around environmental regulations, a trend disturbing to many who hoped that the DOD would take more responsibility in cleaning up after itself.

After decades of working with the most deadly weaponry and toxic substances, the DOD has been left with vast tracts of lands that are uninhabitable. Because of the cost and time required for environmental cleanup, the DOD seems reluctant to play its part. ■

The War on Terror has been used as an excuse to get around environmental regulations, a trend disturbing to many who hoped that the DOD would take more responsibility.

CAPITAL QUOTES

"Good fences make good neighbors. Fences don't make bad neighbors."

—Sen. Jeff Sessions (R-Ala.), on the proposed border wall

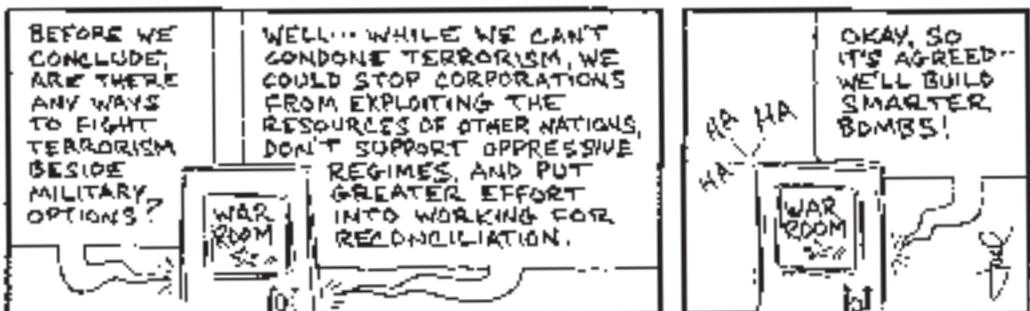
"I think the youth of Iran will do that job. You don't need the Marines in there."

—Hamid R. Moghadam, advocating for internal change in Iran.
New York Times, May 9, 2006

"I'd put my money on the sun and solar energy. What a source of power! I hope we don't have to wait 'til oil and coal run out before we tackle that."

—Thomas Edison (1847–1931)

Pontius' Puddle



Permanent Bases in Iraq

BY PETER DULA

Peter Dula has spent the past two years working with MCC in Iraq.

The United States has kept military bases in every country in which it has fought a war since World War II, with the exception of Vietnam.

An article in *The Washington Post* a few months ago titled, “Biggest Base in Iraq Has Small Town Feel,” described Balad Air Base, which houses 20,000 American troops 40 miles north of Baghdad. At 27,500 flights a month, it is the busiest airport in the world, busier than London Heathrow or Chicago O’Hare. Of the 20,000 troops there, fewer than a thousand ever actually leave the base and have contact with Iraqis. The base has a Pizza Hut, Subway, Burger King and Popeyes. It also has a miniature golf course. Balad still needs a lot of work, however; of the \$81 billion war appropriations bill recently passed by Congress, \$231 million was for new construction at Balad.

Balad Air Base is one of the biggest American bases in Iraq. Camp Victory (the Baghdad International Airport and the surrounding area) and the Green Zone (the area around the Saddam’s presidential palace and the U.S. Embassy) are among the others. All together, the United States has spent at least \$4.5 billion on bases.

The administration doesn’t like to call these bases “permanent.” The preferred word is “enduring.” That is, bases that will endure until they complete the job of installing a functioning democratic regime, beating the insurgency and training a competent Iraqi army. But as the achievement of those goals drags on with no end in sight, people are starting to think “enduring” is just another Bush administration word for permanent. After all, the United States has kept military bases in every country in which it has fought a war since World War II, with the exception of Vietnam.

The suspicion is warranted. In April 2003, *The New York Times* reported that the United States planned four permanent bases in Iraq. In March 2006, General Abizaid, commander of U.S. troops in Iraq, told a House committee that the United States could end up with permanent bases in Iraq in order to protect our oil interests and to “help the moderates prevail” over extremists in the region.

On the other hand, President Bush himself has generally said that the future of American troops in Iraq will be up to future presidents and leaders of Iraq. Donald Rumsfeld said last Christmas that “at the moment there are no plans for permanent bases” in Iraq. (A carefully worded denial: there were never any “plans” for bases in Korea, but U.S. troops have been there for 55 years now.)

Because of these mixed signals, Rep. Barbara Lee (D-CA) introduced an amendment to a recent emergency spending bill for the war, stipulating that no funds in the bill could be used to enter into military base agreements with Iraq that would lead to permanent U.S. bases. The House approved the amendment in March. The Senate later approved a similar amendment. Yet these amendments have no real power over presidential policy.

Why is this important? After all, the United States has hundreds of bases around the world. What’s the big deal about a few more? First, the presence of U.S. troops on Saudi soil has been a major cause of Islamic (especially Saudi fundamentalist, i.e. Al Qaeda) resentment of the United States. It has been named as one reason for Sept. 11. Second, promising “no permanent bases” sends a clear and necessary signal to the Iraqi people that perhaps the invasion was not simply about American control of Iraqi oil reserves. It also sends a message to the people of the region that the United States does not intend to use Iraq as a launching pad for future attempts at regional transformation. ■

U.S.-Iran Relations: Reproach or Rapprochement?

BY J. DARYL BYLER

If you ask most Americans about the history of strained U.S.-Iran relations, they would probably talk about 1979—the year Iranian students took 52 Americans hostage at the U.S. embassy in Tehran and held them for 444 days.

From Iranians, you would likely hear a different date and story. In 1953, the CIA joined the British government to support a coup that overthrew Iran's democratically elected leader, Mohammed Mossadeq. The stated U.S. rationale was to contain communism and Soviet influence in Iran. But the fact that Iran holds the world's second largest oil reserves can hardly be dismissed as a contributing factor. Indeed, U.S. firms emerged from the coup with 40 percent of Iran's oil output.

The United States cut diplomatic ties with Iran in 1979 and has since imposed a variety of economic sanctions. In 2002, U.S. President George W. Bush labeled Iran as part of an "axis of evil."

In recent months, U.S.-Iranian tensions have escalated to dangerous levels. Iran's new president, Mahmoud Ahmadinejad, has made inflammatory anti-Israel remarks and declared that Iran will enrich uranium for its nuclear program.

U.S. leaders fear that Iran is trying to build nuclear weapons, rather than produce nuclear energy for peaceful purposes as Iran insists. Some U.S. policymakers are calling for U.S. military strikes—including the use of nuclear weapons—against Iran's suspected nuclear sites.

The stakes could not be higher. The United States and Iran must sit down for face-to-face talks.

There are some promising signs that this may happen. President Ahmadinejad recently sent a letter to U.S. President George W. Bush—the first official communication in a quarter of a century. And several high-level Iranian officials have called for direct talks.

While President Bush has not responded directly to Ahmadinejad's letter, U.S. Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice announced in late May that the United States will talk directly if Iran first suspends its uranium enrichment program.

U.S. leaders will do well to engage in direct talks with Iran with as few conditions as possible. There is ample room for U.S. humility given its own gigantic nuclear program and its checkered past with regard to Iran. In a piece in the Summer 2002 issue of *World Policy Journal*, Iranian scholar Mostafa T. Zahrani, writes: "It is a reasonable argument that but for the coup [in 1953] Iran now would be a mature democracy."

Second, U.S. leaders will do well to focus on incentives rather than threats. Hadi Semanti, visiting public policy scholar at the Woodrow Wilson International Center, says Iranians are looking for a broad change in U.S. policy: "They want a new paradigm of rapprochement."

Third, U.S. leaders will do well to support a regional approach to weapons of mass destruction. If, in fact, Iran intends to build nuclear weapons, it is not likely to be dissuaded unless Israel—believed to have some 300 nuclear weapons—also fore-swears nuclear weapons. The *Forward* reports that, on a recent visit to Israel, Mohamed El Baradei, head of the International Atomic Energy Agency, told Israeli officials: "We need to discuss this and the sooner the better. We shall either succeed or fail together. This is a matter of survival."

Finally, having already thwarted a fledgling democratic movement in Iran 50 years ago, the United States will do well not to repeat its mistake. Today, Iran's large and youthful population overwhelmingly supports democratic reforms. Shirin Ebadi, 2003 winner of the Nobel Peace Prize, says that U.S. attacks would undermine the human rights and civil society movement in Iran.

Reproach or rapprochement? Mutual respect or military might? That's the choice facing U.S. and Iranian leaders today. ■

U.S. leaders should engage in direct talks with Iran with as few conditions as possible.

Militarism and Latin America

BY LORA STEINER

In the early stages of his tenure as the United States' forty-third president, George W. Bush once suggested that the United States' most important ally was Mexico, and placed high priority on relations with Latin America. In turn, at the time, Mexican president Vicente Fox was looking forward to a new immigration agreement between the two countries.

Then came the terrorist attacks on Sept. 11, 2001, and in the five years since, relations with Latin America have soured and Washington's popularity among Latin Americans has plummeted.

Since War on Terror was launched, much of the United States' foreign policy has turned towards counter-terrorism efforts. Prior to 2001, for example, aid to Colombia was sent as a part of the war on drugs; after the War on Terror began, the talk turned to "narco-terrorism" and cooperation in U.S. efforts to strengthen its security.

The United States has a long history of intervention in Latin America. In 1846, it went to war with Mexico and gained roughly a third of Mexico's territory. In the twentieth century alone, Washington

overthrew or undermined more than 40 Latin American governments.

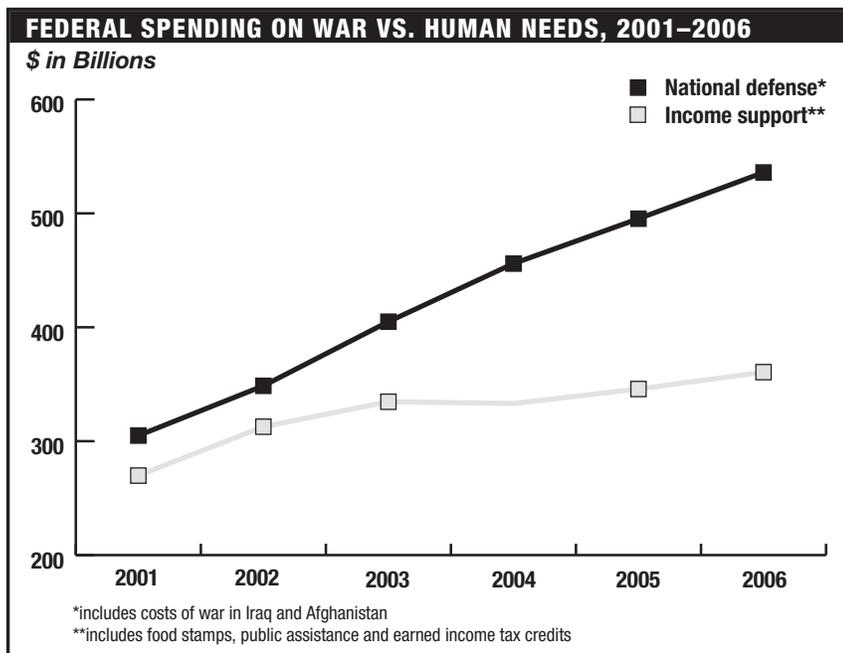
Many Latin Americans remember the history of U.S. involvement in their region and are concerned when the U.S. government begins conducting military exercises or signing agreements to use bases in the region. When the United States signed such an agreement with the government of Paraguay exactly one year ago, it created much speculation and controversy: what were the intentions of the U.S. government? Were there plans for a permanent base?

The U.S. government has also quietly begun pushing an agreement known as Article 98, which would exempt American citizens from being tried in the International Criminal Court (ICC). In accordance with a law passed by Congress in 2002, the United States has begun to deny funding to any country that refuses to sign and ratify Article 98. While not a significant chunk of money, the act has created some resentment; the citizens of many of the countries involved haven't been able to prosecute war crimes in their own countries, so they hold the ICC in higher regard than many Americans.

In a continent with the widest gap between rich and poor, Washington's push for liberal economic policies is often seen as a threat to the region's food security and even its sovereignty. Partly as a result, Latin American countries are voting in populist governments and leaders they believe will speak with them and for them, and that has often meant speaking out against what are viewed as strong-arm policies by the United States.

Former Nicaraguan president Violeta Chamorro once told a journalist that Washington politicians could always find money for wars in Latin America, but rarely for peace. Just a small slice of what Congress has allocated for the War on Terror could build a new world for average Latin Americans, and go a long way towards fostering better relations with the entire region. ■

The United States has a long history of intervention in Latin America, having overthrown or undermined more than 40 Latin American governments in the twentieth century alone.



Source: the Office of Management and Budget

India's Bid for Nuclear Energy

In March 2006, when President Bush made his first visit to India, he pleased his hosts by signing an agreement allowing the United States to export nuclear technology to India. Because of existing U.S. law forbidding such exports, this agreement will need congressional approval.

The United States Atomic Energy Act of 1954 prohibits the export of nuclear technologies to countries that have not signed the nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT). This act has been the cornerstone of U.S. efforts to prevent the spread of nuclear weapons. The United States is one of 188 nations that have endorsed the NPT, which bans the export of nuclear technology to countries that do not agree to international inspections of their nuclear program.

India is one of the few countries, including Pakistan and Israel, that have not signed the NPT, and it does not allow international inspections of its nuclear program. In 1974, India exploded a nuclear weapon using nuclear material provided by the United States for civilian purposes. India sees itself as a rapidly modernizing democracy with the right to be a member of the nuclear weapons club.

On the other hand, Iran is a signatory of the NPT, and until recently, has allowed strict inspections of its nuclear program. It has not developed nuclear weapons and maintains that it has no intention of developing nuclear weapons and only wants nuclear technology to produce electricity. The United States is trying to stop Iran's nuclear program, holding that it is a cover for developing nuclear weapons. Its agreement to supply India with nuclear technology, despite it not having signed the NPT and having developed nuclear weapons, weakens the ability of the United States to gain support for its position on Iran. Many countries see the United States' policy on India and Iran as a double standard.

While the Bush administration asserts that the agreement will not contribute to a nuclear arms race in Asia, critics argue that the agreement will enable India to produce nearly 50 nuclear weapons per year, while at present, it can produce six to ten. Neither Pakistan nor China, both of which have

produced nuclear weapons, is likely to sit back and allow India to increase its nuclear arsenal without doing the same. Clearly, it would seem, the agreement with India weakens international nonproliferation efforts. However, some experts argue that this agreement will bring India part way under nuclear regulations and limit somewhat the expansion of nuclear weaponry.

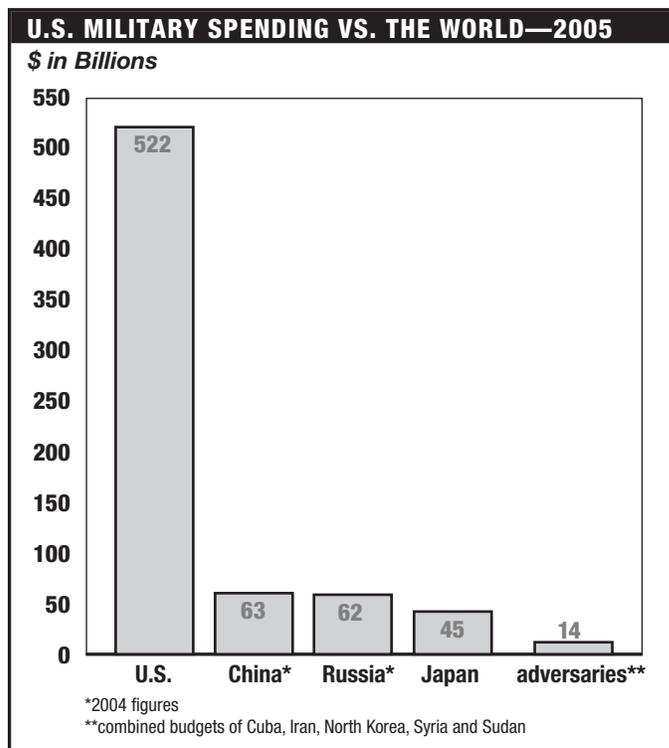
One of the reasons the Bush administration wants to make nuclear technology available to India is that it wants it to produce more of its electricity through nuclear power plants. As India, with a population of more than one billion, grows economically, its demand for energy will increase greatly. The mounting competition for the world's limited energy resources, particularly fossil fuels, is a concern of the United States. Promoting more energy conservation and the development of other sources of energy would be a safer way of addressing the energy problem than exporting nuclear technology and the promotion of nuclear power plants. It would also give more credence to the United States' push for other countries to adopt other energy sources, including nuclear. ■

IN OTHER'S WORDS

BY ED MARTIN

Ed Martin is the director of MCC's Central and Southern Asia program department.

Promoting more energy conservation and the development of other sources of energy would be a safer way of addressing the energy problem than exporting nuclear technology.



Source: International Institute for Strategic Studies, Department of Defense



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SOUND THE TRUMPET!

ISSUE	SUMMARY	ADVOCACY NEEDED
U.S.-IRAN RELATIONS	Rep. Peter DeFazio (D-OR) has introduced a non-binding resolution, H.Con.Res. 391, which expresses “the sense of Congress that the President should not initiate military action against Iran with respect to its nuclear program without first obtaining authorization from Congress.” (For a list of co-sponsors, go to http://thomas.loc.gov/ and search “H.Con.Res. 391.) The bill does not call for direct talks with Iran.	Urge President Bush to engage in direct talks with the Iranian government, without conditions. Urge your representative to support H..Con. Res. 391, but to also go a step further in calling for direct talks with Iran.
DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF CONGO (DRC)	A bipartisan group of U.S. senators have introduced S.2125, a bill to promote relief, security and democracy in the Democratic Republic of Congo. The bill, sponsored by Senators Barack Obama (D-IL), Sam Brownback(R-KS), Mike DeWine(R-OH) and Richard Durbin (D-IL), would establish core principles of U.S. policy to save lives and rebuild this war-torn country.	Urge your senators to support S.2125. Ask them to consider co-sponsoring the bill, if they are not already doing so.