Who is Impeding Disarmament

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Human Security, not Weapons

- Civil Resistance Works!
- Smart and Dumb Sanctions
- How Does Canada’s Health System Stack up?
Just Wars, Unjust Wars, and Everything In Between


Civil Resistance Beats Violence: The Verdict is In

Civil resistance campaigns have been twice as successful as violent uprisings at bringing political change. Erica Chenoweth shares her research with Metta Spencer.

Smart vs. Dumb Sanctions

Sanctions that target potential bomb makers are smart. Those that harm innocent civilians are counterproductive and should be abandoned, writes David Cortright.

Can We Fix Canada’s Flawed Cluster Bomb Treaty Legislation?

Canada has signed but not ratified the Cluster Munitions Convention, and is now trying to override some of the treaty’s core provisions. Robin Collins reports on what was said (and not said) at this fall’s Senate hearings.

False Memories of the War of 1812

The beginning of a nation’s long and proud military history, or a bloody and senseless conflict? Jamie Swift and Ian McKay, authors of Warrior Nation: Rebranding Canada in an Age of Anxiety, take a critical look at the bicentennial propaganda war.

Who is Impeding Disarmament?

In the first of our articles on the economics of war, Dr. Hippu Salk Kristle Nathan highlights a central problem: five of the world’s top six arms exporters are the permanent members of the UN Security Council.

Military Spending Versus Development

A summary of the International Peace Bureau’s report on military spending and the UN’s development agenda.

Why Nuclear Disarmament Has Not Yet Been Achieved

The Doomsday Clock now stands at 5 minutes to midnight, but enlightened self-interest (fuelled by the economic crisis) may yet bring governments back to the nuclear negotiating table. We need both confidence and patience, argues Hon. Douglas Roche, OC.

A Village Faces its Destruction

Smadar Carmim writes of the campaign to save the Palestinian village of Susiya, threatened with demolition for the fifth time in recent memory.

Health and Security

Canada has fallen far behind other OECD states on key indicators like infant mortality and early childhood education. Ron Shirliiff reports on recent talks by Dennis Raphael and Ursula Franklin.

The death of Tecumseh in 1813, as depicted on a frieze on the US Capitol rotunda. See Jamie Swift and Ian McKay’s article on page 16 to read how (and why) the Harper government is reinventing an old war.
Who is Impeding Disarmament?

By Dr. Hippu Salk Kristle Nathan

The United Nations is mandated to raise the awareness that disarmament is the key to a peaceful world. Has it succeeded in this?

Hardly. In 2000, its disarmament exhibit showcased an inverted triangle called “Overspending on Weapons vs. People,” which depicted the world’s misplaced priorities—the overemphasis on arms and ammunition (see this page, right). The top part of the triangle showed annual military world expenditures—about $800 billion.

The bottom part, which was about one-fourth the size of the top, represented all humanitarian and developmental expenses, such as shelter, clean energy services, water, health care, elimination of starvation and illiteracy, prevention of ozone depletion, deforestation, global warming, acid rain, stabilization of population and strengthening of democratic institutions.

According to the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI) by 2011 the world annual military expenditure had more than doubled to reach $1,735 billion. By the latest SIPRI statistics, the largest five military spenders are the US, China, Russia, the UK, and France. (See pie chart on the next page.) These countries are none other than the five permanent members of the UN Security Council, and together they account for 65% of the total global military expenditure.

Who Buys and Who Sells?

In the past three years (2008-11) India, with a military spending of $48.9 billion has moved from tenth to the seventh position among all countries. India has also become the world’s largest arms importer, with almost 12% of the global share. This is a dubious distinction, as India gained independence 65 years ago through Gandhi’s path: nonviolence. Today India’s Human Development Index (HDI) ranks 134th among 187 countries, according to the latest human development report of the United Nations Development Program (UNDP). Its low HDI rank indicates that India needs to give priority to developmental needs: offering its citizens a long and healthy life, knowledge, and a decent standard of living.

Like India, Pakistan also has a poor HDI rank (145th). However it is the third in arms imports with 5.6% of the world share. Similarly, Morocco has a HDI rank of 130, yet is fourth in arms imports.

If these less developed economies are importing arms, which ones are exporting them?

Among the top six arms exporters are the five permanent members of the UN Security Council. The US has a 33% global share in arms export, followed by Russia (26%). Respectively, France, China and UK have global shares of 8.1, 4.5 and 3.6% in arms export. So the UN Security Council members are producing more arms than they need for domestic purposes and exporting the surplus to other countries as a business.

War Suits Certain Interests

Here we see the conflict of interest between the UN’s agenda and the trade agendas of the countries controlling the UN. On one hand the UN Security Council members are strive for a united and peaceful world, but on the other hand a more divided, disturbed, violent, and war-prone world suits their military and commercial interests. The UN Security Council members are supposedly guardians of peace.

With the highest defense budgets and arms exports these countries are also promoters of war. Thus disarmament will remain a distant dream. It is time to realize that the goal of disarmament can be achieved only by actually disarming.

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