

Frequently ✘ Asked ✘ Questions



Question: Isn't this legislation a duplication of systems we already have in place and won't it just create more government?"

Answer: The Department of Homeland Security combines dozens of agencies. They saw a need for it, they created it. It will take a span of 10 years in operation to gather enough evidence to clearly examine its systems of operation. There is nothing that the DoP duplicates, it is a whole new concept. The DoP would reorganize the current systems we have and extend new funding to effective intervention. There are eight Federal areas that the DoP would bring together.

Q: Given the roles of other federal agencies and domestic and international organizations, why should the American public support the Department of Peace?

A: Again, there is currently no overall organized approach by the U.S. government that aims at creating peaceful solutions to the problems we face domestically and internationally. There are some programs that address aspects of peace work, but none that offer any overall structure to a broad-based approach to making the work of peace a national calling. We need to focus on peace proactively, giving peace the stature of a cabinet level position.

We are beginning to be able to predict wars through economic and social indicators. The CIA has compiled the data and developed powerful predictive indicators based on child mortality rates, access to markets and a voice in their government. Our international policies and strategies need to include this awareness as well as the implementation of preventative measures. In addition we need to continually provide our presidents with nonviolent alternatives to war.

Similarly, we can predict the likelihood of criminal behavior subsequent to incarceration. It is common knowledge that early success in school leads to continued educational success, and economic success reduces the urge toward violence. Trainings like "Alternatives to Violence" and "Nonviolent Communication" decrease prison violence and recidivism rates. Our national investments need to reflect these understandings.

Q: What would the DoP do about terrorism?

A: Terrorism is a challenge. 9/11 proved it. The issues go beyond the scope of the diplomacy between nations, which is the focus of the state department. It's time to reach out to other nations and take care of issues before they become problems. The DoP realizes that there are many ways to confront terrorism before it reaches a breaking point. It is peculiar where, in a discussion of causality, so few talk about cause and effect. People don't seem to get the connection. There still hasn't been a national discussion about why 9/11 happened. Internationally many people feel critical of US policies, economic and political. An international dialogue to better understand these issues is long overdue.

Q: There are so many departments not getting the funding they need. Where is the money for the DoP coming from?

A: The budget for the Department of Peace suggested in the bill is 2% of the defense budget. But the deeper issue is that we need to fund that which we want to see become a reality. **Ultimately violence is too expensive a strategy.** The work of the Department of Peace is to prevent violence, both

domestically and internationally. The cost of any war in which we engage is billions. We spent \$2 billion in Somalia and \$500 million in Rwanda. Iraq has cost us more than \$150 billion to date. Preventing even one war would more than offset any expenses up front.

Similarly, in our own country, murder and manslaughter take 16,000 lives per year. Every 15 seconds a woman is abused by a current or former husband/partner. The cost of incarceration is over \$30,000 per year, per person. Yet the cost of programs that teach alternatives to violence in schools and prisons with a proven track record in reducing crime and domestic violence operate at a fraction of these costs. People who are operating these services receive no assistance in implementing and expanding their programs. We can't afford not to implement programs that will save us money in the long run and reduce suffering dramatically. We know what to do.

We have the chance to change the world. It is more a matter of where will we find the money in the future if we don't more seriously look at stopping violence? What's the cost of violence? The DoP offers transformation in areas such as police departments, schools and prisons, because if you lessen the violence, you lessen the cost.

Q: Is it unrealistic to believe Congress will support the DoP with such a tight budget?

A: In tight budgetary times we need to ask ourselves, what investments cultivate the future we desire? What programs will reduce crime, violence and war? What are our options? Just as we are beginning to understand that there are numerous ways to approach our personal health by considering not only the options of allopathic medicine and a surgeon, we also visit a naturopath and a nutritionist to consider all of our options to restore and build health. A healthier diet and gym membership costs money, but less than open-heart surgery or a stroke. The Department of Peace will research and create alternatives to war and fund programs that reduce the violence within our society. Most of our current spending is responsive to violence and the threat of violence. What we cannot afford is to continue to spread our military so thin and expose our troops to an ever-widening spiral of violence around the world. And we cannot afford the growing costs of crime and punishment. Ultimately, peace is a more profitable path.

Q: People have been violent forever, isn't that just how people are?

A: We need to ask ourselves – do we have the capacity to evolve? We have a chance for an evolutionary growth. Only some have been fighting and dragging others along. Each has the potential for violence. The question is: How do we challenge ourselves to be more than we are, better than we are? In these times, it's our obligation to be more than we are, to stand for a better future.

Q: Can the Department of Peace be construed as anti-war, considering the controversy surrounding the United States' involvement in the recent war in Iraq?

A: Some certainly will. However, it is not inherently anti-war. The long-term goal is to make war unnecessary. It does not in any way specifically address the Iraq war. The DoP legislation addresses a wide range of issues both domestic and international in scope. The legislation was originally introduced in the House of Representatives in July of 2001, before the War in Iraq, and before September 11, 2001. Peace is not the absence of war; war is the absence of peace. We must remember with our combined efforts towards a common vision, that peace is possible.



Americans for the Department of Peace (AFDOP) is a citizens' group advocating passage of the Bill to establish a cabinet level U.S. Department of Peace. For more information, please visit <http://www.afdop.org/>