



Building the Peace Toolbox

Three Steps Congress Could Take Right Now

“Our national security toolbox must be equipped with more than just hammers.”

~Secretary of Defense Robert M. Gates

The United States spends hundreds of billions of dollars each year to prepare for and fight wars. But very little money or time is invested in the tools needed to prevent deadly conflict: **diplomacy, development, and international cooperation**. As a result, when U.S. policymakers look for practical ways to respond to conflicts, they only find one thing in their toolbox—a military hammer.

The United States needs to invest in a new foreign policy toolkit equipped to prevent wars before they break out and to maintain peace in postconflict environments. The effective *nonmilitary* tools for preventing deadly conflict and responding to crises are well known but not well funded. Here are three steps Congress could take right now to begin outfitting that peace toolbox.

1 **Diplomacy: Rebuild the Diplomatic Corps**

The United States needs a robust, well-trained corps of diplomats trained in conflict prevention that is deployed to areas of potential or ongoing conflict. In 2008 the United States did not have foreign service officers with the right skills in the right places; nearly one-quarter of all U.S. diplomatic posts around the world were vacant. In 2009 Congress should provide funding to hire and train 1,000 new foreign service officers who can be deployed to conflict zones.

2 **Development: Reform Foreign Aid**

Effective development assistance can help reduce deadly conflict. Unfortunately, U.S. foreign aid is largely driven by short-term political interests. Congress has cut funding for core development assistance programs that address the poverty, lack of education, and inequality that fuel conflict. Urge your representative to double funding for core development assistance accounts from \$4.4 billion to \$8.8 billion and to focus foreign assistance on long-term development.

3 **International Cooperation: Fund the United Nations**

The United Nations plays a critical role in preventive diplomacy, peacekeeping, and postconflict peacebuilding. U.N. peacekeeping operations can cost less than half what the U.S. government would have to spend for a similar effort. In 2009 Congress should repay the nearly \$1.6 billion in U.S. debt to the United Nations and end the restriction on paying this country's full share of peacekeeping costs.

For more information go to www.fcnl.org/wina/whatis.htm

