

## **DON'T SPEND MONEY ON WAR – USE IT FOR PEACE!**

*“Every gun that is made, every warship launched, every rocket fired signifies, in the final sense, a theft from those who hunger and are not fed, those who are cold and not clothed. This world in arms is not spending money alone. It is spending the sweat of its labourers, the genius of its scientists, the hopes of the children. The cost of one modern heavy bomber is this: a modern brick school in more than 30 cities. It is two electric power plants, each serving a town of 60.000 population. It is two fine, fully equipped hospitals. It is some 50 miles of concrete highway. We pay for a single fighter with a half a million bushels of wheat.... This is no a way of life at all, in any true sense.”*

The US President 'Ike' Eisenhower said this in 1953, and it is a pity, but it is more true than ever, and one of the worst things is that his successor George W. Bush is a leading figure in spending money on war and arms.

Every day we are confronted with hunger, poverty, malnutrition, missing drinking water and sanitation, missing basic health care, missing education...

At the same time the global military expenditure has overtaken the 1.000 billion dollar mark!

Governments spend huge sums for arms and these sums are even rising. E.g. the US pumps more and more money into their war in Iraq - the disturbing outcome we see everyday. Civil society, peace organisations and other non-governmental organisations must challenge what their governments are doing and make them change their priorities.

### **Big spenders**

Besides the financial wastefulness of militarism, overall it exacts a huge toll on human life and the environment, while creating a climate of fear and mistrust and undermining global security. The US and UK are in many ways part of the problem, being the highest and second-highest military spenders in the world. The intensification of the “war on terror” has led military spending – after a short decline after the end of the Cold War – back to the old unacceptable high levels. The US alone are spending over 500 billion dollars per year on their military programmes, and this does not even include the costs of the Iraq war. Less-developed countries are following suit, mostly encouraged by wealthier states. A particularly bad example give the 5 members of the UN Security Council – the US, Russia, China, France and Great Britain. On the one side they are *the* official nuclear states, and though they committed themselves to nuclear disarmament in the Non-Proliferation-Treaty Conference in the year 2000, they are doing nothing about it, on the contrary they develop prototypes of new nuclear arms. They have been also the 5 leading suppliers of conventional arms to developing countries in the last 10 years.

Should we really give priority to militarism? In 1987, when military spending reached last time such alarming levels, The UN Conference on Disarmament and Development concluded that “the world can either continue to pursue the arms race with characteristic vigour – or move consciously and with deliberate speed towards a more stable and balanced social and economic development within a more sustainable international economic and political order; it cannot do both”. The 1994 Human Development Report, popularising the notion of “human security” advocated the

“security of people through development, not arms; through cooperation, not confrontation; through peace not war.”

### **Immense Cost of nuclear arsenals**

The costs of the United States nuclear arsenal alone are estimated at around 35 billion \$ per year. From 1940 until today the US must have spent more than 7 trillion dollar for this program. Unfortunately we do not have similarly good estimates for the world’s other nuclear programs. Mostly they are not very transparent. Jayantha Dhanapala, former Under-Secretary-General of the UN said: “No one can state the exact opportunity cost of all this investment. No one can know precisely how many other social and economic goals might have been achieved with this largesse, with additional benefits for international peace and security.”

### **Following the Example of the Big Spenders**

While the overall picture is mixed – some smaller countries continuing to spend less for the military – a number of important players are following the example of the US. Often they are explicitly encouraged by the US and the UK. Large states such as Russia, China, India, and others such as Israel and Pakistan are using the new fashion for anti-terrorism to increase their military arsenals and personnel, re-equipping for long-term battles with rebels and/or hostile neighbours. Each has echoed in its own way the new doctrine of pre-emptive war advocated by the Washington neo-conservatives. This provides the ideological support for inflating the military’s share of the national pie. North-Korea, with one of the world’s highest per capita military budgets, and under permanent threat from the US, has chosen to go down the path of nuclear weapons acquisition. One can only hope that the North Koreans have some idea of the cost implications as well as the security risks in the long term.

### **Hidden Spending**

In many cases military expenses are hidden within non-defence budgets or do not appear at all, so the official figures for military spending are not always reliable. E.g. the US nuclear weapon costs, while not entirely hidden, are largely found under Dept of Environment budgets. In other countries, contingency funds are used for activities such as paying military debts or repairing military hardware. Military budgets are supplemented with funds delivered from unspent budgets from the social sectors. Military activities are portrayed as “peace operations” or “public security” and get paid for by non-military departments such as the police or social welfare.

The central issue is to help countries address the underlying governance problems that reduce transparency and accountability within the defence sector. The issue of off-budget military expenditure is often primarily political, so it requires stronger democratic governance of the defence sector, including activities of both civil and military officials.

### **The invisibility problem**

Military spending statistics are not widely known among the general public, or even among lobby groups. There is a serious problem of perception, or rather of quasi-invisibility. Military spending, when it is seen and assessed at all, is not seen as part

of the development equation. The financial imbalance is one that few analysts seem keen to point out. This is not new. The commentaries put out by the aid and development industry over the year have only rarely made the comparison with the vast sums spent on the military. Jeffrey Sachs said in 2005: The US has launched a war on terror, but it has neglected the deeper causes of global instability. The 450 billion dollar that the US will spend this year on the military will never buy peace if it continues to spend around one thirtieth of that, just 15 billion, to address the plight of the world's poorest of the poor, whose societies are destabilised by extreme poverty and thereby become havens of unrest, violence and even global terrorism."

## **Diverse other costs of Militarism**

### ***Military research:***

In wealthy countries like the USA, France and the UK, significant military research and development budgets drive weapon-based, high technology on the agenda. In 2003-4, nearly one third of British public funding for research and development (2.6 billion pound) was spent by the Ministry of Defence, while 40% of the government's scientists and technologists work for the Ministry of Defence.

It is reported that over 300 US universities, research institutes and corporations were involved at the height of the country's Biological Weapons programme in the 50s and 60s.

A huge proportion of the world's brainpower is lost to the civilian sector due to the power of attraction that military projects hold for scientists and experts of every stripe.

In Spain, the IPB member organisation Fundacio per la Pau has organised a highly successful civil society campaign that has developed a critique of that country's research agenda and has gathered thousands of signatures from scientists for a "hippocratic oath" by which researchers refuse to undertake military-related work.

### ***Environment and health:***

Military-related costs that should be considered here include:

- Contamination from waste and accidents related to nuclear weapon programs and chemical/biological agents
- The effects of landmines and explosive remnants of war, which devastate the environment and pose significant social, financial, logistical and scientific challenges
- Increased levels of radioactivity resulting from the use of depleted uranium
- Pollution of the air, land and water in peacetime, notably from military bases and large scale exercises and firing ranges
- Severe contamination from nuclear weapons development and production
- Destruction of farming land taken over for military purposes
- Burning of oil wells
- Frequent accidents related to military activities that sometimes have serious consequences
- Contribution of the climate change, though precisely the military activities have been excluded from the Kyoto-Protocol!
- Scorched-earth tactics: retreating armies lay waste to enemy territory

The expense of treatment, rehabilitation and long-term care for those injured places a heavy burden on health systems. The financial costs of treating injuries from conventional weapons, such as landmines, are onerous.

***Social impacts:***

We see a lot of negative consequences, such as:

- Prostitution – especially in areas around military bases and docks, together with increased rates of HIV-Aids and sexually transmitted diseases
- Increased crime and violence (including rape) in military-affected communities due to the presence of guns and other weaponry
- Distortions in the local employment market – e.g. businesses that are dependent on foreign military bases but which collapse when the base is withdrawn
- Conscription still exists in many countries, despite being condemned as a human rights violation by the UN Human Rights Commission, Amnesty International and other organisations and bodies.

***Economics:***

High military spending leaves less money in the government budget for dealing with social, environmental and other development issues. Militarisation also hinders an economy's efficiency because a lack of competition in the military sector often allows military producers to feel less compelled to cut their production costs. As for the additional employment allegedly provided by the military sector, this is only a short-term effect: military production tends to use proportionately more capital equipment and less labour than civilian industries and so creates fewer jobs than could be created from a similar investment in civilian production.

***Politics:***

The military run, control or heavily influence governments all over the world. While the number of military dictatorships declined significantly in 1980s and 1990s in Latin America and parts of Africa the hidden hand of the armed forces plays a crucial role in many nominally democratic states. The human rights violations committed in those countries have been well documented by the human rights agencies. In these nations the price of militarism can be very high in terms of human lives lost or cruelly damaged.

**An Example of Effects of Weapons on Development: Small Arms**

Experts estimate that the total number of small arms held around the world is 640 million. Small arms account for around 25% of the 40-50 billion Dollar worth of conventional arms sold every year on the global market. There are some 600 manufacturers, with about the half based in the US. Contrary to the larger weapons, there is a sizeable production in developing countries. Every year some 300.000 people are killed in war and armed conflict, and 200.000 more die as a result of intentional violence, suicide and accidents.

Many of the development effects of small arms are similar to those of larger conventional systems. However, their small size means that is far harder to control their dispersal, and therefore the penetration into illicit markets, extremist political factions, private security forces and criminal circles is much greater. Their effects are even more serious and widespread:

- killings and woundings
- medical and rehabilitation costs
- bereavement, funeral expenses family breakdown
- loss of employment and re-training/relocation costs
- stocks and materials looted
- infrastructure damaged
- forced migration
- workers and residents endangered, climate of fear
- psychological effects, short- and long-term
- aid and development programs and deliveries blocked or slowed down
- post-conflict reconstruction and investment hampered
- community self-confidence undermined
- growth of firearms market – distortion of local economy
- increase in crime and violence – linked to drug trade, trafficking, prostitution, kidnappings, arms dealing, gangs
- young men and boys drawn away from legitimate activities into criminal sub-culture

To make matters worse, any government involved in such conflicts will be tempted to accelerate the exploitation of available resources – oil, minerals, timber and so on – in order to pay for weapons. Insurgent groups and local warlords, if they are able, will do the same.

So small arms hinder development because small arms related conflict and crime damage already fragile economies, small arms violence deters foreign investment, and domestic economic resources are diverted to expenditures on public security.

Small arms have also devastating impacts on women because women deal with the consequences of small arms violence on a daily basis. Sexual violence at gunpoint is used as a weapon of war. Legal small arms are just as dangerous to women as illegal guns.

### **Change Priorities**

The figures show that it is not a shortage of resources preventing the richer nations from addressing climate change and poverty, which, apart from being problems deserving attention in their own right, are probably the greatest contributors to future insecurity and conflict.

Over time, the world could reduce the amount spent on war each year and tackle the real contributors to future insecurity. These are likely to be growing poverty and marginalisation of the poorest, climate change leading to mass migrations; and militarism itself.

### **Human Security Needs**

To meet Human Security Needs the costs are – compared to military expenditure- relatively low:

To eliminate starvation and malnutrition would cost 19 billion dollars.

To prevent soil erosion 24 billion dollars.

To provide safe, clean water 10 billion dollars.

To prevent acid rain 8 billion dollars.

To stop deforestation 7 billion dollars.

To eliminate illiteracy 5 billion dollars.  
To organise refugee relief 5 billion dollars.  
To remove landmines 2 billion dollars.

**With the amount spent on war each year, the world could easily:**

- Invest in international confidence-building, progressive disarmament and scaling down military spending
- Meet the Kyoto international targets on climate change (\$118 billion per year over the next 50 years)
- Meet the Millennium Development Goals for poverty alleviation and development (\$20-40 billion extra per year to 2015)

**UN Millennium Goals:**

The UN Millennium Project calculated in 2005 that the costs of meeting the Millennium Development Goals in all countries are of the order of 121 billion dollar in 2006 (and rising to about 190 billion in 2015). This amounts to around one tenth of the money spent on the military worldwide!

To say it another way, achieving the MDGs in the forthcoming 10 years would be roughly equivalent to that spent on the military in any one year of the decade.

Some examples:

***Water and sanitation goal:***

The World Health Organisation (WHO) estimated that to halve the proportion of people without access to safe drinking water and basic sanitation between 1990 and 2015 would cost around 11 billion dollar annually. To reach the entire unserved population by 2015 would cost around 22 billion dollar per year.

***Health goal:***

The World Bank estimated that to achieve the health-related MDGs would cost an additional 20-25 billion per year, the WHO puts the cost around double: 40-52 billion dollar per year. The goal would be to reduce the under-five mortality rate by two-thirds and to reduce the maternal mortality rate by three-quarters, and to have by 2015 halted the spread of HIV/Aids, Malaria, TB and other major diseases.

***Education goal:***

The World Bank estimated that to ensure, by 2015, that children everywhere will all be able to complete a full course of primary schooling would cost 10-30 billion dollar per year.

***Housing goal:***

UN Habitat says that a significant improvement in the housing and lives of at least 100 million slum-dwellers by 2020 would cost around 12 billion dollar per year. To phase in energy efficiency and renewable energy technology for all would cost \$60 billion per year over the next 10-20 years.

There is a major disparity between global military spending and current levels of development aid. The cost of meeting the MDGs seems a modest and feasible sum. It is clearly a matter of political will and commitment to redirect a part of the sum spent for military purposes in order to meet the MDGs and ensure Human Security for all.

It should follow from all I have said that the argument for switching priorities is straightforward. However, the challenge is to actually persuade decision makers to make this change in priorities happen. This is a matter for civil society in each country. Political systems differ. IPB is willing to work with peace and development groups in all countries to develop a strategy.

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