

**Towards a World Without Violence**  
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International Peace Bureau and Fundacio per la Pau, organizers

**Human Security, Development and Disarmament**  
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On Friday I spoke about what it will take to dismantle the nuclear threat. My conclusion was that we need to fundamentally redefine security in human and ecological terms. Today I want to elaborate on that theme. I was to talk about what security *really* means for people – everywhere. And I want to speak in practical terms, from my many years of experience as an anti-nuclear and peace campaigner. I will begin by describing what is commonly understood as “national security,” using my own government as a case study. I acknowledge that the United States is not responsible for *all* of the world’s problems, but it is certainly a leading bad actor, and unquestionably the world’s most powerful military force. And it is my belief that one of the reasons that the American public has been so slow to challenge the Bush administration’s war program is because the idea that their “national security” is dependent on unbridled military might is pounded into their heads on a daily basis by government officials, reinforced ad nauseum by the mainstream media.

The September 2002 *National Security Strategy of the United States* set forth a sweeping and open-ended policy of preemptive self defense, in which “America will act against...emerging threats *before* they are fully formed. This was elaborated in the December 2002 *National Strategy to Combat Weapons of Mass Destruction*, which states that the U.S. “reserves the right to respond with overwhelming force – including through resort to *all of our options* – to the use of WMD [weapons of mass destruction] against the United States, our forces abroad, and friends and allies.” “All of our options” includes both “conventional and *nuclear* response and defense capabilities,” employed in appropriate cases through *preemptive* measures.”

The United States is modernizing every weapon type in its still vast nuclear arsenal, including bombs, and cruise missile and Trident submarine warheads. “Advanced weapons concept teams” have been established at the U.S. nuclear weapons laboratories, and research is underway on both low-yield nuclear warheads and on targeting techniques to make nuclear weapons more “useful,” particularly against deeply buried targets, as well as *high-yield* earth penetrating weapons.

In addition, the Pentagon is poised to begin development of a new generation of long range delivery systems, capable of carrying either conventional or nuclear weapons. Such systems, intended primarily to increase the already formidable U.S. advantage in conventional weapons, could at the same time provide the building blocks for new nuclear capabilities, particularly in combination with the warhead modifications in progress or under consideration.

Nuclear weapons are *gaining* legitimacy, as the world’s only remaining superpower blurs the distinction between nuclear and conventional weapons and expands the role of nuclear weapons in its “national security” policy.

But the Bush doctrine, however, is not entirely new. It is a continuation and an expansion of programs and policies carried out by every U.S. administration, Democrat and Republican, since President Harry Truman – a Democrat – ordered the U.S. atomic bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki in 1945. In 1997, Democratic President Bill Clinton signed Presidential Decision Directive-60, reaffirming the threatened first use of nuclear weapons as the “cornerstone” of U.S. national security, and contemplating an expanded role for nuclear weapons to “deter” nuclear, chemical or biological weapons.

In 2004, the U.S. Department of Energy is spending \$6.2 billion for nuclear weapons research, development, refurbishment and testing activities. This figure does not include delivery systems or command and control, which are funded separately through the Department of Defense. The Department of *Energy* budget request for nuclear weapons activities in fiscal year (FY) 2005 is more than \$6.6 billion, an increase of 5.4% over the 2004 appropriation. The 2005 request is 130% higher than spending in 1995 for comparable activities. Accounting for inflation (in constant dollars), the U.S. nuclear weapons budget has grown by 84% since 1995, *six years after the Cold War ended*.

However, this is a tiny drop in the bucket compared to the nearly \$400 billion the U.S. is spending in 2004 on its military – not including extra funding for the Iraq war. And \$420.7 billion is requested for FY 2005 – again not including Iraq. Putting these numbers into context, the U.S. military budget is more than eight times larger than that of China, the second largest military spender (\$51 billion); it is more than 29 times as large as the combined military spending of the seven states the U.S. identifies as “rogues” (Cuba, Iran, Iraq, Libya, North Korea, Sudan and Syria – total \$14.4 billion); and it is more than the combined military spending of the next 23 nations. The seven countries the U.S. identifies as potential enemies plus Russia and China together, spend only 27.6% of the U.S. military budget (\$116.2 billion).<sup>1</sup>

During 2003, world military spending rose by 11 percent, in real terms, reaching \$956 billion. According to the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute: “*The main reason for the increase in world military spending is the massive increase in the United States, which accounts for almost half of the world total.*”<sup>2</sup> According to the 1998 United Nations Development Program report, the additional cost of achieving and maintaining universal access to basic education for all, basic health care for all, reproductive health care for all women, adequate food for all and clean water and safe sewers for all is roughly \$40 billion a year.<sup>3</sup> This is less than one-tenth of the annual U.S. military budget, and in my view, a perversion of priorities that should be considered a crime against humanity.

But historically, even U.S. leaders have recognized the real requirements for peace. In his 1941 State of the Union address, before the U.S. entered the second World War, President Franklin Roosevelt analyzed what was essential for peace, identifying four basic freedoms: freedom of speech; freedom of religion; freedom from want; and freedom from fear. Yet today, at the Human Rights Commission in Geneva, the U.S. actively opposes the recognition of economic and social rights, such as education and health care – the essence of freedom from want. In 1997, half of U.S. foreign aid was related to military aid/trade – most to wealthy countries like Israel (I don’t need to say much about the Israeli government’s national security policy) and Turkey, which has often been criticized for human rights violations. Very poor countries like Sub-Saharan African nations have received very little aid.<sup>4</sup> And the U.S. gives

very little to help remedy the global poverty and squalor faced daily by billions of people. In fact, the U.S. ranks 20<sup>th</sup> among the 22 richest countries in the world when it comes to aid.<sup>5</sup>

According to Kirk Boyd, executive director of the International Bill of Rights: *“The false impression being drummed into Americans by today’s leadership is that there is greater security in weapons and the military than in freedom from want. The truth is we will never reach the fourth freedom, freedom from fear, if we rely on the military alone.”*<sup>6</sup>

If the most powerful military force that has ever existed on the face of the earth premises its national security on the threatened first use of nuclear weapons – why shouldn’t we expect *less* powerful countries to follow suit? This is simply an unsustainable model. What is needed is a radically new definition of security, based on new values. It is time to throw away the outdated notion of “national” security, and replace it with a new concept of “human” security.

A great American, Martin Luther King, Jr., recognized this in his “call to conscience” speech against the Vietnam War in 1997:

*“. . . I am convinced that if we are to get on the right side of the world revolution, we as a nation must undergo a radical revolution of values. We must rapidly begin the shift from a thing-oriented society to a person-oriented society. When machines and computers, profit motives and property rights, are considered more important than people, the giant triplets of racism, extreme materialism, and militarism are incapable of being conquered.*

*A true revolution of values will soon cause us to question the fairness and justice of many of our past and present policies. . . .*

*A true revolution of values will soon look uneasily on the glaring contrast of poverty and wealth. . . .*

*A true revolution of values will lay hand on the world order and say of war, ‘This way of settling differences is not just’. . . . A nation that continues year after year to spend more money on military defense than on programs of social uplift is approaching spiritual death.*

*America, the richest and most powerful nation in the world, can well lead the way in this revolution of values. There is nothing except a tragic death wish to prevent us from reordering our priorities so that the pursuit of peace will take precedence over the pursuit of war. There is nothing except a tragic death wish to keep us from molding a recalcitrant status quo with bruised hands until we have fashioned it into a brotherhood.”*<sup>7</sup>

In 1994, I had the privilege of hearing a presentation by Dr. Mahbub Ul Haq, who at that time headed the United Nations Development Program. In addressing the question, “what happened to the peace dividend?,” Dr. Ul Haq described a new concept of security. It was electrifying – one of the most memorable speeches I have ever heard. Even today I can remember almost every word. Dr. Ul Haq spoke eloquently of the need for a fundamental transformation in the concept of security: “the security of people, not just of territory; the

security of individuals, not just of nations; security through development, not through arms; security of all the people everywhere – in their homes, in their jobs, in their streets, in their communities and in their environment.” This new interpretation, he explained, requires us to regard human security as “universal, global and indivisible.” In other words, it applies equally to all people everywhere.<sup>8</sup>

This kind of security cannot be brought about through nuclear weapons and military might. This kind of security can only be ensured through the equitable distribution of adequate food, shelter, clean water and air, health care, education and even the arts. And, somewhat paradoxically, if funding was shifted from armaments to fulfilling these basic human needs, some of the root causes of violence – namely poverty and injustice – would at the same time be addressed, thus reducing the “need” or excuse for military action or other expressions of violence.

When I present to American audiences this alternative way to think about their security – outside the conventional national security “box,” many of them have never heard it before. It’s like a light goes on for them, or a veil is lifted, and they can for the first time see hope for the future through a different way of thinking.

I believe that the days of single-issue organizing are past. We need a new approach to social activism based on cross-issue, values-based organizing. As a starting point, I suggest the following core values as a basis for our common work: nonviolence; critical thinking (ie. asking the right questions); democracy; cooperation; justice; sustainability – and a sense of humor.

In line with this last item, I’d like to close with a little story I co-authored last year, after taking a break with friends during the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) Preparatory Committee meeting in Geneva. It’s called, “A Message from the Axis of Hope.”<sup>9</sup>

After a long, hectic and exhausting week of activities at the NPT PrepCom, three NGO delegates took a day off on Sunday for a brief tour of the French Alps. We spent a glorious day enjoying the *old* Europe. We explored the market in the French village of Annecy, hiked up the hill to the old castle, and discovered the “Mystères et découvertes,” a most surprising art exhibition, bringing together medieval and futuristic art installations reflecting in one way or another the alpine landscape. The three of us found it spellbinding.

Emerging into the blazing sunlight, we pondered the spectacular view of the snow-capped mountains towering above Lake Annecy and watched the leisurely picture below of sailing boats and strolling families. One of us observed, “imagine that the whole world could be this peaceful and content.” As we sat together on an ancient stone wall and posed for a photograph, we looked at each other and realized who we were. One of us was from Germany, where nuclear fission was discovered and ballistic missiles originated. One of us was from the United States, the first country to develop and use nuclear weapons. And one of us was from Japan, the first country to suffer the devastating effects of the atom bomb. All of us were born in the years following these events. And all of us were women. We felt that we were “the axis of hope.”

We sat down together to write postcards to our friends at home. And this is the message we sent:

*“We have a dream... A nuclear weapons convention ratified, space weapons banned, missiles gone, and we have loads of time to enjoy beautiful Switzerland (and France)! Love and peace from ‘The Axis of Hope.’”*

Satomi Oba, Japan (born 1950)  
Jackie Cabasso, USA (born 1952)  
Regina Hagen, Germany (born 1957)

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<sup>1</sup> *High Military Expenditures in Some Places, U.S. Military Spending*, by Anup Shah, <http://www.globalissues.org/Geopolitics/ArmsTrade/Spending.asp>

<sup>2</sup> *SIPRI Yearbook 2004, Armaments, Disarmament and International Security*, Part II. Military spending and armaments, 2003, Chapter 10. Military expenditure, <http://editors.sipri.se/pubs/yb04/ch10.html>

<sup>3</sup> *Kofi Annan’s Astonishing Facts*, by Barbara Crossette, The New York Times, September 27, 1998.

<sup>4</sup> *High Military Expenditures in Some Places*

<sup>5</sup> *Path to a world free from want and fear*, by J. Kirk Boyd, San Francisco Chronicle, 12 February, 2004

<sup>6</sup> *Path to a world free from want and fear*

<sup>7</sup> *Beyond Vietnam*, Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., address delivered to the Clergy and Laymen Concerned about Vietnam, at Riverside Church, New York City, April 4 1967, <http://www.tanbou.com/2003/BeyondVietnam.htm>

<sup>8</sup> These concepts are discussed in a paper, *Human Rights, Security and Governance*, by Mahbub ul-Haq, available on line at: [http://www.toda.org/publications/peace\\_policy/p\\_p\\_fw98/haq.html](http://www.toda.org/publications/peace_policy/p_p_fw98/haq.html)

<sup>9</sup> *This article originally appeared on May 6, 2003 in “News In Review,” a daily newsletter published during the April 28–May 9 Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty (NPT) Preparatory Committee (PrepCom) meeting in Geneva, Switzerland. “News in Review,” produced by the Reaching Critical Will project of the Women’s International League for Peace and Freedom, was distributed to delegates and NGOs (nongovernmental organizations) attending the PrepCom.*