

# Cooperatives and Peace: A Domestic Perspective from the U.S.

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# Overview

- Peace is not simply a lack of conflict.
- Peace has an economic element.
  - Sen. George Mitchell’s “My View” column
- Cooperatives provide social stability.
- Co-ops can be helpful even in wartime.
  - Arghand in Afghanistan (individual initiative)
  - WOCCU in Afghanistan (co-op organization initiative)
  - Ag Cooperatives program in Iraq (government initiative)
- Cooperative economics provide a way for people to work with those who share their values, rather than against those who do not.



# Peacemaking Potential of Co-ops

- Co-ops also serve as tool for easing “culture war” between religious and secular people.
- Co-ops can ease desire for political independence and chances of violence.
- Something similar to co-ops can be found in the values of all three Abrahamic faiths as well as in other traditions.
  - More information at [www.holycoop.wordpress.com](http://www.holycoop.wordpress.com)

# Two Hopeful Examples

- Basque experience:
  - Co-ops created economic independence.
  - Also reduced allure of labor militancy.
  - ETA now spent force, Mondragon a global model.
- Italian experience
  - Co-ops began as Catholic effort in 1890s.
  - Secular socialists split off in early 20<sup>th</sup> century.
  - Now two huge and thriving movements.
  - Co-ops fill same niche as mafia.

# THANK YOU

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