

A study by the Congressional Budget Office itself found a "striking correlation between economic malaise on the one hand, and domestic unrest on the other."

For impoverished countries that are serious about raising standards of living, there can be no substitute for good governance and sound economic policies. But even the best trade and investment-led strategies will fail if they leave the poor behind. And, as President Carter points out, agriculture is the economic backbone of most of the world's poorest countries, and the primary source of livelihoods for the poor, rural majority.

The United States took a significant step in the right direction last year by passing and enacting into law the "Africa Seeds of Hope Act," (H.R. 4283, now Public Law: 105-385). This measure was designed to better focus existing programs of assistance to Africa on the needs of rural producers who represent a majority of Africans, yet have the lowest incomes and suffer from the worst food shortages in the world. By focusing resources on farmers, the measure works to ensure the long-term political stability and economic growth of the world's most famine-prone region. Congress should closely follow its implementation, but next steps must include payment of arrears to the United Nations, passage of debt relief legislation, and a reversal in the decline of our foreign aid budget. These are our cheapest and surest lines of defense against costly and destabilizing wars and crippling constraints to our own economic growth and expansion.

[From the Paris International Herald Tribune, June 17, 1999]

FIRST STEP TOWARD PEACE IS ERADICATING HUNGER

(By Jimmy Carter)

WASHINGTON—When the Cold War ended 10 years ago, we expected an era of peace. What we got instead was a decade of war.

The conflict in Kosovo is only the latest to embroil the international community. Conflicts have raged in Latin America, Europe, Africa and Asia in the 1990s, often involving the entire international community in costly relief operations and peacekeeping missions, frequently under hostile conditions. These conflicts—mostly civil wars—have been extraordinarily brutal, with most victims being children, women and the elderly.

Why has peace been so elusive? A recent report sponsored by Future Harvest and generated by the International Peace Research Institute in Oslo examines conflicts around the world and finds that—unlike that in Kosovo—most of today's wars are fueled by poverty, not by ideology.

The devastation occurs primarily in countries whose economies depend on agriculture but lack the means to make their farmland productive. These are developing countries such as Sudan, Congo, Colombia, Liberia, Peru, Sierra Leone and Sri Lanka—places with poor rural areas where malnutrition and hunger are widespread. The report found that poorly functioning agriculture in these countries heightens poverty, which in turn sparks conflict.

This suggests an obvious but often overlooked path to peace: Raise the standard of living of the millions of rural people who live in poverty by increasing agricultural productivity. Not only does agriculture put food on the table, but it also provides jobs, both on and off the farm, that raise incomes. Thriving agriculture is the engine that fuels broader economic growth and development, thus paving the way for prosperity and peace.

The economies of Europe, the United States, Canada and Japan were built on strong agriculture. But many developing countries have shifted their priorities away from farming in favor of urbanization, or they have reduced investments in agriculture because of budget shortages. At the same time, industrialized countries continue to cut their foreign aid budgets, which fund vital scientific research and extension work to improve farming in developing countries.

Unfortunately, much of the farming technology developed in industrialized nations does not transfer to the climates and soils of developing nations. It is not a priority for agricultural giants in affluent nations to focus on the poor regions of the world or to share basic research advances with scientists from poor nations.

This neglect should end. Leaders of developing nations must make food security a priority. In the name of peace, it is critical that both developed and developing countries support cultural research and improved farming practices, particularly in nations often hit with drought and famine.

For example, the report finds that India, one of the world's largest and poorest nations, has managed to escape widespread violence in large measure because the Indian government made food security a priority.

Beginning in the 1960s, farmers in India were given the means to increase their agricultural output with technology packages that included improved seeds, fertilizers, irrigation and training. Today India no longer experiences famines as it did in the first half of this century. India's food security contributes to its relative political stability.

While food is taken for granted in industrialized countries, many parts of the world—sub-Saharan Africa and large parts of Asia, for example—suffer serious food shortages. Today, per capita food production in sub-Saharan Africa is less than it was at the end of the 1950s. The report concludes that new wars will erupt if the underlying conditions that cause them are not improved.

The message is clear: There can be no peace until people have enough to eat. Hungry people are not peaceful people. The Future Harvest report is a reminder that investments in agricultural research today can cultivate peace tomorrow.

Former President Carter is chairman of the nonprofit Carter Center, which seeks to advance peace and health around the world. He contributed this comment to the International Herald Tribune.

OUTSTANDING YOUNG KENTUCKIANS FROM OHIO COUNTY HIGH SCHOOL IN HARTFORD, KENTUCKY, WIN THE "WE THE PEOPLE . . . THE CITIZEN AND THE CONSTITUTION"

HON. ED WHITFIELD

OF KENTUCKY

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, June 22, 1999

Mr. WHITFIELD. Mr. Speaker, I rise before you today to recognize 15 talented and patriotic young scholars from my district who competed in the national finals of the "We the People . . . The Citizen and the Constitution" competition earlier this month.

I am pleased to recognize the class from Ohio County High School in Hartford, Kentucky who represented our Commonwealth in this national competition including teams from every state and the District of Columbia.

These outstanding young Kentuckians are: Kyle Autry, Josh Benton, Hollie Bratcher, Jacqueline Bryant, Keara Daughtery, Jarrod Frizzell, Hillary Grant, Ashley Hale, Emily Harris, Erika Hawley, Michelle Jarvis, Nakayah Myers, Meredith Shrewsbury and Alex Taylor. They are coached by John Stofer, a teacher at Ohio County High School.

"We the People . . . The Citizen and the Constitution" is the nation's most extensive program dedicated to educating young people about our Constitution and the Bill of Rights. The three-day national competition simulates a Congressional hearing in which students defend positions on historical and contemporary constitutional issues. This format provides students an opportunity to demonstrate their knowledge and understanding of constitutional principles while providing teachers with an excellent means of assessing performance.

This year's competition involved 1,500 schools and provided literature and course-related materials on the history and principles of constitutional democracy in the United States to more than 75,000 teachers and 24 million students.

High school competition begins at the congressional district level with teams from each school vying for the district championship. District winners go on to compete at a statewide hearing and state champions travel to Washington, D.C. in the spring to represent their state in the national finals.

I am proud of this Ohio County team because this is the first time a school from my district has represented Kentucky in the national event. In a time when public cynicism and apathy are high, it is reassuring to know that this program is instilling a sense of civic duty and understanding in our future leaders.

RECOGNIZING THE LADIES AUXILIARY OF THE WEST TRENTON VOLUNTEER FIRE DEPARTMENT

HON. RUSH D. HOLT

OF NEW JERSEY

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, June 22, 1999

Mr. HOLT. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in recognition of the 50th anniversary of the Ladies Auxiliary of the West Trenton Volunteer Fire Department. Over the last half-century, the women of this organization have made a tremendous contribution to their community by lending both financial and moral support to the members of the Fire Department.

Founded on June 8, 1949, the Ladies Auxiliary focused from the very beginning on innovative and creative fundraising ventures. The first year, members assisted the firemen with a Block Dance by volunteering as food stand operators and Bingo judges. They also threw a Halloween Party in the fall. By December 1949, the Auxiliary was able to present the Fire Department with a check for \$200.

In the years since, the Auxiliary's yearly donations have grown. The first \$5000 check was presented in 1972, followed by a record \$17,600 check in 1976. Fundraisers including organized trips to dinner shows, pasta dinners, and flea markets have continued to garner large sums in recent years, and the annual Dinner-Dance has become a township tradition. The funds collected over the years have helped ensure that the West Trenton Fire Department can serve the community effectively.

The Ladies Auxiliary has had a long and rich history on the county and state levels. They have marched in the State Fair and at July 4th parades, are a part of the Ladies Auxiliary of the Mercer County Firemen's Association, and have several Life Members who have joined the State Auxiliary. At their 50th Anniversary Dinner-Dance on June 19, they honored three still-active original charter members: Kitty Canulli, Edith Guadagno, and Grace Diesel Wilwol.

I urge my colleagues to join me in recognizing the past and present members of the Ladies Auxiliary to the West Trenton Fire Department on their 50th anniversary. Their dedication to the community is to be commended, and I send them my warmest wishes for another successful 50 years.

TRIBUTE TO WESTHILL MUSIC DEPARTMENT

HON. JAMES T. WALSH

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, June 22, 1999

Mr. WALSH. Mr. Speaker, on April 9, 1999, 220 student performers and chaperones of the Westhill High School Music Department from Syracuse, New York, came to the Washington D.C. area for the "Festivals of Music." This event was sponsored by local corporations to bring schools from around the nation to the District of Columbia. Westhill was one of seven schools to give band and chorus performances in front of three judges. These college professor judges evaluated the groups in writing and listened closely and repeatedly to taped sessions. The Westhill group gave an outstanding performance that day, putting Westhill's Music Department among the best in the country. Thomas Lindemann, Department Leader, said the chorus and band received an "excellent" and "superior" rating, respectively, in both concert performances and the music reading exam. Out of the seven schools, the band came in second. The Westhill chorus came in third. These high marks signify how well these group of students performed based on these national standards.

The Westhill Music Department held their spring band concert on May 25th and the final choral concert on June 2nd.

I am very proud of these young people, who have exhibited discipline, sensitivity, and love of music while representing their school in the very finest Westhill tradition. I am equally proud of the Westhill Music Department, the parents, and administrators who are so supportive of this outstanding group.

MANDATORY GUN SHOW BACKGROUND CHECK ACT

SPEECH OF

HON. DANNY K. DAVIS

OF ILLINOIS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, June 18, 1999

The House in Committee of the Whole House on the State of the Union had under

consideration the bill (H.R. 2122) to require background checks at gun shows, and for other purposes;

Mr. DAVIS of Illinois. Mr. Chairman, I rise in support of the Conyers' Democratic Substitute Amendment to H.R. 2122, the Mandatory Gun Show Background Check Act. Today, in this sacred chamber, we have an opportunity to address this nation's most pressing problem, gun violence, in a meaningful and effective fashion. We have a mandate from the people to take action that stems the tide of violence that is sweeping across our nation from Washington, DC to Chicago and LA. The biggest victim of this tide of violence is our children. From Chicago's west side to Colorado and over to Georgia, we have felt the pain of lost precious lives. Now, before we lose another precious life, we must take meaningful action.

Today, we have the opportunity to put in place meaningful gun control legislation, a task that we failed to complete last nite. Lets close the gun show loophole, lets ban the importation of large ammunition clips, lets raise the age to possess a handgun and semi-automatic weapon, lets make sure that every gun is sold with a safety device, lets adopt the Conyers' substitute. Why do we need these protections. Well I'll tell you why, in Chicago we have a gun problem, our children are shooting children. In 1997 firearms were used in over ¾ of the murders committed in Chicago. What makes this statistic so disturbing is that over half of the persons committing murder were under the age of 21. In 1997 Chicago had 246 murders of people under the age of 21 and there were 290 people under the age of 21 charged with committing murder. Chicago contributes more than its fair share of children to a terrible statistical category: children killed too soon by hand guns, and it must stop. How can we in good conscious let this situation go on. Did you know that since 1969 that firearms are the leading cause of death among African-American youths? For thirty years handguns have been killing African-American youth and we still debate whether or not we need this common sense gun legislation. When will we take this necessary action?

Now is not the time for loopholes in the bill that's trying to close loopholes. No one here is saying that someone can't own a gun, all they are saying is you have to wait, that your background must be checked out, and that children should not have guns. These are simple, straight forward, common sense proposals. Lets do it and make America safer and better. Lets not fail America's children again, lets take this opportunity to the right thing and pass meaningful gun reform.

MANDATORY GUN SHOW BACKGROUND CHECK ACT

SPEECH OF

HON. JANICE D. SCHAKOWSKY

OF ILLINOIS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, June 17, 1999

The House in Committee of the Whole House on the State of the Union had under consideration the bill (H.R. 2122) to require background checks at gun shows, and for other purposes:

Ms. SCHAKOWSKY. Mr. Chairman, I rise today in support of the McCarthy/Roukema/Blagojevich amendment. Common sense dictates that we, as representatives of the American people, support this measure.

This amendment is not about taking rights away from law abiding citizens. It is about closing a loophole in the law that gives criminals a free pass at gunshows. This amendment would provide law enforcement officials with the same three business days to conduct background checks at gunshows that they are now given when guns are bought in stores. This amendment would go a long way in ensuring that guns stay out of the hands of criminals.

The American people demand action from this House of Representatives. Mothers and fathers are demanding action to protect the most vulnerable among us, our children, from the onslaught of gun violence that is taking the lives of 13 of them each day. They are telling us that "It's the guns—stupid."

How many more children will be lost before Congress gets the message? How many more mothers will have to suffer before we act?

The American people are watching. We cannot shy away from our responsibility. We must rise to the occasion and pass meaningful gun safety legislation that will help end the cycle of violence.

CELEBRATING THE 96TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE ST. PAUL AFRICAN METHODIST EPISCOPAL CHURCH

HON. LOIS CAPPS

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, June 22, 1999

Mrs. CAPPS. Mr. Speaker, I rise to bring to the attention of my colleagues an extraordinary church that is celebrating 96 years of service to the community of Santa Barbara—the St. Paul African Methodist Episcopal Church.

The St. Paul African Methodist Episcopal Church was founded in 1903 by Reverend J.P. Wright. The following year, the first church was established on the corner of Haley and Canal Streets. In September of 1913, during the pastorate of Reverend J.A. Duncan, the present building was completed. From the first organization of only one actual member in 1903, the membership has grown to approximately 175 worshippers in 1999.

Mr. Speaker, I am inspired by the A.M.E. Church's service and dedication to the city of Santa Barbara. The congregation has been an integral partner in the creation and success of local programs that fight racism and violence, programs such as Beyond Tolerance, the Pro-Youth Coalition and Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. celebrations. The church has shown a commitment and vision that continues to be a beacon of hope to our community.

Mr. Speaker, I was honored to join the A.M.E. Church this past weekend in celebrating 96 years of fellowship. I thank the congregation for all that it has done through the years and wish many more years of success to the St. Paul African Methodist Episcopal Church.