



Persuading Congress to Work for Peace

Five Steps Congress Could Take Right Now

“When your only tool is a hammer, everything looks like a nail.”

The U.S. has invested hundreds of billions of dollars to fight and win wars. But very little money or time has been invested in the tools necessary to prevent deadly conflict. As a result, when U.S. policymakers look for tools to respond to wars and escalating conflicts, they find a toolbox with only one implement—a military hammer.

Changing budget priorities and reorienting U.S. foreign policy could take years, or even decades. But Congress can take a first step toward building a toolbox for peace by funding common sense, proven strategies to prevent war, help to deescalate wars when they break out, and help win the peace when the fighting has stopped. Here are five steps your members of Congress could take this year to build the peace toolbox:

- 1. Fund Civilian Peacebuilders** The U.S. has military forces and National Guard troops to deploy in conflict zones but no stand-by force of “civilian peacebuilders” skilled in finance, agriculture, health care, education, and civilian policing. Urge your representative and senators to cosponsor legislation authorizing the creation of a “civilian reserve corps” (H.R. 1084).
- 2. Fund Reconciliation Programs** The U.S. government’s “Reconciliation Program” supports projects such as a YMCA program in Jerusalem which brings together young people from Israeli and Palestinian backgrounds to play sports and begin to establish bonds of understanding. Urge your representative to work to double funding for the “Reconciliation Program” in the State Department funding bill.
- 3. Full Funding for U.S. Diplomacy** As of January 2008, the U.S. State Department has 1,000 diplomatic positions around the world that are unfilled, leaving empty desks at U.S. embassies. Congress needs to ensure that the U.S. has fully staffed diplomatic missions around the world. Urge your representatives and senators to increase funding for diplomacy in the State Department funding bill.
- 4. Fully Fund UN Peacekeeping and Pay \$1.2 Billion in Arrears** In some circumstances United Nations peacekeeping operations cost less than half what the U.S. government would have to spend for a similar effect. Urge your representative to support appropriations to pay the \$1.2 billion debt the U.S. owes to UN peacekeeping operations and to fully fund peacekeeping operations the U.S. endorses and votes for.
- 5. Double Funding for Development Assistance** Funding for core development assistance programs has been reduced dramatically in the last decade. Yet these programs address the poverty, lack of education, and hunger that are often root causes of conflict. Urge your representative to double funding for core development assistance from \$1.2 billion to \$2.4 billion.



Building Structures for Peace

FCNL has distributed nearly 50,000 copies of its popular booklet, “If War is Not the Answer, What Is?: the Peaceful Prevention of Deadly Conflict.”

“Building Structures for Peace: Filling a Peace Toolbox” builds on the original booklet, offering a practical guide to how Congress could initiate, shape, develop, and fund public policies that would strengthen the capacity of the U.S. government to work for the peaceful prevention of deadly conflict and help construct a durable peace.

Discussed in **Filling a Peace Toolbox** are five key tools for constructing peace.

1. Trained Diplomats
2. Development Assistance

3. UN Peacekeeping Missions
4. Multilateral Peacebuilding Capabilities
5. Stand-by Corps of Civilian Experts

Copies of the booklet are available now. Order a supply to share with your church, meeting, or community group. Order on-line by going to the FCNL website, www.fcnl.org, and clicking on “Publications,” or by calling 800-630-1330.

