

Beating Ploughshares into Swords? The Disturbing Direction of U.S. Africa Policy

By Peter Quaranto

In the previous newsletter, Phil Reed described the creation of the U.S. Africa Command (AFRICOM), which signifies deeper and sustained U.S. military engagement on the continent. Yet, AFRICOM is hardly surprising; the militarization of U.S. Africa policy has been underway for a decade now. The danger though lies in what is increasingly absent: accountability.

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Ironically, the latest phase in U.S. Africa policy began and is now culminating with Somalia. The end of the Cold War brought new Western optimism for humanitarian operations, especially in Africa. The first Bush administration, in its final days, authorized 25,000 U.S. marines for “peacekeeping” in Somalia. President Clinton supported this mission, until eighteen troops were brutally killed in October 1993. Domestic pressure forced rapid withdrawal.

The resulting cynicism led Clinton to issue the famous Presidential Decision Directive 25, stating that the U.S. would only send peacekeepers to conflicts that “pose direct threat to our national security.” For some, this signaled disengagement from Africa. However, the result was not detachment, but subtler relationships. In particular, U.S. policy since has prioritized strengthening bilateral military relationships with key geo-strategic allies, such as Nigeria, Ethiopia and Uganda. In exchange for supporting U.S. interests, these allies have received increased aid, diplomatic support and military cooperation.

Military assistance and training of these African allies has also steadily increased, much of it under the heading of “peacekeeping.” Clinton launched the Africa Crisis Response Initiative (ACRI), which current President Bush has continued under the new name African Contingency Operations Training and Assistance (ACOTA). Between these two programs, the U.S. trained at least 10,000 African troops from 1997 to 2005. Though helpful to build capacity, this training has privileged particular national militaries, in-



Peter Quaranto at Northern Uganda Lobby Days in October 2006.

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stead of regional or sub-regional bodies.

The 'War on Terror' has changed the political landscape, but U.S. privileging of military relationships has only increased. According to the World Policy Institute, foreign military financing has doubled from 2000 to 2006. Coordination on counterterrorism has intensified existing alliances and fostered new unlikely ties with states such as Algeria and Sudan. Intelligence sharing and military access have taken clear priority over peacemaking.

In addition, the U.S. military has sought unprecedented access to the continent. The 2002 establishment of the Djibouti-based Combined Joint Task Force – Horn of Africa has placed at least 1,800 U.S. troops permanently in the region. This has coincided with the establishment of "access points," where the U.S. military can refuel aircraft, temporarily house soldiers and store equipment. Such points now exist in Algeria, Kenya and Uganda. This groundwork provides a foundation for AFRICOM.

The strategy here is to position the U.S. military to support regional allies as they pursue specific U.S. counter-terror objectives on the continent. Rather than getting bogged down in Somalia as happened in 1993, why not let African militaries do the dirty work? Many African leaders, anxious for aid and diplomatic cover, have happily accepted such arrangements. The perk (or peril) of this approach is that accountability is elusive.

This brings us back to Somalia. At the end of 2006, Ethiopia invaded to dismantle the Union of Islamic Courts (UIC), who had seized control of Mogadishu just six months before. The U.S., along with giving tacit approval

for this incursion, supported with two air strikes on southern Somalia on 8 and 23 January. The quick defeat of the Islamists was hailed as a victory for counter-terrorism, yet optimism faded as Mogadishu plunged into violence. March and April have brought the worst violence in Somalia since its civil war in the early 1990s.

Yet, as one journalist aptly put it: "Somalia burns, but does anyone care?" Surely, some of us do. The question, though, is how we expose and engage these recent trends. How do we begin mobilizing now before Somalia becomes just the first in a long line of new proxy wars in Africa? The erosion of political accountability will likely continue as military relationships deepen with the advent of AFRICOM.

Until we name this phenomenon, we cannot engage or resist it. The first step must be a serious appraisal of this militarization, understanding its roots and context. This is a conversation not just for those in Washington, but for peacebuilders and activists throughout Africa.

As U.S. engagement in Africa continues, the message of Isaiah could not be timelier: "And they shall beat their swords into ploughshares, and spears into pruning hooks; nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more." We must become the Isaiah's of today.

Peter is a Marshall Scholar, studying at the University of Bradford's Peace Studies department. He co-founded AFJN's sponsored campaign, the Uganda Conflict Action Network, which has become Resolve Uganda. He now works as a senior researcher for that organization.

AFJN to Celebrate 25 Years of Analysis and Advocacy

Excitement is growing over AFJN's upcoming 25th anniversary celebration to be held April 18-21, 2008 in the Washington area. Naturally, we're all thrilled that AFJN has been able to persevere through a quarter of a century of education and advocacy. However, the way in which we're going to be celebrating that event promises to be one of the high points of our history.

Prof. Jeffrey Sachs, world famous development economist and humanitarian has agreed to address the assembly on Saturday morning, speaking to us about "*United States Policy and Africa: An Assessment of the Current Administration and Imperatives for the Next.*" The participants will then be able to engage Prof. Sachs with questions and comments. See our website for more information about

this author, professor and friend of AFJN.

Entitled, "**Celebrating Africa: Analysis to Action,**" the conference will include five workshops, three on advocacy topics and two on organizing at parish and university levels. There will be a surprise guest speaker for Friday evening and a gala dinner on Saturday. Being an advocacy organization, we will offer the possibility to all participants to lobby their members of Congress on Monday the 21st. So, mark your calendars now, save the date and come to Washington to celebrate, analyze and advocate.

P.S. The program committee is looking for pictures from AFJN's history, from annual meetings, demonstrations, briefings or whatever. If you have any that you'd like to share, please contact the office. Thanks.

Another War on Your Watch?

Archbishop Francois-Xavier Maroy of Bukavu, Democratic Republic of Congo, in a recent letter to the French ambassador (see the AFJN website), raised the alarm on what he deemed to be an imminent return to war in the East of Congo. Here, Jacques Bahati, an AFJN intern originally from the DRC, offers us his take on the present precarious situation:

In late May, the provincial government of the South Kivu province and the church in the eastern Congo raised the alarm, stating that they had evidence of imminent preparation for war against the Congo coming from the east. The Democratic Republic of the Congo has always been at war at all fronts. Who are its enemies? An analysis reveals three. The first is its own government. The D.R.C. has never had a responsible government, only selfish and corrupt ones. The second is made up of the foreign multinationals that have been looting Congolese natural resources, leaving nothing to the people and nurturing war by arming rebel factions. The third enemy is comprised of foreign nations. The D.R. Congo has a long and painful history of colonization, neo-colonization and the foreign military invasion by its neighbors Rwanda, Uganda and Burundi, who occupied three quarters of the country from 1996 until recently.

On May 28th, UN radio announced a report of the infiltration of foreign fighters in the Minebwe Mountains: "...a Burundian was presented to the governor of the province by the commander of the 10th regional military, General Sylvain Tshikweji. The man said that he was contacted at his sport club in Bujumbura (Burundi) to participate in a competition in Uvira (South Kivu). When he got to Congolese territory, he was taken with two other Burundians to the Minebwe Mountains at gun point. After he escaped, he was captured by a soldier of the 10th regional military. The South Kivu province governor, Celestin Cibalanza, said that he was worried about the situation. According to him, it was a recruitment to destabilize the province".

What the central government in Kinshasa has called an interethnic conflict, calling for a round table for negotiations, was rejected by political and religious authorities from the East, who, through Archbishop Maroy's letter, made clear that the evidence points not only to internal actors such as the Banyamulenge, but to neighboring countries. This information is based in part on the testi-

mony of captured infiltrators recruited from Rwanda and Burundi. One of them explained that he was promised a job opportunity in the Congo. But when he got there, he was taken to a military training camp from which he escaped.

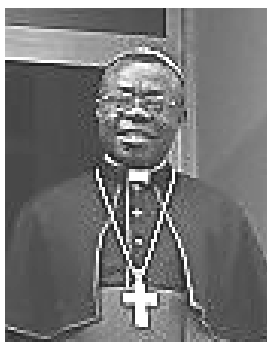
History also seems to point to what authorities in the East are saying about a new war. Since 1990 and the beginning of the efforts to overthrow the Hutu regime of Juvenale Habyarimana in Rwanda, the Congolese Banyamulenge have been part of the planning, the beginning and the end of both the Rwandan war and the 1996 invasion of Congo.

After the Tutsi, exiled from the Hutu revolution of 1959 in Rwanda, retook in 1994 the power that they had held since the 1300s, they moved on with their plan to have a Tutsi-led central Africa. They invaded the Congo, using the Banyamulenge citizenship crisis that existed even prior to their participation in the Hutu-Tutsi Rwandan war. This issue was minimized, if not supported, by the international community that accepted the Rwandan Tutsi-led government's pretext to invade the Congo: that the Congo had welcomed the former Rwandan army. The war was long and very deadly.

Today, Congolese still suffer from the consequences of the recent war, namely the birth of tribal armed self-defense groups, the presence on the Congolese territory of the Hutu armed factions that hope to return in power in Rwanda and the rebellion movement of Laurent Nkunda, who today is the cause of many massacres of the people in the North and South Kivu provinces. The security situation in eastern Congo has never improved since its invasion by Rwanda, Burundi and Uganda. Just one of the many recent events reported by the UN radio MONUC involved 500 families of the village of Kanyiola who fled their homes. Some were kidnapped, women were raped and others killed. Thousands fled Kisharo in Rutshuru/North Kivu.

The cry of the Catholic Church in South Kivu is a challenge to the D.R. Congo government to tackle the question of the readiness of the Congolese army to secure peace with Rwanda, Uganda and Burundi and to deal with the issues of the Banyamulenge (because of their relationship to these countries in planning to harm Congolese), the armed Hutu of the F.N.L from Burundi, the rebels of the

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Archbishop Maroy of Bukavu

Congo Global Action Hosts Milestone Brussels Conference

By Hervé de Bailleux

The first major project of Congo Global Action (CGA) took place from March 20 -22 in Brussels. CGA members in Brussels organized the conference entitled – *Congo: After the elections, next steps?* The International Rescue Committee (IRC) was the main host, with support from several student clubs. Together, they organized the successful conference at the Catholic University of Louvain la Neuve. More than 100 people attended the three-evening conference. The majority of the attendees were university students and first and second generation Congolese immigrants to Europe.

The first day was organized around two of the three pillars of CGA: *saving lives* and *ending economic exploitation* in the DRC. The film “Congo – A country under siege” was screened. Mr. Murhabazi, Director from the Congolese NGO, BVES, « Bureau pour le Volontariat au service de l’Enfance et de la Santé », headquartered in Bukavu, gave a detailed presentation of the current humanitarian situation in Eastern Congo and highlighted the work of the national NGOs. Several of the university students in attendance expressed great interest in volunteering and/or interning with national NGOs throughout the DRC.

Anouk Franck of NIZA ((Nederlandse Instituut voor Zuidelijk Africa) gave a thorough overview of the transparency initiative for extractive industries. NIZA works with the Fatal Transactions Coalition and outlined the mutual responsibilities that the government; private industry and civil society all have in improving methods and practices when it comes to exploiting the wealth of natural resources throughout the DRC.

Philippe Cornélis of Greenpeace Belgium spoke about the social, environmental and ecological risks that come with the methods used in extracting natural resources in the DRC. He particularly focused on the forestry sector and the importance of the government in implementing a solid environmental policy to protect, preserve and regenerate forests.

The second day focused on the third pillar of CGA: *keeping people safe from harm*. Mr. Ladislav de Coster, Program Manager for Lawyers without Borders, outlined the challenges currently facing the DRC as they rebuild the judicial sectors and attempt to assure access to justice. He

emphasized that the rule of law and political will at all levels of government are the most critical sectors for the DRC’s recovery.

Mr. Jean-Claude Willamme, professor at the Catholic University of Louvain la Neuve, discussed the lack of political process for peace and reconciliation. In addition, there is a gross absence of any formal funding and comprehensive plan for security sector reform for the country. To complement his discussion, Mr. Xavier Zeebroeck, researcher at GRIP (a think tank specializing in peace and security issues), gave a historical review of the UN’s role (MONUC) in the DRC since 2002. He demonstrated the way in which MONUC’s responsibilities and tasks were increased as they demonstrated success. This expansion of their mandate then won them the support of the Congolese people

The political and economic environment discussions were presented by Mr. Pierre-Antoine Braud (Institut d’Etudes de Sécurité) and Bob Kabamba (Université de Liège).

The last evening was dedicated to a vibrant discussion of development assistance to the DRC. This debate was led by Mr. Vincke, from the Belgium AID Office and Mr. Rosa, a member of the cabinet of the European Commissioner for Development. Many of the Congolese in the audience expressed the need for the Congolese to take charge of their own destiny and not depend any further on international assistance.

At the end of the conference, many of the students remained in order to discuss how they could get involved and remain active in regards to the DRC. The International Catholic Student Movement facilitated the discussion about how to move forward with more activities such as: film events so that people can learn about the DRC, expert panels, and internships in the DRC with local NGOs to assist in the humanitarian situation. They also decided that the Student Club “Cafrikap” would be the focal point for Congo Global Action activities at the University.

The Congo Global Action coalition is planning a second conference in Washington DC from November 11 to 13, 2007. A third conference in Africa is in the planning stages for 2008. AFJN is one of the founding members of this coalition, and Rocco Puopolo serves on its executive committee.

Please plan to attend the November Congo Global Action Conference and Lobby Day in Washington, DC. Join us to advocate for the DRC and call for increased local and international response, beginning at the grassroots level.

Stand by Me! Cincinnati Twinning Generates Solidarity & Advocacy with Africans

By Dr. Mike Gable

Remember the Ben E. King song from the 1960s, *Stand by Me*? What a terrific piece of music that warmly captures the meaning of human friendship and solidarity. The U.S. Catholic bishops' 2001 document, *A Call to Solidarity With Africa* reflects the same message: "U.S. Dioceses and parishes have found twinning with dioceses and parishes in Africa and other parts of the world to be enriching experiences of communion with other members of the body of Christ and a means of deepening bonds of solidarity with a church in need." It's all about building relationships and solidarity in God's family... standing with and for one another in good and bad times.

A priest of the archdiocese of Cincinnati, Fr. Paul Rehling, had taught at a seminary in Ghana and developed friendships there. When he returned in 1991 to become pastor of St. Aloysius church in Cincinnati, Ohio, he gradually built a twinning relationship between our parish and the diocese of Jasikan in Ghana. After my family returned from lay missionary work with Maryknoll, we found this to be a great parish to join. Over these years, we've had four of their priests as our assistants while they completed advanced studies at our local seminary. We've connected with local Ghanaian Catholics and choirs and have developed relationships that have brought new life and hope for racial harmony to our nearly all white parish. In turn, a dozen of our parishioners have visited these priests and their home villages in Ghana over these years and learned of their joy and Spirit filled cultures as well as their severe needs, especially in health care and education.

Beside the 40 parishes in our diocese twinning with other parts of the world and the US, this example of St. Al's solidarity with African churches is now spreading to other parishes during our five-year Archdiocese African Solidarity Project. This effort has led to a highly successful African World Mission Sunday Mass and Celebration last October in Cincinnati. This event will be repeated this October and my Mission Office is adding an "Africa Summit" this September in Dayton, Ohio, with the support of

Fr. Rocco Puopolo of AFJN. In this process, it has been energizing to see new relationships now being built in our archdiocese among Africans, African Americans and members of other cultures. (Please see our new publication, *Stand with Africa*, a guide for our parishes and examples of parish twinning at our website: www.catholiccincinnati.org/mission).

Because of these personal friendships with Africans through our twinning endeavors, it's been much easier and understandable for our parishes to consider advocating for a variety of pieces of legislation affecting Africa in recent years. During a recent April visit from Ghana, one of our

twinning friends, Sr. Philippine Dzormeku, explained, "It is terrible to see our people often die in transit to distant clinics or find few or no medical workers when they arrive." Consequently, it was not difficult for St. Al's leadership to allow our twinning committee to generate letters about the new African Health Capacity Investment Act, now Senate bill #805, as recommended by Phil Reed of the AFJN staff. We learned from him that passage of this bill would directly deal with the

severe shortage of health care workers in Africa.

With the blessing of our pastor at St. Al's, our twinning committee explained this bill in our recent church bulletin, and on the following weekend we provided sample letters for our parishioners to read and sign after the Masses. We have found that this as a great education tool that allows parishioners to: a) learn about African issues, b) appreciate Catholic Social Justice Principles, and c) demonstrate their global solidarity as U.S. Catholic citizens. As a result, St. Al's parish alone generated 500 signed letters and took 250 each to our congressperson directly and to the aide of one our senators in early May.

Sr. Philippine and our current Ghanaian resident priest, Fr. Vincent Antie, accompanied our twinning committee to these offices to share their own stories of health care problems to add real depth and urgency to this issue. This was

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Dr. Mike Gable, guests from Ghana and a delegation from his parish visit Congressman Chabot in his Ohio office.

AFJN Members Report on World Social Forum in Nairobi

Several AFJN members headed to Nairobi last January to attend the World Social Forum. Some of their experiences can be found on the AFJN website under "Member News."

Two members of the AFJN Board of Directors, John Kleiderer and Sr. Ann Oestreich, were there as well. Sr. Ann said, "There is no alternative to being there, participating, networking and strategizing with people from five continents and over 140 countries." Find below part of an article from "LifeSigns" magazine in which Sr. Ann interviewed four of the six Sisters of the Holy Cross (Daisy Kabuleeta, Edith Tumuhimbise, Jacinta Katusabe and Theresia W. Mbugua) who attended the Forum. Her hope is that their reflections for "LifeSigns" (and "Around Africa") can give a glimpse into the character of this unique event.

LS: Can you describe your experience of the World Social Forum?

Sister Edith: I didn't think it would be so big! The crowd included people from all over the world. The whole world was there!

Sister Daisy: It was wonderful—people coming together from everywhere to discuss common problems in the areas of water, poverty, gender, agriculture, children, human rights ... and to celebrate the variety of cultures present there. I was especially happy to see the Ugandan cultural dances being performed.

Sister Jacinta: The venue was so large and spread out. It was a challenge to choose a session (from the hundreds going on simultaneously) to attend, and then to find it!

Sister Theresia: I expected to meet all kinds of people, including those suffering from injustices and those struggling against injustice. I attended workshops that encouraged us to make changes where we are—to act locally—and was able to collect a lot of resources on issues relating to women, children, the situation of the family, and land.

LS: What kinds of workshops and sessions did you attend?

Sister Daisy: I went to sessions on HIV/AIDS, food security, women and work, violence in Somalia ...

Sister Edith: ... and human rights, especially street children and child trafficking, land issues ...

Sister Theresia: ... and sessions educating women about who they are and what their rights are.

Sister Jacinta: I went to workshops promoting education for all, and about the differences between urban and rural issues in education. I learned more about the need for teachers in Uganda and about many unemployed teachers in Somalia.

LS: What was the most surprising thing you saw or learned at the forum?

Sister Edith: Everywhere I went, everything I heard and saw was an eye-opener for me. I knew that there are problems everywhere, but listening to people describe what was happening to them made everything much more real for me. When I listened to people from Palestine speak about their situation, I was deeply touched. I felt as if I had been there with them.

Sister Daisy: I was surprised by the focus on empowering women. And people really struggled with difficult questions, global questions impacting street children, food and education. People were working together to find answers.

Sister Theresia: I was glad that people from the slums were present, and their issues brought forward. But I was disappointed to find some forms of oppression present even inside the forum—vendors, especially those selling food, charged very high prices. And Coca-Cola® and the World Bank were present. They seemed out of place.

Sister Theresia: I will try to understand people and issues better, and be more aware of what is happening in the lives of people around me. I want to share these experiences with my team members and incorporate these understandings into our radio ministry.

Sister Jacinta: It helped me to talk to other teachers about how to work in large classrooms with more than 100 students at a time. It was good to share ideas with them.

Sister Edith: Our Sisters of the Holy Cross in Africa are working with all of the social problems discussed at the forum. It was good to get new ideas from others working on the same problems. It built up my courage and made me feel hopeful.

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Sr. Ann Oestreich, IHM with Holy Cross sisters in Nairobi

Four Interns Join AFJN Staff for the Summer

From June through August, AFJN will have the services of four students who introduce themselves to our members in this article. You can see their pictures on the AFJN website.

Rehana Merchant, who hails from Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, has just concluded her sophomore year at Trinity University. Her area of concentration is Mathematics. She most recently became interested in African affairs after attending a Trinity sponsored program this past fall with guest speaker Father Rocco on "Conflict Diamonds" in Sierra Leone. Her newfound interests are the genocide in Sudan and the major conflict behind child soldiers in Africa. At AFJN, Rehana plans to gain a more in depth understanding of the genocide in Sudan and will further explore the ways in which child soldiers can be rehabilitated.

Sara Snider is a small-town girl making her way in DC for the summer. Sara leaves the peaceful St. Lawrence River in northern New York State each August to study Economic Policy and International Peace at the University of Notre Dame. When she's not studying or working on economic justice topics, she participates in the ND Liturgical Choir and ushers at the Debartolo Performing Arts Center to get her kick of performing arts. This coming fall she will be a senior with a lot on her plate, including the responsibilities of co-president of ND's AFJN chapter, the co-director of the first annual student Conference of Human Development, as well as simply being an avid member of the Economic Justice (Fair Trade) subgroup of Amnesty International ND. For the fall semester of 2006, Sara studied Development abroad in Uganda with the School for International Training, learning first hand both

the positive and negative impacts of development on the people. Her experience there motivated her desire to see "the other side" of development—the policy and advocacy side in DC.

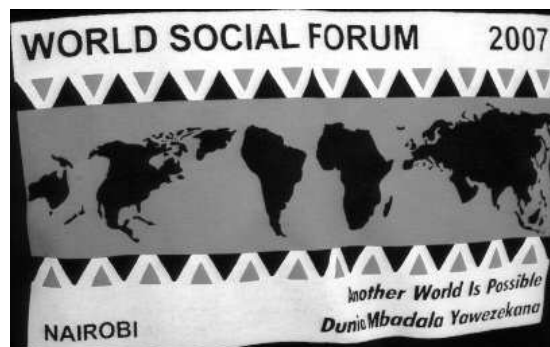
Anne Vickers, originally from Franklin, TX, is a senior Nonprofit Management major at Furman University in Greenville, SC. She is participating in George Mason University's Summer Institute on International Development, and her internship with AFJN is a part of the program. She has a strong interest in international development and the work of NGOs, and she is looking forward to the hands-on experience she will receive while working with AFJN. Anne will be spending her time primarily researching the issues of water campaigns in Africa such as water quality, conservation, and access. She will also be conducting secondary research on refugees and IDPs (Internally Displaced Persons) and working with the AFJN staff to prepare the 25th Anniversary Celebration booklet.

Jeff Weaver just finished his freshman year at Swarthmore College, where he plans to major in economics. A lifelong resident of the Washington, DC area, he loves humidity, the Metro, and Code Red days. Jeff first became interested in Africa his senior year of high school, when studying barriers to development in Nigeria and Algeria, and has since devoted much of his academic life to similar areas. He has a special interest in disarmament and demobilization processes, economic development, and the Horn of Africa. At AFJN, Jeff will primarily focus on the conflict in Somalia and issues surrounding US domestic farm subsidies and trade.

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LS: If you had the opportunity to attend the World Social Forum again in 2009, would you go? Would you encourage other sisters to attend?

Sisters Theresia and Jacinta: I wish we had been more visible as Sisters of the Holy Cross. Many congregations sent large delegations, and they had banners and displays about their ministries. I think we should be more visible next time.



Sister Edith: If I had the opportunity to go, yes, I certainly would—but not if my attendance would keep another sister from going who had never been to the forum. More of our sisters should attend.

Sister Daisy: It was definitely worth going. I know that the World Social Forum has changed me and changed everything for me: what I see around me, how I am in ministry, how I see other people and their struggles. I would definitely go again.

Bringing African Issues to the Presidential Candidates

By Phil Reed

Over the past couple of months, I have been working with other DC based Africa advocates to engage the 2008 presidential candidates on African issues. Several meetings have been held, chaired by Greg Simpkins of the Leon Sullivan Foundation, to reflect on the best ways to compel the candidates to think about their eventual Africa policy. Some of the groups around the table include the International Rescue Committee, the US Institute for Peace, the Africa Society, Save Darfur, Constituency for Africa and many more.

The plan is to hold a Presidential Forum in the month of October 2007, inviting the candidates to an evening dedicated to Africa policy. At this point, a questionnaire with ten rather substantive and detailed questions is being drafted by the group. When the questionnaire is finalized it will be sent to all the presidential candidates that are registered with the Federal Elections Commission. They will be asked to respond to the questions by the end of August. The questionnaire will be posted on the AFJN website as soon as it is ready.

The working group will study the answers of the candidates and then publicize those answers, but without taking

a stand or endorsing any particular candidate. The Forum, to be held in Washington, will be a chance for the candidates to elaborate even more on their answers and to respond to further questions to be asked by the audience members.

The questionnaire could act as a guide for AFJN members across the country to engage the candidates as they travel about over the next few months. If we can make sure that, in their meetings with voters, they are always asked a question about their Africa policy and attitudes, then perhaps we will eventually see more positive attention paid to the many issues that have their roots in US policy and that cause difficulty for the people of Africa. Keep checking the AFJN website for the questions, and eventually the answers, of the candidates.

All of the candidates are being questioned in multiple venues and forums. Recently in DC, I attended the Sojourners event in which three major Democratic candidates were asked how their faith influenced their politics. In that discussion, issues close to AFJN's heart such as Darfur, HIV/AIDS and poverty were necessarily voiced. Let's keep them thinking, talking and eventually acting.

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also a great opportunity for our parishioners and our African friends to learn of our legislative process and how we U.S. citizens/parishioners show our solidarity with Africa. "I was afraid to see Congressman Chabot the first time," said retired secretary Barb Wuest of St. Al's, "but after visiting my friends in Ghana, my love for them got me through my fears. I now feel empowered to continue this ministry." *Stand by Me* has become a concrete reality, not just a nice song for us.

Our local senators and congresspersons pride themselves on being conservative, Republican, pro-life, Catholic, "budget hawks." Consequently, our parishioners pointed out in our visits to them that our U.S. tax dollars would be better spent for pro-life purposes if more and better health care workers could be funded in Africa to actually administer needed medicines and services. They agreed that African economic development is not possible without basic health care and personnel to administer it.

As Archdiocesan Mission Office director, it's a real blessing to see ordinary parishioners around our archdiocese allowing the Spirit to empower them through these twin-

ning relationships to become advocates for and with our African sisters and brothers. I'm glad to report that that other parishes and dioceses are now lobbying with us on Senate bill 805. However, I'm especially enthused that I now serve on AFJN's board, as we are now reaching out to other U.S. parishes and dioceses in order to enliven and unite with their efforts of solidarity/advocacy with/for Africans.

If you have suggestions or comments to help our efforts or similar stories of solidarity/advocacy for us, e-mail AFJN, or me at: [mgable\(at\)catholiccincinnati.org](mailto:mgable(at)catholiccincinnati.org). As our bishops conclude in their 2001 pastoral letter, *A Call to Solidarity with Africa*, "We indeed mutually enrich each other in mission when we engage one another as sisters and brothers in Christ." ...or in other words, *Stand by me!*

Dr Gable is an AFJN Board Member and Mission Office Director, Archdiocese of Cincinnati. On June 20, Senator Voinovich decided to co-sponsor Senate bill 805. Congratulations to Mike and his parishioners for proving once again that local action is essential to achieving real policy change.

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L.R.A from Uganda, the Interahamwe from Rwanda who live and operate on the Congolese territory attacking their countries and harming Congolese.

On June 7, 2007, in Lubumbashi, Rwanda, Burundi and

Uganda ended a meeting attempting to find a solution to the security issue. From June 12 to 14, 2007 the UN was to hold a conference on disarmament, demobilization and reinsertion (DDR), as part of the effort to assist the newly elected government in addressing one of its many challenges.

AFJN Happenings in Brief...

Sign-on Letters:

- Letter of Solidarity and Peace to our Brothers and Sisters in Zimbabwe
- Statement calling for Leadership Selection Reform at the World Bank and the IMF

AFJN Events:

- May 2nd: At Trinity University: Brown bag lunch featuring Fr. Charles Kitima, President of the Catholic University of Tanzania, Mwanza
- May 22-23: At Trinity University: AFJN Board of Directors Meeting
- June 7: At Trinity U: Input in Nursing Class on Healing and Art, with examples from Child Soldier rehabilitation activities
- June 11: Facilitation of meeting of heads of Faith-Based Agencies with authorities from the Special Court of Sierra Leone

- June 19: Pittsburgh, PA: Conference with the Spiritan Community Assembly & Retreat

Conferences & Meetings:

- Participation in the Sojourners/Call to Action Assembly in Washington

Working Group Meetings:

- DR Congo Coalition
- Northern Uganda working group
- Advocacy Network for Africa
- Catholic Working Group on Sudan
- Water working group
- Catholic Task Force on Africa

**** Rocco wishes to announce that former intern, Beth Tuckey has been hired as staff for AFJN. She will begin working in early July. Welcome back, Beth!!**

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

Interns:
Jacques Bahati
Rehana Merchant
Sara Snider
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