

## War and Peace Issue Team Report October 2004

**Chair** – Laola Hironaka FMI

**Active team members** – Laola Hironaka FMI, Jason Sengheiser, Floyd Contreras, Bill Farrell SM, Candy Sengheiser, Chip Pitts, Michael Detzel, Lynn Horiuchi, Nancy DeHonorés

The War and Peace Team continued to focus on two major areas of concern:

- 1) the war in Iraq;
- 2) the humanitarian crisis in Darfur, Sudan.

Several team members also were involved in activities surrounding the presidential election. Our chair was recruited by a Presidential Debate view-and-discuss committee at St. Mary's University to serve as a roundtable leader. The debates were well-attended by students, faculty, staff, and guests over a period of several weeks.

The activities of the team are always undertaken in two steps:

- 1) In-depth research followed by discussions. The national and foreign press is perused daily. Publications include the New York Times, the Wall St. Journal, Le Monde, the London Times, and magazines such as the Economist and the Far Eastern Economic Review. Books by notable international figures are also reviewed.
- 2) Actions are taken after conferring with members of Congress, the Executive Branch (esp. the State Department), friends at the United Nations and with various foreign embassies (especially the Japanese -- due to its status as the major donor nation in Asia and the long-time activities of our chair in Tokyo).

In the last few months, the following actions have been taken:

- 1) Three visits to offices of Congressmen who are leaders on the issue of Darfur, Sudan. These visits were each on the occasion of meetings in Washington, DC sponsored by Amnesty International. The additional meetings were made possible by a generous Marianist-related donor. The visits were with staff members, who in some cases had made several trips to Darfur, of two New York congressmen, Donald Payne and Charles Rangel. Thanks to the efforts of these two legislators, both houses of Congress have unanimously voted to support aid to Darfur totaling several hundred million dollars.
- 2) Visits to two important UN offices, headed by friends of our chair: a) the Undersecretary General for Humanitarian Affairs & Emergency Relief Coordinator, Jan Egeland, and b) the former head of the UN office in Singapore, Kishore Mahbubani, who was at the time being considered as a possible candidate for successor to Kofi Annan.
3. Group member Jason Sengheiser has organized a committee in St. Louis for relief for Darfur.
4. Regarding the War in Iraq, the team continues to organize small-group discussions on the grave problems connected with the war. Our audience has been mainly university students.

Let us unite in effort and prayer as we continue our initiatives in the "nova bella" in which Father Chaminade showed us how to participate as sons and daughters of Mary, Regina Pacis, Queen of Peace.

-