

July-August 2007

## Failures and Fallacies of United States Farm and Foreign Policy

**Farm Policy** 1

**Staff News** 2

**Congo and Water** 3

**Peacebuilding** 4

**Mugabe as Hero?** 5

**Intern Musings** 6

**Take Action!** 7

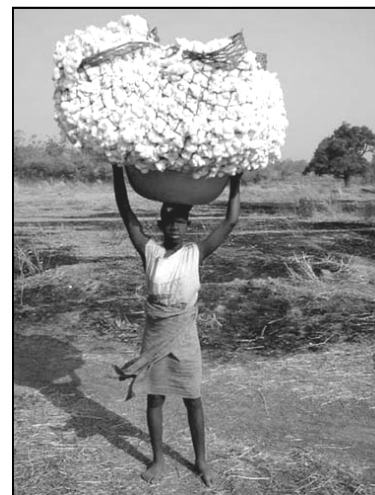
By Jeff Weaver

Agricultural policy tends to be greeted with yawns, but the 2007 United States Farm Bill should generate frowns for citizens of every nation. This bill, although esoteric, allocates tens of billions of dollars annually to U.S. farm subsidies. These payments hurt farmers in much of Africa and the rest of the world by artificially deflating prices for agricultural goods to levels at which these farmers cannot keep producing. The farm bill also continues subsidies declared illegal by the WTO and squanders American tax dollars that could well go to more just ends. Yet most importantly, as a microcosm of United States policymaking, the bill's crafting demonstrates a complete disregard for relations with other nations and a self interest unsustainable in a globalized world. This worrying trend and the other faults of the bill merit further exploration.

The U.S. House of Representatives recently confirmed reports of Congress' lack of vision by passing the 2007 Farm Bill. During their consideration of the legislation, the House devoted little thought to the effects of subsidies abroad. Even though the U.S. should begin revitalizing the Doha Trade Round by dismantling cotton subsidies ruled illegal by the World Trade Organization, the only representative mentioning this issue was ignored! The U.S. cannot afford further growth in anti-American sentiment, and both the reputation of the U.S. and its aid budget would benefit from better food security abroad. However, not once were the harmful effects of farm subsidies abroad mentioned! An amendment to more rapidly phase out subsidies went nowhere, and as a whole, the Representatives simply pandered to their domestic constituents.

This will prove foolhardy. The United States demonstrates a blatant disrespect for the international system by ignoring its laws. This arrogance could contribute to a decline in

*(Continued on page 2)*



Cotton harvest in Burkina Faso

### Save the Date!

April 18-21, 2008  
"Celebrating Africa:  
Analysis to Action"  
AFJN's 25th  
anniversary with  
special guests  
Jeffrey Sachs and  
Ishmael Beah

(Continued from page 1)

the multilateralism needed to resolve issues larger than Doha. Some, such as global warming, have potentially catastrophic ramifications for the U.S. Furthermore, the waste of American tax dollars will serve to drive the nation deeper into debt, perhaps precipitating a cut in health care or education spending.

It will also hurt Africa and nearly all developing countries. The death of the Doha Round in this fashion will force African countries, which possess little leverage at a negotiating table, into bilateral preferential trade agreements from which they will see little benefit. Although some find Doha unpalatable, it will likely improve from its current state, and its failure will have harmful effects in Africa.

The continuation of farm subsidies will greatly disadvantage African farmers, trapping them in subsistence agriculture without any safety net or choice of career. A recent Oxfam report claims that a repeal of the already illegal U.S. cotton subsidies would result in 1 million fewer West African children going to bed hungry and 2 million more receiving an education. The countless documentations of the injurious impact of



Leave farming in the hands of Africans

subsidies invoke the prophet Ezekiel: "Woe to the Shepherds of Israel who only take care of themselves...Is it not enough for you to keep the best of the pastures for yourselves? Must you also trample down the rest?" (Ezekiel 34:2, 18). The United States enjoys some of the world's best arable land and agricultural technology while much of Africa lacks even basic irrigation. In addition, subsidies only seem to take care of wealthy Americans, with 84% of payments funding the richest fifth of farmers. The United States should leave behind these limited farm policies and pursue a reduction in its subsidies.

For the betterment of all peoples, including their own, governments must embrace a wider vision of their policies. The "beggar thy neighbor" policies that helped drive the entire world into the Great Depression are just one of many historical examples of the wrong-headedness of self-interested policy-making. The American Congress is currently failing in this responsibility, and a possible Bush veto of the farm bill should not detract from this reality. Yet, even if the bill succeeds, let us take the words of Ezekiel to heart and continue to pursue the common good in the future.

## AFJN Bids Farewell to Phil Reed and Welcomes Beth Tuckey

I invite all the AFJN membership and friends of AFJN to join me in offering a sincere and heartfelt thanks to Phil Reed for his service to AFJN this year. As many of you know, AFJN has been experiencing more transition over the past few years than normal (we are always in transition, don't you know). In July 2006, Phil was able to jump in as interim director when Bill Dyer moved on to community leadership and before I was able to get to DC to begin this work. Phil graciously stayed on beyond those first few weeks as I settled in, completing what has become a whole year of faithful service to AFJN. His attention to the everyday administration of our office, development of the web site, guidance of our interns, analysis and research on a variety of issues and support to me and to the Board have been greatly appreciated. Phil will move on at the end of August to other involvements as Jacques Bahati moves in. Please join me in wishing Phil every blessing and good thing as he opens a new chapter in his life: We follow you, Phil, with our prayers and best wishes. Keep in touch!

-Rocco Puopolo, s.x.

Beth Tuckey came to AFJN for the first time in the summer of 2006 as an intern and has returned to continue the work of peace and justice transformation in Africa. A recent graduate of Kenyon College in Ohio, Beth completed a B.A. degree in International Studies with a focus on politics and anthropology in Africa. Though her first visit to the continent of Africa was brief (ten days on the plains of Tanzania), Beth followed her intrigue and spent three and a half months studying in Uganda with the School for International Training. At AFJN, Beth will be taking up many of Phil Reed's tasks when he leaves at the end of August. She will also be attending meetings and hearings pertaining to the focus campaigns of AFJN – Northern Uganda, US militarization of Africa policy, and food security, among others. Beth is excited to be back in Washington and is looking forward to making a substantial and robust impact at AFJN.

*Beth Tuckey joined AFJN on July 9. Phil Reed will be leaving on August 24.*

## Congo's Struggle for Water

By Anne Vickers

*When the poor and needy seek water, I will open rivers on the bare heights, and fountains in the midst of the valleys; I will make the wilderness a pool of water, and the dry land springs of water. Isaiah 41:17-18*

In the previous newsletter, Jacques Bahati wrote "the foreign multinationals [have] been looting Congolese natural resources, leaving nothing to the people and nurturing war by arming rebel factions." During my time at AFJN, I have been researching one such example: the mining industry in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) and its effects on the DRC's water supply.

In a presentation to the Consultation on the Extractive Sector, November 2005, Amnesty International states:

"The DRC conflict has killed three million people and more than 2.5 million have been driven from their homes in mineral-rich lands. Combatants have killed or tortured independent miners and traders for their minerals or money. Several companies in eastern DRC have provided resources in the form of taxation, or provide services, or otherwise contribute to the warring factions' revenues, otherwise they cannot operate in the area. Consistent testimonies show that in some instances such contributions are the major, if not the sole, source of finance with which armed groups acquire weapons which are then used to commit human rights abuses against civilians. The link between companies and the war is clear, and the companies are indirectly contributing to the cycle of violence." (Amnesty International, 2005)

Furthermore, corrupt contracts have been signed that give away large portions of DRC's mineral wealth and benefit only the companies and high ranking officials who made the deals. On April 20, 2007, Martin Kabwelulu, the Minister of Mines, announced the creation of an inter-ministerial commission to "revisit" these contracts between private companies and the state. Meanwhile, the mining industry continues to exploit the Congolese people.

Of all the extractive industries, mining is where water issues are most acute. Mining in developing countries like the DRC has increased due to the growing global economy's need for raw materials such as gold, copper, and coltan (used in our cell phones and computer chips). Hundreds of thousands of gallons of water are pumped out of

local rivers, taking away much needed water resources. The remaining pit is then used for chemically-processed waste, raising the acid levels and creating a toxic environment. This pollution affects the farming economies where these mining projects are located, poor areas that need the water not only for drinking, but also for irrigation. The contaminated water also contributes to a high level of waterborne diseases, such as cholera.

Local people are not paid for the use of their water, and some families living near mining projects have even been displaced. As there is little government capacity to regulate the massive mining industries, nothing has been done to remedy the situation. What is more, the World Bank has played a significant role in supporting mining projects. The economic benefits (primarily to the government) are not worth the negative impacts on the environment and local communities. In the northeastern area of Mongbwalu, 80% of the population depends on mining for their source of income, but the majority of the wealth is smuggled out of the country.

The Congo River is 2,900 miles long. Its drainage basin covers 1,335,000 square miles, which includes almost the entire country and six other bordering African nations, yet only 22% of Congolese have access to safe drinking water. According to Jean-Roger Kaseki, "It is estimated that 1,200 people die each day from conflict-related disease, hunger, and violence in the DRC. Conflict has been fueled by the struggle for mineral wealth. Congo's mineral resources could be used to fund development. Instead, the government allows foreign mining companies to exploit the gold while giving relatively little back to the country or to local communities."

"The economic benefits [of mining] are not worth the negative impacts on the environment and local communities."

There are ways you can be active in promoting change in the DRC and in other developing countries facing the same water issues and exploitation by the mining industry. Join AFJN in asking that more appropriations be added to

(Continued on page 6)

## Reconsidering Methods of Peacebuilding in Africa

By Beth Tuckey

Within the field of conflict resolution and peacebuilding, there exists a question of how present the international community ought to be in negotiations. In a recent analysis from the Council on Foreign Relations, author Stephanie Hanson summarizes a number of approaches currently being taken on the African continent and implies that most “homegrown” peace agreements are unsuccessful. She suggests that African countries are “hunting for an elusive peace” and that without international initiatives, it is unlikely that conflicts will be resolved. It may be true that recent attempts at peace negotiations have been less successful in the absence of international actors, but international efforts themselves are not without their flaws. Perhaps we need to begin to consider a new methodology when examining peace deals in Africa.



Northern Ugandan children still caught between war and peace

In many ways, it is correct to say that international brokers enhance the effectiveness of conflict resolution. But it is also important that we examine those resolutions and the measures for implementation taken by either national governments or international actors. Too often, external forces assist in the brokering of reconciliation only to find that the Western-endorsed model does not enforce a lasting peace.

Stephanie Hanson endorses the work of external peace negotiators and says that “successful international initiatives brought peace to Sierra Leone and Southern Sudan.” While it is true that Sierra Leone has largely overcome the conflict of the late nineties, it is hard to say the same for Southern Sudan. In July, the International Crisis Group

released a report analyzing the fragility of Sudan’s Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA) and the necessity of greater UN vigilance to ensure the implementation of the accord. David Mozersky, Crisis Group’s Horn of Africa Project Director, alleges that “if the CPA fails – which is increasingly likely – Sudan can be expected to return to full-scale war, with devastating consequences for the entire region.” It becomes clear, then, that something is lacking from the CPA; that all sides do not feel satisfied or that suitable methods of justice and post-conflict transformation do not exist. If the international community is to be involved as a mediator, we must examine our capabilities in the field as it relates to the conflict.

Sudan is not alone in its struggle to find peace after external moderation. Even Rwanda, whose Gacaca Trials were largely a product of Western encouragement and were designed to replicate the Truth and Reconciliation Commission in South Africa, is experiencing difficulty in finding a stronger sense of restorative justice.

Thus, it begs a return to the tireless question of international involvement in post-conflict situations of national or local scale. How much can Western institutions and governments influence peace deals in Africa? When do they have a right to breach a nation’s sovereign status? Perhaps most importantly, what is the best option when issues of human rights and humanitarian emergencies are taken into account?

Of course, each situation requires a separate analysis, but the northern Uganda peace talks provide a good example of the power of Western actors in halting conflict and saving lives. Though the Juba peace process is undeniably fragile, the simple dispatch of an American diplomat could incite the two sides to sign an agreement. This requires little capital investment, only the presence of the United States. But what is important in this situation is that the Government of Uganda (GoU) and the Lord’s Resistance Army (LRA) come to terms and establish a plan for reconciliation independent of the desires of international actors. They must be confident in their own capacity to procure peace or the endorsement of external governments will have little lasting impact. The recent signing of a reconciliation and accountability document in Juba is a step in the right direction – it was drafted by the GoU and the LRA and allows for both formal and traditional forms of judicial action.

Nevertheless, for a more holistic peace agreement in northern Uganda, one that will bring a stronger sense of serenity to the north, the presence and legitimacy of a U.S.

*(Continued on page 5)*

## The Kaleidoscope View of African Heroes

A change in the approach of the international community toward Zimbabwe's Mugabe

By Sara Snider

Robert Frost was correct (and thank goodness) when he wrote: "George Washington was one of the few men in all of human history who was not carried away by power." George Washington was not without sin, but I must congratulate him for refusing a third term as president of the United States. Although it was offered, Washington seemed to realize the value of changing leadership to promote constant renewal in government. His humble perspective laid a foundation for our new republic that has continued successfully for over 200 years.

As American citizens, our historical heroes of colonial times are idealistically remote, with only their legacy remaining in our Constitution and our grade school history books. Our current critiques of their follies are much removed from their living presence.

Currently in the U.S., however, I notice that any criticisms of our "heroes against terrorism" often produce negative looks from fellow citizens. These are our existing, but temporary heroes. These negative looks encourage us to be supportive of people in power and to positively influence their decisions, regardless of the impact on ourselves, our families or communities, or those of others around the world. Frequently, when we speak about methods or mindsets alternative to that of the "heroes," we are labeled unpatriotic, un-American, or even treasonous.

America has provided strong but distant heroes who are difficult to relate to as anything more than a face on our coinage and current "heroes" who through social rules garner respect regardless of whether or not we agree with the actions that made them a "hero." With these two points in mind, I want to think more about the heroes of post-colonial times in Africa.

Robert Mugabe, President of Zimbabwe, is a true present-day hero to many Africans, despite the fact that he has led the country for almost three decades. Zimbabwe has gone

from the route of a newly independent well-paved highway of development onto a quickly deteriorating dirt path of economic failure and disastrous human rights abuses. The economy is in shambles. Unemployment hovers around 80%, and one can note a staggering 20 year drop in life expectancy since Mugabe took office 27 years ago.

Mugabe's ability to maintain the presidency confuses many outsiders. Despite his lack of action to improve economic conditions and his unfair social "renewal," there has not been a unanimous call for his removal by those in Africa. Why is it that even in this sub-Saharan dream country full of intelligent citizens, doctors, lawyers, and academia, a strong civil society cannot seem to do enough to turn the country around?



President Robert Mugabe

The title "hero against colonialism" creates a mentality that has pacified many who would have normally looked for alternatives. Colonialism is viewed as the wrong of all wrongs in Africa and freedom from that concept holds great meaning. Colonial history tends to paint Western nations as evil and exploitative, imperialistic and manipulative. On the other hand, the founding fathers like Obote in Uganda, Kaunda in Zambia, and Mugabe are seen as the source of freedom. These are current heroes who inspire many to believe in a constant "fight against colonialism." In spite of extremely poor conditions and standards of living, this ideal has impeded on many nations' ability to move forward into a new era. Just like our inability to criticize our "heroes against terrorism," many find it difficult

*(Continued on page 7)*

*(Continued from page 4)*

official is imperative. As such, the international community must be willing to more fully support initiatives that are "homegrown" to ensure that they do not fail. Hanson writes that internally resolving Darfur or Somalia is implausible; it will certainly be difficult, but perhaps if the international community were more willing to support and invest in internal efforts, peace in these regions might be more conceivable.

In the end, it is not a matter of including or excluding the international community, it is a matter of examining the extent to which our involvement can aid in a peace process. It is important that we listen to the victim's needs and to the demands of those fighting before we push for a signature on a deal that will be neither heeded nor implemented in the long term. AFJN is working on a project with the Advocacy Network for Africa on restorative justice and we hope that you will join us in promoting new strategies for procuring peace in Africa.

## Learning the Path to Advocacy: Beginning with Child Soldiers

By Rehana Merchant

The first issue in Africa that caught my immediate attention was the use of children in armed forces. Before becoming an intern at AFJN, I was aware that child soldiers existed; however, I was not knowledgeable about the issue. I hadn't heard about the process of becoming a child soldier, their lives as soldiers, or the struggles that await them once their service has ended. As I researched, the frequent discussion of the Lord's Resistance Army (LRA) sparked my interest.

The use of child soldiers in the LRA in Northern Uganda and Southern Sudan is a well-known concern. The LRA has committed numerous humanitarian crimes against its own people, including, but not limited to, kidnapping, raping, and killing.

During my time with AFJN, I expected to understand the history and conflict behind the use of child soldiers. I wanted to know how influential governments could enforce the prevention of children as soldiers and what methods of punishment are used against countries that continued to use children.

I haven't met any child soldiers personally, but I have read and heard many of their stories. Save Darfur and the Enough Project with their extensive analysis of conflict in Sub-Saharan Africa, really shaped my understanding of the situation in Africa regarding children in rebel groups and government forces. I also read *A Long Way Gone: Memoirs of a Boy Soldier* by Ishmael Beah, which describes in detail Beah's life before, during, and after his involvement in the war. I watched the movie "Invisible Children," which introduced me to the children of Uganda who came

together every night to hide from the raids of armed forces. I also attended briefings such as "Child Soldiers: New Evidence, New Advocacy Approaches" at the U.S. Institute of Peace, which focused on the importance of rehabilitation.

I have learned that children are easy targets because they are immature, impressionable, dependent, and can hide in small spaces so that they are not easily detected. Most

child soldiers are kidnapped or coerced into action; however, in some cases, children voluntarily join because of economic needs, personal safety, or to avenge the death of a loved one due to the war. Once a child is an official member of the armed force, they are often drugged with cocaine, marijuana, or a substance referred to as "brown-brown", which is a mixture of cocaine and gunpowder. Soon, the children form a sense of community and safety within the armed force that transforms them into loyal soldiers.

Former child soldiers suffer from deep trauma and are in great need of rehabilitation. Many are released from armed groups with nothing. It is very important that these children be reunited with their communities, given opportunities, and provided a sense of purpose.

My research on child soldiers in the LRA devastated me. However, there are many things that can be done. Currently, the Child Soldier Prevention Act of 2007 (S.1175 and H.R.3028) has been designed to prohibit any U.S. military aid to a country that uses children as soldiers. You can write to your Senator and Representative to ask that they cosponsor S.1175 and H.R.3028 today so the use of children during war will come to an end.



Summer AFJN intern and Trinity University student, Rehana Merchant

(Continued from page 3)

the Water for the Poor Act (P.L. 109-121). The Religious Working Group on Water, of which AFJN executive director Father Rocco Puopolo is a member, is calling on U.S. policy makers and inter-governmental institutions to "ensure universal, sustainable access to sufficient, safe, acceptable, physically accessible and affordable water for personal and domestic use." Contact your Senator asking for increased appropriations and funding for water devel-

opment programs (look for talking points and sample letters on our website). Oxfam America and Earthworks have also created the "No Dirty Gold" campaign to end dirty gold mining practices. Twenty-five jewelry retailers have endorsed the campaign's "Golden Rules" criteria for more responsible mining. Visit their website to find out how you can take action against dirty gold mining: [www.nodirtygold.org](http://www.nodirtygold.org).

*Attention Dayton area members! The archdiocese of Cincinnati is hosting an Africa Educational Summit in Kettering, Ohio on September 29. See the AFJN website for details or contact the Mission Office of the archdiocese to register.*

(Continued from page 5)

cult in Africa to downplay the significance of “heroes against colonialism.”

Mugabe’s strength has been underestimated in the past, and unfortunately those who now offer counteraction to Mugabe or the Zanu-PF party are labeled “terrorists.” Even non-opposition groups, including religious groups, individuals, journalists, and NGOs, have been branded as political and therefore, according to Mugabe, “should be prepared to face the wrath of the state.” These groups are still providing as much resistance as possible without completely exposing themselves to harm.

In May, Tiseke Kasambala, a Human Rights Watch researcher on Zimbabwe, submitted a report to the 41<sup>st</sup> Ordinary Session of the African Commission on Human and Peoples’ Rights saying that “[d]espite widespread international condemnation and calls for an end to the abuses – the beatings, arbitrary arrests and abductions of opposition members and supporters, civil society activists, and the repression of ordinary Zimbabweans – continue unabated.”

Mugabe still plays the “oppressed colony” card by saying that the Western countries have provoked the current economic failures through the use of selective sanctions. In the meantime, the South African Development Community (SADC) has done very little to address the needs of Zimbabwe. South Africa’s President Mbeki has decided to continue “quiet diplomacy” and Zambia’s Kaunda has said that the West is “demonising Mugabe.” How can the West move beyond the negative colonial stereotypes and influence change and how can Africans diminish the draw

of anti-colonial heroism?

In order to deter blind loyalty to “heroes against colonialism,” post-colonial countries might want to emphasize the possibility of these leaders to change. The identification

“...the title of hero cannot exempt those deemed with the title from being held accountable for their actions.”

of heroism could be applied to certain events rather than allowing for life-long amnesty. Most importantly, the title of hero cannot exempt those deemed with the title from being held accountable for their actions.

I firmly believe that to remedy the belligerent and juvenile personality of Mugabe’s government and improve human rights conditions, the Zanu-PF needs more peer pressure, and Western countries need to modify their strategy on punishing Zimbabwean officials with specified sanctions. The West, especially the UK and US, should enable the countries neighboring Zimbabwe to significantly increase pressure on the Mugabe government. As members of an international community, Western countries have the responsibility to stay engaged without taking an exclusively adversarial role.

With increased international support, neighboring countries and the African community as a whole have the wonderful opportunity to expand and continue working jointly to resolve continental issues. Their aid and influence will hopefully provide for a smooth transition through Zimbabwe’s elections next year.

It’s mid-summer. All the outdoor projects are done. You’ve had enough of that African heat, but Congress hasn’t! Now it’s time to do something for Africa!

#### Jeff’s article on the Farm Bill got you going?

- To help reform this bill in the Senate (it already passed the House), write, call or visit your Senator during their August recess. To look at a sample letter or read more about the issue, check out our **Make Farming Fair Campaign** on the AFJN website.

#### Did Anne’s article on the Congo pique your interest?

- The DRC’s human resources, their women and children, continue to be raped. You can help by signing the petition that supports the International Violence Against Women Act.
- The Carter Center, the Open Society Initiative for Southern Africa and 30 local experts are currently examining approximately 60 mining contracts and proposing changes to correct biases. A petition exists that demands a Fair Share for Congo when reevaluating the mining contracts.
- Register for Congo Global Action Conference and Lobby Day, November 11-13 in Washington, D.C. Visit the “Want To Help?” section of our **Promote Peace in the D.R. Congo Focus Campaign** for links to these crucial petitions or to register for the Congo conference. Sign on and voice your concern!

**The Africa Faith and Justice Network**, inspired by the Gospel and informed by Catholic Social Teaching, educates and advocates for just relations with Africa.

**Staff:**

Rocco Puopolo, s.x.

Phil Reed

Beth Tuckey

**Interns:**

Rehana Merchant

Sara Snider

Anne Vickers

Jeff Weaver

© Africa Faith and Justice Network, Inc. ISSN 1093-4820. Materials in Around Africa are copyrighted and may be used provided AFJN is given credit. For full citations, visit the AFJN website.

**MEMBERSHIP FORM**

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Phone \_\_\_\_\_

Email \_\_\_\_\_

Contributing Member \$50 \_\_\_\_\_ Organizational member \$1,000 \_\_\_\_\_

Return to AFJN, 125 Michigan Ave NE, Washington, DC 20017  
Ph. (202) 884-9780 Fax: 202-884-9774 email: [afjn@afjn.org](mailto:afjn@afjn.org)  
[www.afjn.org](http://www.afjn.org)

*Advocacy for justice and peace in Africa doesn't just happen. AFJN needs your help and participation! Thank you for your financial support.*