



Peace & Justice Update
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The countries for the Peace & Justice Updates have been chosen as areas of focus at the Institute.

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SOURCE ABBREVIATIONS

The Age	=	The Age (www.theage.com.au)
AfricaFocus	=	AfricaFocus (www.africafocus.org)
AFP	=	Agence France-Presse (www.afp.com)
AllAfrica	=	AllAfrica Global Media (www.allafrica.com)
American Chronicle	=	American Chronicle (www.americanchronicle.com)
Amnesty International	=	Amnesty International (www.amnesty.org)
Asian Tribune	=	Asian Tribune (www.asiantribune.com)
AP	=	Associated Press (www.ap.org)
AWID	=	Association for Women's Rights in Development (www.awid.org)
BBC	=	British Broadcasting Corporation (news.bbc.co.uk)
BBC Monitoring	=	BBC Monitoring International Reports (www.monitor.bbc.co.uk)
CBC News	=	CBC News (www.cbc.ca)
Christian Monitor	=	Christian Monitor (www.christianmonitor.org)
CIA	=	CIA - The World Factbook (www.cia.gov)
Concord Times	=	The Concord Times (www.concordtimesl.com)
Crisis Group	=	International Crisis Group (www.crisisgroup.org)
The East African	=	The East African (www.nationmedia.com/estafrican/current)
eKantipur	=	Kantipur Online (www.kantipuronline.com)
eng24.kg	=	News Agency 24 (http://eng.24.kg)
EU	=	European Union (www.europa.eu.int)
Financial Times	=	Financial Times News (www.ft.com)
FMM	=	Free Media Movement (www.freemediasrilanka.org)
Guardian	=	Guardian Unlimited Network (www.guardian.co.uk)
The Hindu	=	The Hindu Newspaper (www.hinduonnet.com)
HRW	=	Human Rights Watch (www.hrw.org)
Herald Tribune	=	Herald Tribune (www.iht.com)
ICC	=	International Criminal Court (www.icc-cpi.int)
ICG	=	International Crisis Group (www.crisisweb.org)
ICTY	=	International Criminal Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia (www.un.org/icty)
IHT	=	International Herald Tribune (www.iht.com)
Independent	=	The Independent (www.independent.co.uk)
IndiaTimes	=	India Times (www.timesofindia.indiatimes.com)
IPS News Agency	=	Inter Press Service News Agency (ipsnews.net)
IRIN	=	Integrated Regional Information Network (www.irinnews.org)
ISN	=	International Relations and Security Network (www.isn.ethz.ch/index.cfm)
IWPR	=	Institute for War & Peace Reporting (www.iwpr.net)
Kathmandu Post	=	The Kathmandu Post (www.nepalnews.com.np)
Jurist	=	The Jurist (jurist.law.pitt.edu)
LA Times	=	Los Angeles Times (www.latimes.com)
Library of Congress	=	The Library of Congress (www.loc.gov/index.html)
Monitor	=	The Monitor (www.monitor.co.ug)
Nepal News	=	Nepal News (www.nepalnews.com)
Nepali Times	=	Nepali Times (www.nepalitimes.com)
New Vision	=	New Vision (www.newvision.co.ug)
News24	=	News24 (www.news24.com)
NYT	=	The New York Times (www.nytimes.com)
PANA	=	Panafrican News Agency (www.panapress.com)
Peace Africa	=	Peace Africa (www.allafrica.com/peaceafrica)
PDO	=	People's Daily Online (english.peopledaily.com.cn)
Prensa Latina	=	Prensa Latina, Latin America News Agency (www.plenglish.com)

Prensa Libre	=	Prensa Libre (www.prensalibre.com)
Oxfam Great Britain	=	Oxfam Great Britain (www.oxfam.org.uk)
RadioFreeEurope	=	RadioFreeEurope, Radio Liberty (www.rferl.org/featuresarticle/2007)
ReliefWeb	=	Relief Web (www.reliefweb.int)
Reuters	=	Reuters (www.reuters.com)
RSF	=	Reporters sans frontières (www.rsf.org)
The Rising Nepal	=	The Rising Nepal (www.gorkhapatra.org)
SDUT	=	San Diego Union Tribune (www.signonsandiego.com)
The Star	=	The Star.com (www.thestar.com)
Transparency Int.	=	Transparency International (transparency.org)
UNESCO	=	UN Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization (www.unesco.org)
UNFPA	=	United Nations Population Fund (www.unfpa.org)
UNHCHR	=	UN High Commissioner for Human Rights (www.unhcr.ch)
UNICEF	=	UN Children's Fund (www.unicef.org)
UNIFEM	=	UN Development Fund for Women (www.unifem.org)
UN News Center	=	UN News Center Homepage (www.un.org)
VOA	=	Voice of America (www.voanews.com)
Web India	=	Web India (www.webindia123.com)
WP	=	The Washington Post (www.washingtonpost.com)

SOURCE ABBREVIATIONS FOR SPECIAL SUPPLEMENT

Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR)

www.unhcr.ch/udhr/

1996 International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (International Covenant)

www2.ohchr.org/english/law/pdf/cescr.pdf

Pew Center on Global Climate Change (Pew)

pewclimate.org/

UPDATE SUMMARY

COUNTRY UPDATES

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COLOMBIA

President's relative caught in political scandal: Mario Uribe, second cousin and close political companion to President Álvaro Uribe, was taken into custody April 22 for suspected ties to right-wing paramilitary groups. After being denied political asylum in Costa Rica, Mario Uribe was arrested for meeting with former paramilitary commander Salvatore Mancuso before the national elections in 2002 and allegedly negotiating the purchase of land in an area under paramilitary control. Mario, who has been involved in politics since the 1980s and became a senator in 2002, stepped down from office in October 2007, but has continued to deny the accusations against him. President Uribe remarked, "The arrest warrant for Senator Mario Uribe hurts me, but it is a pain I will accept with patriotism and without avoiding the fulfillment of my responsibilities." This arrest has raised questions as to presidential ties to the paramilitary groups. Although investigations have been carried out and no evidence of links found between the president and the illegal groups, critics continue to question President Uribe's ties because of his alliances with many of those lawmakers already accused or arrested. Mario Uribe is one of more than 30 lawmakers who have been arrested in this "parapolitics" scandal in Colombia. The right-wing paramilitaries were created by landowners and drug traffickers to help combat left-wing rebel groups. A 2003 peace deal between the government and the paramilitary groups led to the demobilization of 31,000 men in exchange for reduced jail sentences and protection from extradition. (Reuters, April 22, BBC News, Guardian, April 23, 2008).

Presidents voice desire for trade agreement: Following the United States House of Representatives' decision to stall the passage of a free trade agreement between Colombia and the United States, the presidents of the two countries have continued to state their approval of the deal. In an April 22 meeting with the leaders of Mexico and Canada in New Orleans, U.S. President George W. Bush argued that this agreement would promote prosperity in the U.S. and Colombia. He cited the successes of the North American Free Trade Agreement with Mexico and Canada and the fact that these countries have already negotiated free trade agreements with Colombia. Bush said, "It makes no sense to me to say that Colombia goods can come into our country duty-free, yet our goods can't go into Colombia duty-free and yet that's the case. An agreement with Colombia would level the playing field. And a failure to pass the agreement would send a terrible signal to our neighborhood." He criticized House Speaker Nancy Pelosi for making the decision to delay the agreement stating that this was a "bad decision on her part" and the U.S. should not "turn its back on a . . . friend like Colombia." Colombian President Álvaro Uribe also expressed his desire to pass the agreement in an interview April 22. Uribe highlighted the decrease in the number of murders of trade unionists since he took office in 2002. He placed great emphasis on the steps Colombia has made to improve conditions, and its focus on an alliance with the U.S. Uribe commented, "Colombia has a long tradition of friendship and loyalty with the United States. Colombia shares the democratic values of the United States. Colombia has had difficulties with other countries because other countries did not understand the reasons for our loyalty to the United States. Therefore I ask this question: Given these circumstances, how can anyone understand that the United States does not approve this agreement?" Uribe's certainty however, was not echoed by the U.S. Congress, which has not wavered in its decision to stall the agreement. (Washington Post, April 20; New York Times, April 22, 2008).

GUATEMALA

Plan of the Hundred Days comes to an end: Since taking office January 14, President Álvaro Colom faced an uphill battle to accomplish the 132 targets stated in his Plan of the Hundred Days, which came to an end April 23. Colom created the plan to win the confidence and popular support of voters during the 2007 presidential campaign. As the Plan of the Hundred Days came to its conclusion, many criticized the shortcomings of Colom's first three months in office, which have been marked by

insecurity, ongoing violence, social upheaval and economic crisis. The violence that persists in Guatemala was one of the main targets of criticism. The murders of city bus drivers, violent deaths associated with drug trafficking and a surge in kidnappings have plagued the Colom government. Other internal weaknesses and external factors have prevented the fruition of the Plan of the Hundred Days. "There are constraints of the budget, of civil service capacity, of experience in [government] posts, even to secure staff to fill these posts. This makes it difficult to meet the expectations that the government has raised," said Lizardo Bolaños, of the Center for Economic and Social Research (CIEN). Some have scrutinized official appointments, stating that Colom granted government posts in exchange for support for his political campaign. Instances of possible nepotism, such as the appointment of Gloria Torres, Colom's sister-in-law, as the president's party's liaison with all the mayors, have also evoked negative reactions. The task Colom faced of providing immediate results in governance "was a lost race almost the start. He practically put the rope to his neck. It was too ambitious of a plan," said Luis Linares, of the Association of Research and Social Studies (ASIES). Despite the criticism, Colom expressed that he remained convinced the country was headed in the right direction and promised that in eight months his government would mitigate security concerns. Colom acknowledged that the security and health situations in Guatemala were critical, but asserted that the dismissal of corrupt police officers and a revision of emergency services serve as initial steps towards progress. A week earlier, the Colom government had launched Mi Familia Progresá, a program to deliver monthly vouchers to poor families to improve the health and education of their children. The Colom government also created the Council for Rural Development, which promotes projects in Guatemala's 44 poorest municipalities. Addressing security matters, Colom stated that his first three months in office have seen crime rates drop from 17 to 11 per day, and that more than 600 thousand kilograms of cocaine have been seized in that time. Despite the progress, which also includes a call for dialogue, the reconstruction of educational facilities and the delivery of microcredit in different areas, the Colom government still faces enormous and complex problems. (Prensa Libre, April 20, 21, 23, 2008)

Government implements social investment project: A government accord issued April 17 established the social investment program, Mi Familia Progresá. The agreement instructs the Ministry of Finance to search for resources for the operation of the program, which was to fall under the supervision of the Executive Secretariat of the Presidency and be coordinated by the newly-formed Council of Social Cohesion. The aim of the program was to improve the quality of life for impoverished families, increase school attendance of children between six and 15 years old and ensure the health of pregnant women and children under age five. Approximately US\$6.6 million was to be allocated to Mi Familia Progresá to be distributed among 45 priority municipalities. Program director María Castro explained that the aid was to be distributed in the form of vouchers worth approximately US\$20 each month. The program consists of two separate vouchers of that value, which will help finance either health services or educational attainment. In some circumstances, families may be eligible for both vouchers. The vouchers will be issued every two months through the Rural Development Bank; in an attempt to prevent fraud, will give the family contribution only to women with a photographed identification card with their fingerprints on it. The program was expected to decrease maternal and infant mortality rates as well as malnutrition. "This is only a part of actions in the priority municipalities with improvements in infrastructure, productive projects, in addition to strengthening health and education," said Castro. In the first phase, the program was to benefit between seven thousand and nine thousand families in selected municipalities in the departments of Sololá, Totonicapán and Quiché. Personnel of the program worked against the clock to deliver financial transfers within President Álvaro Colom's first hundred days of presidency. At his inauguration, Colom promised to focus his first hundred days as president to increasing public safety, rural aid and health and educational facilities. (Prensa Libre, April 17, 18, 2008)

NEPAL

Political parties debate coalition government: As results of the April 10 Constituent Assembly elections continued to be counted, the Maoists upheld their significant lead over other political parties. The party had already secured 120 of the 240 seats available through the first-past-the-post system and about 30 percent of the seats available through proportional representation as of April 22. With the Nepali Congress (NC) and United Marxist-Leninist (UML) parties trailing a distant second and third in the polls, discussions of possible coalitions have begun to take place between the significant parties. Although prior to the election the parties had expressed their intention to remain a part of the government no matter what the results showed, some groups are calling for a complete withdrawal. Intellectual leaders of the NC met April 23 to discuss the most appropriate next step. They argued that a government controlled by the Maoists would not be capable of bringing about security for the people and would most likely bring the nation under authoritarian rule. NC leader Dip Kumar Upadhyay remarked, "It will be a suicidal move to decide in haste to join the government before ensuring that Maoists return property looted by them, guarantee safe return of our cadres and genuinely respect the peace agreements." Upadhyay and others argued that the NC should instead work from outside the government to ensure the creation of a true democracy. Conversely, Maoist leaders have said that a coalition government is necessary in order to maintain international legitimacy and create a successful constitution. Senior Maoist leader Dinanath Sharma said, "We will lead the government, there is not doubt about that, but we want other parties to join us in the government ... We have asked them to join us, but there are factions within both the NC and UML who are against it." The current arrangement was created by a peace deal signed in 2006 and consists of an alliance among the seven main political parties. Some analysts have argued that a coalition government is necessary in order for the Constituent Assembly to maintain peace in the nation. (AFP, Kantipur Online, April 22, 2008).

Tibetans continue protests in Nepal: Tibetans marched toward the Chinese Embassy in Kathmandu Tuesday, April 22, protesting the recent Chinese crackdowns in Tibet. At least 50 protestors were arrested and three injured. Later the same day, a group of nine protestors entered the United Nations compound in Kathmandu and delivered a message to the international body calling for more support. One protestor explained, "We asked for UN support to put pressure on China for human rights in Tibet, to free all political prisoners and a proper investigation of China's crackdown." The protests and arrests came days after Human Rights Watch (HRW) stated its disapproval of the treatment of detained protestors by Nepali police. Sophie Richardson, Asia advocacy director at Human Rights Watch (HRW) stated, "Nepal has just held relatively peaceful, democratic elections ... but the government cannot be selective about who in Nepal is entitled to such basic rights – Tibetans there are entitled to peaceful expression and assembly too." Over the past six weeks of protests by Tibetans living in Nepal, HRW has reported hundreds of arrests and detentions, 850 since April 15 alone. HRW has claimed that these illegal arrests and detentions show the biases in the Nepali government against the Tibetan population. It has also showed contempt towards the way in which these protestors were treated, citing examples of beatings, unnecessary and excessive use of force, and sexual assault against Tibetan women. HRW demanded that the government to be created by the Constituent Assembly should make a point of releasing the Tibetan protestors in order to demonstrate its dedication to human rights. Nepal is home to about 20,000 Tibetans in exile who fled their country after the 1959 failed uprising against the Chinese. Protests have taken place throughout the region since the anniversary of the failed uprising of March 10, 1959. (Human Rights News, April 20; Associated Press, AFP, April 22, 2008).

UGANDA

Special Feature Story: The Peace, Recovery and Development Plan in Northern Uganda

The Peace, Recovery, and Development Plan (PRDP) for Northern Uganda was created based on a need for improvement in quality of life for Northern Ugandans in response to the war fought between the Lord's Resistance Army (LRA) and the government. In general, the number of Ugandans unable to meet their basic needs such as health, education, water and sanitation, declined from 56 percent in 1992 to 31 percent in 2006. However, because of the 20-plus year conflict in the North, Northern Uganda has not improved at the same pace and income poverty remains high, literacy rates are lower, and access to basic services is poor. The PRDP is a commitment by the government to stabilize and help the North over a three-year period (2007-2010) through a set of programs that all leaders and stakeholders will accept and implement throughout the Northern region.

The Government of Uganda has formulated five PRDP strategies to provide a framework to address the causes of conflict and instability in the North. First, the government will give support to ongoing political dialogue with armed groups such as the LRA to promote communication and peace. Research has shown that violent conflict reduces Gross Domestic Product by 2 percent per year. The government asserts that the PRDP focuses on conflict, growth, and prosperity through its effort to reverse these trends by creating peace and stability, which will ultimately have a positive impact on prosperity and growth. The government will also work on an organizing framework which is set up to create better coordination and supervision of ongoing projects to enable better analysis of the impact on the people of Northern Uganda and the economy. Also political, security, and development links, focusing on the creation of a "free and enabling environment," will be made possible through such things as demilitarization. Lastly, the PRDP is to help mobilize resources to address gaps created nationally and internationally in response to the conflict in Northern Uganda. It is hoped that those gaps can be filled by reallocating existing government budgets and securing additional finances internationally. The total amount of funds needed to secure the PRDP is US\$607 million.

The stated goal of the PRDP is to stabilize Northern Uganda in order to regain peace and create a foundation for recovery and development. In order to achieve peace and recovery, the PRDP created four strategic objectives; Consolidation of State Authority, Rebuilding and Empowering of Communities, Revitalization of the Economy, and Peace Building and Reconciliation. Consolidation of State Authority includes a Police Enhancement Program, a Judicial Services Enhancement Program, a Prisons Enhancement Program, a Rationalization of Auxiliary Forces Program, and a Local Government Enhancement Program. The programs include changes such as increasing police presence from 3,723 to 11,510 personnel; re-establishing a functional legal and judicial system that includes prosecutorial staff, judges and courts to help solve land conflicts; reducing overcrowding of prisons by increasing prison facilities and strengthening community service; rehabilitating offenders and sensitizing the public to accept offenders back into society; and withdrawing and redeploying the Ugandan People's Defense Force (UPDF) while gradually increasing civilian police.

The second objective, Rebuilding and Empowering of Communities, was created to meet needs for emergency assistance, basic social services, and livelihood support to war-affected populations. This objective includes a Humanitarian Assistance Program, a Return and Resettlement of Internally Displaced Persons Program (IDPs), and a Community Empowerment and Development Program. These three programs incorporate purchase of resettlement packages that include hoes, axes, and basic household items and seeds; as well as opening emergency access roads, providing information to internally displaced persons about which areas are secure enough to return; prevention of dropouts at all levels of education, construction and expansion of schools; increase of safe water coverage;

reduction of mortality through creation of more health facilities in the two sub-regions of Acholi and Lango, and livelihood support through financing of organized groups creating income generating activities.

The third objective, Revitalization of the Economy, is to be a major incentive for peace. The main programs are a Production and Marketing Enhancement program, an Infrastructure Rehabilitation and Urban Improvement Program, and an Environment and Natural Resource Management Program. The programs include investment in both consumption and cash crops through enhancement of land and labor productivity, increasing livestock production through improved breeding practices, investment in fisheries, increasing household incomes through bee farming and honey production, ensuring that 70 percent of the population has access to roads and uses them, delivery of electricity for economic activity and social service activity, protection and development of forest areas on farms, and restoration of ecosystems and increasing sustainable conservation of wetlands, riverbanks, lakeshores, and mountainous areas.

The last of the four objectives is Peace Building and Reconciliation, of which the two main programs are a Public Information, Education and Communication and Counseling Program and a Demobilization and Re-integration of Ex-combatants Program. The programs are focused on such issues as increasing information on opportunities for ensuring welfare, incomes, and land rights; community radio program for areas with limited radio coverage, enhancing psychosocial, trauma and other counseling services to traumatized persons; support for reintegration of ex-combatants; resettlement packages for ex-combatants; and skills training for 50 percent of ex-combatants. (Peace, Recovery and Development Plan for Northern Uganda)

SPECIAL SUPPLEMENT

The following three articles represent research and writing done by the interns at the Joan B. Kroc Institute for Peace & Justice in order to contribute to our readers' information on international topics selected by the institute as particularly relevant to the 2008 elections. Readers are encouraged to seek out information on the candidates' positions on these issues.

Universal Declaration of Human Rights Turns 60

Human rights are all-encompassing, foundational standards which the international community has established and according to international law, nations and individuals must strive to respect and achieve. In December of 1948, the General Assembly of the United Nations adopted the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. This became a living document which helped define the many specific and general rights that are included in the term "human rights" and should be regarded as central to all of humanity. The declaration begins with the preamble, which outlines exactly why such a document is necessary. It affirms not only that these rights are the "foundation of freedom, justice, and peace in the world," but also that they are essential in avoiding tyranny and promoting social progress. The declaration then defines the specific rights which the United Nations has established as universal. It points specifically to the significance of equality among races, genders, religions, and nationalities. It establishes that many practices are inherent violations of human rights, such as torture or slavery. The document recognizes that all persons are equal before the law and therefore are equally protected and subject to the rule of law. It defines the right to marry, the right to own property, the right to education, and the right to an adequate standard of living. The rights to freedom of expression and thought are also incorporated in the declaration. The establishment of these rights in particular makes it illegal to

discriminate based on religious beliefs, opinions or practices. Employment rights are defined to include the right to work, the right to equal pay for equal work, the right to reasonable working hours and the right to join trade unions. This declaration is to apply to all states, groups, and peoples.

The 1966 International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights is another living document ratified by the members of the United Nations in order to reiterate many of the rights described in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and to provide logistical recommendations for how these rights should be established and maintained. The document begins by emphasizing that states must use whatever economic or technical means are necessary to achieve the rights defined in the Covenant and that there can be no discrimination in regard to the application of Covenant based on "race, color, sex, language, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, property, birth or other status." The document outlines the right to work and the responsibility of states to establish technical and vocational training in order for this to be achieved. It reiterates the rights to just and favorable working conditions as described in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and highlights the importance of equal wages for equal work and a fair, living wage. It defines in detail the rights of trade unions to strike and to establish national federations. It outlines the necessity of protection for the family, specifically highlighting the right of a mother to paid maternity leave. The document stipulates that states must establish programs and measures to keep their peoples free from hunger, and that the international community is also included in this responsibility. The Universal Declaration of Human Rights defined the right to education; the Covenant contains a more in-depth description of what is included in this right, namely free primary education, accessible secondary education, and higher education accessible on the basis of capacity. For those states that ratify the Covenant without having these educational rights met, the document states that they must establish a plan within two years stating how they intend to achieve those goals. The document stipulates that these rights must be protected, promoted and fulfilled, through various means including international action, conventions, recommendations, technical assistance, and regional meetings. (UDHR, International Covenant)

Climate Change Legislation Booms in the 110th Congress

New Congressional attention reflects a shift in the debate over global warming, with key Congressional leaders calling for dramatic reductions in emissions of carbon dioxide and other greenhouse gases. The many rigorous bills of the 110th congress include a large number of proposed cap-and-trade systems, resolutions requesting U.S. participation in international climate change negotiations, and funding for research focused on climate-friendly technologies. Also, benefits can be found in many bills addressing energy efficiency, energy security, new technology research, agriculture, resource management, national security, and wildlife preservation. By March of 2008, lawmakers had introduced more than 195 bills, resolutions, and amendments specifically addressing global warming and green house gas emissions. The previous congress only submitted 106 pieces of legislation during its entire two-year (2005-2006) term. In other words, the current Congress has introduced nearly twice the bills in half the time.

In December of 2007, the Senate Environment and Public Works Committee voted 11-8 in favor of S.2191, the Lieberman-Warner Climate Security Act. This is the first greenhouse gas cap-and-trade bill ever to come out of a congressional committee and it is scheduled to be addressed by the senate floor some time in 2008. One of the bill's amendments includes a low-carbon fuel standard for transportation fuels. The standard would mandate 5 percent less carbon per unit of energy in 2015 and 10 percent less carbon per unit of energy in 2020. This bill would create two separate caps; one covering facilities producing hydrofluorocarbons (HFCs) and the other covering facilities that use more than 5,000 tons of coal annually and process, produce, or import natural gas, among other issues. The cap on facilities producing HFCs would start in 2010 at 300 million metric tons of carbon dioxide

equivalent and decline to 90 million by 2037. Taken together, the bill's provisions would aim to reduce overall U.S. greenhouse gas emissions an estimated 63 percent by 2050. As of March, there were 10 cosponsors including senators Benjamin Cardin (MD), Robert Casey (PA), Norm Coleman (MN), Susan Collins (ME), Elizabeth Dole (NC), Thomas Harkin (IA), Amy Klobuchar (MN), Bill Nelson (FL), John Warner (VA), and Ron Wyden (OR).

The House of Representatives energy bill for 2007, the New Direction for Energy Independence, National Security, and Consumer Protection Act, was sponsored by Representative Nancy Pelosi (CA) with 18 cosponsors. Among other provisions, the bill makes a Congressional declaration of intent to participate in international climate negotiations to create an instrument including a commitment from all major emitting countries that will come into force after the first commitment period under the Kyoto Protocol, which ends in 2012. The bill also mandates the creation of an Office on Global Climate Change within the State Department. The bill further authorizes funds for research in solar energy, biofuels, marine renewable energy and geothermal energy, as well as for carbon capture and storage research, development, and demonstration.

A second energy bill created in 2007, sponsored by Representative Nick Rahall (WV) with 198 co-sponsors, is the Renewable Fuels, Consumer Protection, and Energy Efficiency Act. This is the final energy bill produced after negotiation among the White House, Senate, and House of Representatives. The bill establishes a renewable fuel standard of 36 billion gallons by 2022. The bill also directs the Secretary of Transportation to increase corporate average fuel economy regulations to create a combined standard for passenger cars and light trucks of at least 35 miles per gallon by 2020. The bill focuses on a variety of issues intended to promote the development and deployment of biofuels, energy efficiency, carbon capture and storage, environmentally sustainable public buildings, and an increase in the corporate average fuel economy (CAFE) standard. ([Pew](#))

Taliban Benefits from Diversion of U.S. Attention and Resources from Afghanistan to Iraq

Following the September 11 attacks, the Bush administration launched a campaign that included military, political and legal actions to ostensibly curb the spread of terrorism. In October 7, 2001, the United States launched the war in Afghanistan with the stated purpose of capturing Osama bin Laden, destroying al-Qaeda and removing the Taliban regime. By the end of 2001, the joint United States – Afghanistan coalition had toppled the Taliban's main strongholds in Kabul, Kunduz and Kandahar. After the remnants of the Taliban managed to evade coalition forces throughout the summer of 2002, they gradually began to regroup and make preparations for an insurgency that would persist well into the present.

As part of Operation Enduring Freedom, North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) troops began to replace U.S. troops in southern Afghanistan beginning in January of 2006. By July, the NATO-led International Security Assistance Force had assumed full command in the south. By October, the NATO force had assumed control in the east as well. During the transition, NATO forces faced the deadliest spate of violence in the country since the Taliban regime was ousted in 2001.

Since 2006, increased Taliban insurgent activity, burgeoning illegal drug production and a fragile government with little control outside Kabul have threatened the stability of Afghanistan. By undermining human capital, the Taliban constrains Afghanistan's potential room for growth. Through shootings, bombings, beheadings and burnings, the Taliban have forced many public schools across the country to shut down.

Conflict between U.S. and European leaders has also hampered the effort to stabilize Afghanistan. British commanders criticized American Special Forces for causing a high level of civilian casualties due to the extensive use of air power. The British have claimed that these casualties make it hard to win local support. U.S. and European leaders also have disagreed over the number of troops

needed in Afghanistan. Although NATO troops will commit more troops to combat the Taliban insurgents, the force still falls short of what U.S. and Afghan commanders want. As of April 2008, NATO maintained 47,000 troops in the region. A contingent of 2,500 U.S. Marines will be added to forces in southern Afghanistan, but only until November 2008. Four hundred eighty eight U.S. soldiers have died in the war in Afghanistan as of 25 April 2008.

Other reasons explain the failure in Afghanistan to stabilize the countryside, curb insurgent attacks and reduce death. The U.S. delayed its efforts to pressure the Pakistani government to crack down on Taliban members finding safe haven within the country. The war in Iraq has meant that military, financial, and political resources have been shifted away from Afghanistan to Iraq. From fiscal 2005 to fiscal 2006, U.S. assistance to Afghanistan dropped 38 percent, from \$4.3 billion to \$3.1 billion. Washington has spent around \$3.4 billion a year for reconstruction efforts in Afghanistan, less than half of what it spends in Iraq. In brief, U.S. leaders have had a hard time dividing their attention between the reconstruction efforts needed in Afghanistan and the war in Iraq. (New York Times, BBC, Economist, Washington Post)