

SAGE* THOUGHTS

We all want to create peace in the world. But it seems few of us are prepared to create the political and economic changes that are necessary for this. We have to start with the recognition that war is a very profitable business and that governments are the chief customers. [Thich Nhat Hanh](#) wisely notes that the roots of war are found in the way we live our lives. It's not only the violence we struggle with internally. Our tacit support for an economic system that values money more than people and now largely controls public policy is a key. I think [John Kenneth Galbraith](#) has it right: "War remains the decisive human failure". (See his excellent article "[A Cloud Over Civilisation](#)" for details.)

So to think about world peace we had better be thinking about the U.S. political system. If your main customer is the federal government, any decent business leader knows you need to find ways to expand your influence there in order to increase business. [President Eisenhower's concern about the military-industrial complex](#) has come to full fruition. Our war industry (this is a more accurate description than "defense" industry), like other big businesses, enjoys great advantages in our current political system:

- An election system that requires lots of cash. Money largely equates to influence. And who can buy lots of it? Then after you get elected to Congress or become president what do you need to spend a lot of time doing?
- A lobbying system with few restraints. And who has the money to hire gobs of well-paid lobbyists? Who has most of the lawyers who can be so helpful to suggest or even write legislation that the busy legislators don't have time to create, or often even read? Which lobbyists are best equipped to help out with the fund raising needs of legislators and the president (either through direct donations or assistance in fund raising efforts)? And then the plum: Who better to hire as lobbyists to influence government policy than ex-legislators and executive staff who can return at higher salaries to schmooze with their former colleagues? Then you hire ex-military staff to convince their former Pentagon brethren about

the absolute necessity of building purchase of the latest lethal weapon on the industries' drawing boards into their next budget request.

- A friendly Supreme Court. Who benefits most as a result of their ludicrous ruling in the [Citizens United case](#) on 1-21-11 that the Constitution can't tell the difference between me and General Motors when it comes to rights of political speech? Their finding that money equals speech (so you can't limit it or require disclosure of its source) makes the decision even more bizarre.

Extensive public relations and friendly media that buy acceptance for our war business leaders and reinforces our culture of "redemptive violence" (as Walter Wink so aptly put it) top off the package. In contrast to the old capitalists of the 19th century, these leaders and their staff have the creditability to be serving in the White House and administrative departments, particularly the State Department, or used as consultants. Think [Dick Cheney](#) here. In recent decades a feature of our political system is the revolving door between our war industry and Congress, executive departments, and the Pentagon.

As Galbraith notes, this ensures that the military option is always given serious consideration in dealing with world affairs. A classic example is the primary choice of military means to fight terrorism after [9-11](#). When a job requires a surgeon's scalpel and use a jackhammer instead, why should we be surprised we only made the problem worse? But who is complaining? This approach just led to a larger (and more profitable) military effort. Military influence also ensures that a sizeable chunk of our foreign aid is actually used for purchase of military goods. (This is a neat trick when you think of it: give our taxpayer dollars to foreign nations who then return part of it to enrich our war industry and its investors.)

Is it any wonder that we:

- Live in a culture that glorifies violence and the military, and emphasizes fear;
- Build weapon systems we don't need;
- Maintain a military size far out of proportion to our real needs;
- Sell more arms than the rest of the world combined;

- Maintain over a thousand bases around the world;
- Privatize war (This practice led at one time in Iraq to our having about the same number of private contractors as military personnel. From the perspective of the war industry this “improved” way of waging war creates more profits while avoiding the political opposition that a draft can generate.);
- Try exempting our war establishment when it comes to making necessary budget cuts (even though in the 2011 fiscal year it comprised 48% of the budget excluding the trust funds like Social Security);
- Are involved in armed conflicts around the world almost continuously for many years?

John Kenneth Galbraith’s volume of essays, [The Economics of Innocent Fraud](#), is an excellent summary of the myths and realities of our current economic system. This excerpt describes how our war industry dominates U.S. military and foreign policy. He notes we are accepting “programmed death for the young and random slaughter for men and women of all ages”. Galbraith puts war in perspective as “the decisive human failure”.

So what can we do about all of this? Click into next month’s column for some answers.

-- Bob Rundle

**SAGE is the [Institute for Spirituality and Global Economics](#), an arm of the Peacebuilding Institute, and a new contributor to The Peace Memo. We hope they will become frequent contributors.*

Who knew?

This may be one of the nation’s best kept secrets:

The [United States Institute of Peace](#) (USIP) provides the analysis, training and tools that help to prevent, manage and end violent international conflicts, promote stability and professionalize the field of peacebuilding.

United States Institute of Peace Forges Ahead with Congressional Mission to Prevent and Manage International Conflict

February 17, 2011

Contact: Allison Sturma
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The House vote on February 17 proposes elimination of the Institute’s funding for the remainder of the fiscal year, and reflects the concern of all Americans, which we share, to bring the federal budget under control.

The [United States Institute of Peace](#), like all the federal government’s national security and foreign affairs institutions, knows that America’s spending must come under control. And we are doing our part to contribute to bringing down the deficit.

But we also know that no price can be put on peace. National security can never be compromised. America is at war. There are organizations like ours that save lives and save money to prevent, manage, and resolve international conflicts without violence. We will continue to carry out our Congressional mandate to help train civilians and military personnel and to help international organizations in the transition from war to peace.

The United States Institute of Peace was buoyed this week by [expressions of support](#) (PDF/864 KB) from the senior most leaders of our country—both on the civilian and defense side, and from members of Congress.

The Institute of Peace was set up by Congress as a non-partisan effort, during the presidency of Ronald Reagan. Its origins began earlier -- through a legislated commission chaired by Sen. Spark Matsunaga (D-Hawaii), a World War II veteran of the Army’s famed 442nd Regimental Combat Team, who believed passionately in the importance of the U.S. as international peacemaker. On our 20th anniversary, Congress passed a bipartisan resolution applauding the Institute’s work. We are determined to live up to that reputation—and sustain the course in support of our congressional mission.

Richard Solomon is president of the United States Institute of Peace. Go to the [article](#) for references.

[Hotspots of 2011- the places to watch in 2011, and why](#)

Posted by [Camilla Schippa](#) on January 12, 2011

(Jim Foster, President of the [Peacebuilding Institute](#) adds sixteen additional “Hotspots,” and concluding remarks. These follow Camilla, Schippa’s observations. I have abridged some of Ms. Schippa’s entries; for full text, click on the article title. The Peacebuilding Institute, an international, full-spectrum peacebuilding organization, publishes The Peace Memo.)

Just before 2010 clicked over, Foreign Policy with the [International Crisis Group](#) (ICG) published the top 16 crisis points to watch in 2011. According to the International Crisis Group, there are currently three dozen conflicts worldwide, and they took a look at the 16 hotspots to look out for in 2011. Here are the 14 countries on the ICG list which are also covered by the [Global Peace Index](#) (GPI). What are your thoughts? Any other country to add?

Cote d’Ivoire ([2010 GPI Position: 118/149](#)): With the run-off election between incumbent Laurent Gbagbo and Cote d’Ivoire’s former Prime Minister, Alassane Ouattara, being marred by clashes, allegations of fraud by both sides, and mounting international and regional pressure on Gbagbo to step down, the situation in Cote d’Ivoire has the potential to take a negative turn in 2011.

Colombia ([2010 GPI Position: 138/149](#)): With a new president, Juan Manuel Santos, Colombia’s prospects look bright for 2011. Many of his reforms have focused on addressing the long term issues, however, FARC still maintain 8,000 armed troops and many more supporters throughout the country. Parallel to this, there has been a rise in urban violence and homicide rates, mainly connected to the drug trafficking market.

Zimbabwe ([2010 GPI Position: 135/149](#)): With elections due mid this year, the unity government forged in the wake of disputed 2008 elections is seemingly on borrowed time. President Robert Mugabe and Prime Minister Morgan Tsvangirai are at disagreement over what the elections are all about. Mugabe wants an end to the unity government, while Tsvangirai wants a new constitution to come

out of the 2011 elections. There is a real possibility that violence will break out around the elections

Iraq ([2010 GPI Position: 149/149](#)): While Iraq still holds the last position on the Global Peace Index (the same position that it held in 2007 and each subsequent Global Peace Index), there are less dying from conflict and terror-related activities now than in the past. However, the new government, formed after 9 months of political stalemate, is currently extremely weak, while Iraq’s security forces remain extremely reliant on U S-led forces and training.

Venezuela ([2010 GPI Position: 122/149](#)): Venezuela’s economic, social and security problems are spiking, with urban violence spiking dramatically, while Venezuela has also become a major drug trafficking corridor, hosting foreign and domestic drug cartels. President Hugo Chavez has been accused of stoking the fire with partisan, fiery rhetoric, while his recently-enabled “decree powers” have all but silenced the newly elected, opposition-controlled National Assembly

Sudan ([2010 GPI Position: 146/149](#)): With the southern Sudan referendum in full-swing, the fate of Sudan for 2011 will be set early in the year – and perhaps within days. With all going well, the referendum outcome (widely expected to result in southern Sudan seceding from the north) will be recognized by the northern government, and violence will be kept to a minimum. However, hotspots within the country include Darfur and in the disputed area of Abyei along the north/south border, where violence has already been recorded.

Mexico ([2010 GPI Position: 107/149](#)): The ongoing war on drug cartels within Mexico, announced four years ago by President Felipe Calderón, has claimed over 30,000 lives. Violence has spread to the countries economic and cultural centers, while organized crime routes reached into much of the United States. Ciudad Juarez, a border city with Texas, is considered on par with Caracas as the most deadly city in the world

Guatemala ([2010 GPI Position: 112/149](#)): Affected by the drug war in Mexico, many drug cartels are finding friendly ground in Guatemala, where the country itself is weak, and government institutions are much more fragile than those in Mexico. The

Peace Memo

Volume 3, Number 3

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United Nations has set up, and now extended the mandate for, the International Commission Against Impunity in Guatemala as an attempt to prevent corruption, and the further reach of drug cartels, among government officials. Elections are also slated for August of this year, but early polls indicate a nation facing no clear forerunner, and an environment which could easily erupt into a turf war between expanding drug cartels

Haiti ([2010 GPI Position: 114/149](#)): With the earthquake at the beginning of 2010 killing over 300,000 people, and subsequent cholera outbreak and a painstakingly slow reconstruction effort, to many Haiti is on the brink of social collapse. 1 million people still remain homeless in Haiti's capital, while the government still remains unable to provide services or security, after the earthquake shattered the government's infrastructure. Elections in November of last year resulted in a stalemate, with a run-off election due this month.

Pakistan ([2010 GPI Position: 145/149](#)): Floods that have displaced 10 million people adds to the problems which Pakistan faces, with security threats from terrorist organizations based on Pakistani soil, and political instability stemming from a weak government and the influence of the military within Pakistan. The government so far has been unable to confront security threats in the northwestern parts of the country with full force, while the government in Islamabad is increasingly gaining the public image of being corrupt and unable to reign in military leaders and the military establishment.

Somalia ([2010 GPI Position: 148/149](#)): The transitional government, backed by the UN and African Union peacekeeping forces, remains weak, with much of the country controlled by insurgent groups, of which the biggest is al Shabab, who control much of the southern and central parts of the country. However, Somaliland in the northwest is stable with functioning democratic rule, while Puntland in the northeast is relatively peaceful while partly being troubled by insurgents and pirate gangs.

Lebanon ([2010 GPI Position: 134/149](#)): Politically, Lebanon is currently fragile, with a power-sharing pact formed in 2008 being increasingly strained and tested. The assassination of former Prime Minister

Rafik Hariri has led to the formation of an international tribunal which could spark sectarian violence within the country yet again, and perhaps motivating further politically-oriented assassinations. Externally, Lebanon also risks sliding back into another war with Israel. Relations between the two countries are exceptionally tense, and the build-up of military forces along the Israel/Lebanon border continually threatens a slide into all out war. Tense internal and external situations are both contributing to an extremely fragile environment for Lebanon in 2011.

Nigeria ([2010 GPI Position: 137/149](#)): Another nation with another election slated for this year, sectarian violence and the unraveling of a rebel amnesty in the Niger Delta characterized Nigeria in 2010. In 2011, the election may see violence in both pre and post-poll environments, while the practice of intimidation and vote buying is common in Nigerian elections. The rebel forces in the Niger Delta show no sign of slowing their attacks, with attacks on oil facilities and government offices commonplace. To top it off, the new president, whoever that may be, must also deal with vast economic inequality among the nations 140 million citizens which leaves oil wealth in the hands of a few, while much of the population live around the poverty line.

Democratic Republic of the Congo ([2010 GPI Position: 140/149](#)): After the official end of the Second Congo War, massive parts of the nation remain in upheaval. The worlds largest UN peacekeeping force is finding it difficult to protect those living even close to its bases, while rebel groups roam much of the country. Neither the government, based on one side of the nation with its own distinct language and an impenetrable jungle separating it from the rest of the nation, nor rebel forces have enough resources to win an all out war against each other, but both have enough resources to continue fighting indefinitely. The situation in the Democratic Republic of the Congo is dire, and for 2011, it seems that much of the same can be expected.

NOTE: **Guinea** and **Tajikistan** were also included in the International Crisis Group article. However, these two countries are not yet included in the

Peace Memo

Volume 3, Number 3

March 2011

Global Peace Index as of 2010, as insufficient data was available at the time of publication of the Index.

Additional Hot Spots to watch in 2011, suggested by Jim Foster, President of the **Peacebuilding Institute**, include:

Afghanistan, the epitome of the dictum that violence begets violence, is courting even more violence with its corrupt government and fraudulent elections. It is listed as one of the ten most violent nations on the Global Peace Index.

Myanmar, with its government's continuing policies of isolation and repression, and human rights abuses, is ripe for revolution, particularly on the part of its repressed Buddhist population.

Tunisia, with a new government no better equipped to handle its economic recession than was the former government.

Algeria has some of the same issues of repressive government, as does its neighbor, Tunisia.

Libya, like Algeria, has issues of repression and corruption by its government and is also a neighbor of Tunisia.

Egypt, a longstanding benevolent dictator has left, but the path to representative government is not yet clear.

Mauritania, is a neighbor of Albania, is beset by ethnic tensions in an Islamic state. It is also next in line to follow the example of the Tunisian people..

Israel/Palestine are two peoples who will probably continue at loggerheads with each other for the foreseeable future, as they have for many years. **Israel** is one of the world's ten most violent countries according to the GPI.

Iran, whose policies of repression of its own people and its antagonistic attitudes toward the rest of the world will likely continue its downward spiral. The 2009 riots have set the stage for more to come, both in Iran and in other Middle Eastern nations.

North Korea, whose nuclear brinkmanship with South Korea and its brutal repression of its own people, could easily overreach, may bring all-out war to that region with devastating consequences for itself and all of its neighbors.

Russia, with its continuing economic and human rights issues, is one of the world's ten most violent countries on the GPI.

Ukraine, a former Soviet bloc nation, has yet to achieve a stable government free of oppressive interference of Russia.

Georgia, a former Soviet bloc nation, has yet to achieve a stable government free of oppressive interference of Russia. It is listed as one of the ten most violent countries on the GPI.

Yemen, whose weak government and the presence of Al Qaeda make for a very volatile situation. Its prospects for peace have gone down significantly in 2010.

Syria, a country in the middle of warring factions and steeply declining on the GPI.

Madagascar is a country steeply declining on the GPI.

Zimbabwe is a country steeply declining on the GPI.

Suffice it to say that for 2011 the work of peace is as urgent as ever—but it is not hopeless. This brief survey has focused on current “hotspots.” It has not made note of recent successes, such as Ireland, which has moved dramatically from violence to its current position as one of the world's ten most peaceful nations, according to the Global Peace Index. What has happened in Ireland can happen elsewhere. It is the conviction of this writer that a new day is dawning and that peace will ultimately prevail worldwide. The efforts of the tens of thousands peace builders at work around the world will not be in vain.

James L. Foster, President
[Peacebuilding Institute](#)

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Religious Leaders Condemn Attacks on Public Employees

Interfaith Worker Justice Defends Beleaguered State Workers amidst "Moral Crisis"

"February is shaping up as the cruelest month workers have known in decades," columnist Harold Meyerson [wrote](#) in Wednesday's *Washington Post*, referring to Wisconsin Governor Scott Walker's [proposal](#) to strip public employees of most of their collective bargaining rights and cut pay and benefits without any negotiation – and his threat to [call out the National Guard](#) if the state's public employees go on strike.

But the assault on public workers is under way in multiple states. Bills that would in one form or another roll back labor rights and wage standards have recently been (or will soon be) introduced in Alaska, Arizona, Colorado, Connecticut, Hawaii, Idaho, Indiana, Iowa, Kansas, Maine, Michigan, Minnesota, Mississippi, Missouri, Montana, Nevada, New Hampshire, New Mexico, Ohio, Oregon, Pennsylvania, South Dakota, Tennessee, Texas, Virginia, Washington, and West Virginia.

Amidst this onslaught, the [Board of Directors of Interfaith Worker Justice](#) today issued a statement that brings religious teachings to bear on the current national standoff. The statement, [Stop Attacking Workers](#), reads:

Our religious traditions insist that workers, as human beings with inherent dignity, have the right to form associations to improve their conditions at work. Statements issued by a wide array of ... faith bodies support the right of workers to organize and bargain with their employers over wages, benefits, and a voice on the job.

"Governor Walker's bill is an affront to the human dignity of public sector workers," said Rabbi Renée Bauer, Director of the [Interfaith Coalition for Worker Justice of South Central Wisconsin](#). "As a religious leader I recognize this as a moral crisis. Jewish tradition makes protecting the weak from exploitation by the mighty, treating laborers fairly and recognizing their rights to organize a religious obligation."

"My tradition is not alone in this call," Rabbi Bauer said. "All religions believe in justice. Now is the time for all of us to live out our faith by raising our voices to protect the rights of workers in Wisconsin and throughout the country."

Tennessee's Legislature will soon consider bills that would [curtail the rights of teachers and prohibit them from collective bargaining](#).

"Tennessee State Senators are trying to ram through legislation this week attacking school teachers," said Rev. Jim Sessions of Interfaith Worker Justice of East Tennessee and a member of IWJ's national board of directors. "They want to turn the clock back 50 years, when teachers had no right to organize and salaries were so low because the mainly female workforce wasn't supposed to need much money, as they were provided for by their husbands. Those times are gone, teachers have won dignity on the job, and we need to move forward, not backward," said Sessions, a United Methodist minister.

"Rather than pushing down standards for public workers, all workers should be valued and achieve respect at the workplace," reads the Interfaith Worker Justice board statement, which concludes:

Using the state budget crisis as a pretext for ramming through anti-worker "Right to Work" laws and prohibitions on state worker representation is an affront to workers and to the faith principles of justice and fairness. The people who take care of our children and our elderly, build our roads and schools, teach our children, serve our food, attend our houses of worship, and work in our hospitals and industries deserve better.

The full text of the statement is available at <http://www.iwj.org/index.cfm/stop-attacking-workers>. Also see IWJ's resource "What Faith Groups Say About the Right to Organize" ([PDF](#)).

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The Great Bobble-head Saga

Posted to [Standing on the Side of Love](#) by John Bohstedt, [Tennessee Valley Unitarian Universalist Church](#) in Knoxville, February 10, 2011.

Four days after the horrific shootings in Tucson, TV news [reported](#) that a local firing range, “Fabulous Firearms,” run by Brent Wilson, had advertised a unique fund-raiser for the next Saturday (Jan. 15). For \$5, shooters could fire at one of two bobble-head dolls (8” high), the proceeds going to the Second Harvest Food Bank. The bobble-heads were anything but anonymous: they were dolls of Lane Kiffin and his father, Monte Kiffin, former University of Tennessee football coaches despised by fans for having abruptly left our program for the rosier climes of Southern Cal. So fans could get their anger out while contributing to a worthy cause, Wilson announced.

That shocked us – just as the nation plunged into a furious debate over the role of vitriolic rhetoric in contributing to our nation’s long history of public shootings, people were invited to enjoy shooting at effigies of living public figures! At Tennessee Valley Unitarian Universalist Church (Knoxville), we have wanted to reduce violent political rhetoric ever since our own Church shootings in 2008. “Our” shooter’s four-page manifesto explained in detail that “This was a hate crime, ” “This was a political protest,” “This was a symbolic killing.” Since he could not get at the liberal elites listed in Bernard Goldberg’s 100 People Who Are Screwing Up America, he would shoot their local supporters. His letter echoed familiar hate- radio themes, and incendiary books that the police found in his home: Michael Savage, Liberalism is a Mental Disorder; Sean Hannity, Let Freedom Ring: Winning the War of Liberty over Liberalism; Bill O’Reilly, The O’Reilly Factor: The Good, the Bad, and the Completely Ridiculous in American Life. He carried 70 high-powered shells, and evidently planned to keep shooting until he was killed by the police. Instead he was tackled by five parishioners.

In the last five years of hate-radio’s and TV’s competitions in outrage, “trigger-words” have become common in political diatribes. By trigger-words I mean direct calls for physical violence such as:



Bobble-head dolls of ex-UTK coaches Lane & Monte Kiffin, as portrayed online. (Thanks to Ted Lollis)

They oughta be hanged!” “Just shoot him!” “Beat him up!” “Kick them out,” “Make them afraid to leave their home,” and so on. Because our shooter’s expressed motivations reproduced such rhetoric, many TVUUCers believed – not that such words alone “caused” shootings – but rather that they gave public currency to the idea of physically attacking a political opponent, formulated as a suggestion – not to every listener, but to someone already living in a delusional world who heard the TV or the dog talking directly to him.

We felt the Great Bobble-head Shoot would affirm the legitimacy of murderous rhetoric about celebrities. Indeed, some of Wilson’s fans joked on Facebook about shooting at Obama dolls! So we called for a ban on talk of physical violence against political opponents, not by state fiat but by leadership.

TVUUC members did several things. As a spirited discussion began on our own e-list, Ted Jones & Bill Fields drafted a resolution for the TVUUC Board that would “respectfully ask the Unitarian Universalist Association that the [Standing of the Side of Love](#) initiative make the issue of public speech that contributes to violence one of their campaigns.” The motion was circulated and unanimously endorsed by our Board. Meanwhile Ted Jones and John Bohstedt began conversations about actions with Dan Furmansky, director of SSL. Partly as a result of those conversations, SSL posted a web-page that enabled voters to [ask their Congressmen to renounce “vitriolic rhetoric.”](#) Dan accepted Ted Lollis’s invitation to give a forum on his work at SSL, the weekend of the UUA’s [National Day of Standing on the Side of Love](#), featuring associated UU events across the country. Rev. Chris Buice of TVUUC organized an interfaith panel for that afternoon to discuss

“Standing on the Side of Love: Spiritual Approaches to Polarized Politics.”

John Bohstedt and several others emailed the director of Second Harvest Food Bank (with which we had collaborated for years), and asked them to sever their relationship with the shooting fund-raiser. We committed to raising the money to replace the \$2000 they anticipated from the shooting event. (Note: The event had been planned weeks before Tucson). After receiving a number of friendly suggestions from TVUUCers, and angry blasts from some others, Second Harvest announced they had severed their link to the shooting event. We promptly raised the money. More than \$4000 came in within 24 hours (from TVUUC and our networks of allies). A Sunday Special Collection at TVUUC harvested \$1700 more. A second charity also declined connection with the shooting event.

Meanwhile, several of us also began to email the owner of Fabulous Firearms, Brent Wilson, explaining our feelings to him. In several exchanges he responded cordially, though noting that “we are worlds apart in our beliefs.” Indeed we were: in religion; in the possible role of rhetoric in violence; and in his view that we hypocritically accepted the “genocide of babies.” He thought the notion that shooting at dolls “caused” murders was idolatrous, satanic and sick. Nevertheless, he moved from using bobble-head targets to clay pigeons to paper targets, joking “as long as the tree-huggers don’t come after me.” He described this as “a compromise, but not a capitulation.” As he explained to his fans who accused him of “caving in:” We critics were not anti-gun, but “when it comes to people who for whatever reason were really distressed that we might shoot a likeness of a human – well one can’t argue with that.”

I call that a brave and generous response.

We did not change Brent and his supporters. We did not try to. We expressed our views frankly, however much they might conflict, with enough respect to keep the conversation going, recognizing that we remained “worlds apart.” It seemed in the end that, while compromise on principles was unlikely or even undesirable, it was possible to find common ground on a specific action, perhaps on unexpected bases.

Epilogue: The day of the event, Ted Jones led a Bobble-head Rescue. He collected \$5s and “saved” several dolls, together with a paper target. (Of course they were silhouettes!) But it felt like a win-win-win that achieved satisfactory outcomes for all three parties, while humiliating or antagonizing none.

FYI: Rachel Sabbath: About the Rachel Sabbath Initiative

In 2009, the [Religious Institute](#) launched the [Rachel Sabbath Initiative](#), calling on congregations and denominations from diverse faith traditions to raise awareness and support for the United Nations Millennium Development Goal 5 to reduce maternal mortality worldwide and achieve universal access to reproductive health by 2015.

Approximately 343,000 women die every year around the world from complications related to childbirth or pregnancy. Maternal mortality could be reduced by more than 70 percent by improved access to reproductive health services, including contraception, treatment for pregnancy and birth complications, and strategies to prevent or manage abortion-related complications.

New Friends:

[Shanti Foundation for Peace](#)

[Unrest Magazine](#)



Spotlight on our Affiliate:

[Voices in the Treetops](#)

Through the expressive arts, Voices in the Treetops, Inc. networks to create a culture of peace by fostering positive, co-operative, productive activism. We concentrate on literary and performing arts programs for children, teens, and adults which promote character development, leadership, social and environmental responsibility, wellness, entrepreneurial skills development, social justice, and cultural preservation. Our mission is to teach and/or empower the principles of pro-active communication through the performing and literary arts and to partner with agencies and institutions operating for the good of the community.

We specialize in workshops, e.g. Domestic Violence, that challenge the structures of power and control that continue to destroy the fabric and integrity of our society. We mentor young artists, activists and advocates. We help communities use the power of the performing arts to promote peace, facilitating constructive dialogue and collaboration between individuals, families, faith-based organizations, social service agencies, juvenile services, legal and medical professionals, health professionals and institutions of primary through higher education. VOICES IN THE TREETOPS, Inc. is totally committed to creating a culture of peace.

Contact [Paula Larke](#) for more information.

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Workshops, etc.:

[Ecumenical Advocacy Days](#)

Development, Security and Economic Justice: What's Gender Got to Do with It?

March 25-28, 2011 Washington, D.C.

Join faith-based advocates from across the U. S. in the nation's capital **March 25-28, 2011** to be inspired and equipped to speak boldly on behalf of people-centered sustainable development and economic justice, physical safety, security and peacemaking, with a particular focus on those most impacted — women, girls and families. Experts will train participants on policy issues and advocacy, culminating on Monday with lobby visits on Capitol Hill.

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Based in Knoxville, TN, **The Peace Building Institute** is a 501c3 non-profit, full-spectrum, peacebuilding organization directly engaged in or supportive of a variety of organizations and activities. It is the vision of **The Peacebuilding Institute** that it and its institutes, programs, and affiliates accomplish their Mission using the following criteria:

1. Programs and materials, though they may be spiritually based, are offered without exclusion.
2. We will use efficient and effective means of communication, including information technology, to accomplish our purposes.
3. Programs and materials must be affordable and accessible to the broadest range of people, supporting the full spectrum or peacebuilding specializations.
4. We support peace and justice advocacy and peacebuilding activities worldwide, networking wherever possible, particularly with those in the most impoverished, repressive nations.

Visit our [web site](#) for more information on affiliates and programs.

Benefits of Joining: The satisfaction of knowing you are supporting many efforts for peace around the world; learning about events and gatherings for

peace; meeting folks across faiths and cultures; access to programs with [our speakers and facilitators](#); free consulting services for planning your peace event.

The Peacebuilding Institute has two types of memberships, individual and organizational. We are committed to the principle that economic need should not interfere with membership, therefore membership levels take into account the great disparities of wealth among nations. To achieve approximate parity in minimum membership fees, these fees are tied to the ranking of the per capita income of each country.

The percent reduction in fees corresponds to the quarterly global ranking of such national income. For example, if a nation is ranked in the lowest 25 percent of income, fees would be 25 percent of the minimum suggested giving level. The higher quarterly rankings would result in either a 50 or 75 percent rate. The Membership Coordinator can make exceptions.

For those located in wealthier nations the suggested individual levels are: \$20.00, \$35.00, \$50.00, or other (USD) per year. Suggested organizational levels are: \$100.00, \$150.00, \$200.00 or other (US) per year.

Contact us: 865.332.2912
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GOOD NEWS:

[Israel's Defence Minister Barak: Must look beyond Middle East risks](#)

28 February 2011 - Israel's defence minister said Monday that his country would be ready to talk peace with Syria if Damascus were serious about doing so -- a sharp departure from Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's go-slow approach to peacemaking while the Middle East is in turmoil. Defence Minister Ehud Barak said, Israel must see the changes as an opportunity to move peacemaking forward -- including possible talks with Syria.

THE SPARROW SINGS

January, 2011

According to Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., the U.S. is “the greatest purveyor of violence in the world.” A gun’s reason for being made and sold is to do violence to another. This is reason enough why guns, especially handguns and assault rifles, should not be sold to Americans. We don’t give sugar to a diabetic, or acidic products to someone suffering from ulcers. Then why give a gun to someone who is violent? We see the terrible results of doing so. Those who deal in gun trade are accomplices to the crimes committed with guns. I feel the only way to change this is to have our schools, churches and institutions begin to teach the nonviolence preached and practiced by Dr. King and Jesus Christ before him. The other thing we can do is to make it illegal to produce and sell guns and ammunition for the 250 million guns already out there. At this time it is permitted to sell guns at gun shows where no background checks are done on potential buyers. It is true that other things, like cars, also kill people; but cars are not made to do violence to another. They are made to transport people. A gun, however, is made for one purpose only....to wound or kill. According to The New England Journal of Medicine, the owners of guns are 43 times more likely to be wounded or killed with guns than those without guns. Despite the rhetoric of the N.R.A., guns are very poor means of defense. Nonviolence is a far better defense. Violence only leads to more violence. Nonviolent acts lead to less violence. Dr. King and Gandhi both warned us that “We either have nonviolence or nonexistence.” --Don Timmerman

“The main thing is not to fear approaching anyone. We need to learn to approach those whom we or others regard as our enemies, whether people in another country or the White House or people anywhere in positions of political or religious leadership—people who have authority

Peace Memo

Volume 3, Number 3

March 2011

and power which could be used for the welfare of the human family. We need to think about the manner in which we approach them. If we can possibly imbibe a little of the spirit of St. Francis, it will help.” --Sr. Rosemary Lynch, a peacemaker who recently died after being hit by a car.

We try to be accepting of people and be present to them rather than trying to change them. The most important thing is to stay calm and peaceful. Folks who want to change will work at it. Others might not have the resources to change.” --Peter Stieher of the San Bruno CA Catholic Worker

“When scientific power outruns moral power, we end up with guided missiles and misguided men.” “The Church must be reminded that it is not the master or the servant of the state, but rather the conscience of the state. It must be the guide and the critic of the state, and never its tool. During the last two world wars, national churches even functioned as the ready lackey of the state, sprinkling holy water upon the battleships and joining the mighty armies in singing ‘Praise the Lord and pass the ammunition.’ A weary world, pleading desperately for peace, has often found the Church morally sanctioning war.” --Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.

INTERESTING FACTS

Only one week after the shootings in Tucson, the Crossroads of the West gun show took place just 13 miles away from the shooting site. --[Democracy Now](#), 1/14/11

The U.S. has well over 250 million guns in private hands (N.R.A.), more than any other country. In 1 year, guns killed 17 in Finland, 35 in Australia, 39 in England and Wales, 60 in Spain, 194 in German, 200 in Canada, and 9,484 in the U.S. --[The Brady Campaign](#)

Right now 90% of war funds are spent on attacks and only 10% on development. --[The Nation](#), 1/3/2011

Seven years after the U.S.-led invasion, Iraq’s national grid still only supplies a few hours of power each day and intermittent electricity is one of the public’s top complaints. --[Just Foreign Policy](#), 1/5/2011

Guatemala has one of the highest murder rates in the hemisphere with 52 homicides per 100,000 inhabitants. ----Jerry Brewer, C.E.O. of Criminal Justice International Associates

More than 250 cases of rape have occurred in several makeshift camps in Haiti in the first 150 days after the earthquake of Jan. 12, 2010. --[Amnesty International](#)

Former president Jean-Bertrande Aristide, is not permitted to return to Haiti. However, “Baby Doc” Duvalier, notorious for his human rights abuses, is permitted to return. --[Reuters](#), 1/19/11

Corporations in the U.S. are employing people. In 2010 , they employed 1.4 million people....all overseas. Over half of the people employed by Caterpillar were overseas. Dupont continues to hire people of Asia and now no longer considers itself an American company. Coca-Cola, Dell and IBM also hired more people overseas. --[Buzzflash](#), 12/29/10

This was the 34th consecutive year that the global temperature was above average. The last below-average year was 1976. --[USA Today](#), 1/12/11

The U.S. government spent only 0.05% of its GDP last year on federal job-training and job-search programs while 1% was spent on unemployment insurance.

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Volume 3, Number 3

March 2011



MARK YOUR CALENDAR!

When	Who	What	Where	Details
March 13 2:00 PM	PIET	Planning Meeting	Church of the Savior 934 Weisgarber Rd. Knoxville, TN	Planning for Summer Peace-building Institute
March 25-28, 2011	Ecumenical Advocacy Days	Development, Security and Economic Justice: What's Gender Got to Do with It?	DoubleTree Hotel Crystal City 300 Army Navy Dr. Arlington, VA	Call (800) 222-8733 to make reservations under the name "Ecumenical Advocacy Days" Call (800) 222-8733 to make reservations under the name "Ecumenical Advocacy Days"

