

DISARMAMENT FOR DEVELOPMENT: AN INTERNATIONAL CONSULTATION

Organised by the International Peace Bureau and Just Defence

LONDON OCTOBER 21, 2005

REPORT

The purpose of the Consultation was to explore possibilities for, and challenges to, the new IPB Programme '*Disarmament for Development*'.

It served also as a farewell activity of the British group **Just Defence**, who have worked over many years to raise issues relating to the legal status of Britain's defence policies.

CORA WEISS, IPB President

- Welcomed the participants and thanked Just Defence for their financial contribution to the costs of the meeting. She invited everyone present to introduce themselves.

- Outlined the current international political context, especially the disastrous war in Iraq. One of the crucial dimensions was the widespread feeling of humiliation.

- Civil society plays an important role in creating alternatives to violent confrontation. This year has seen the 5th anniversary of the SC resolution 1325 on Women Peace and Security, and the presentation to the UN of an important report on the work of civil society in promoting a culture of peace.

- Brazil's referendum on small arms is a landmark.

- We need our heroes: for example the late Nobel laureate Joseph Rotblat, who maintained the vision of an end to war. Furthermore, this is also Einstein's centenary year.

- In addition, we celebrate the 100th anniversary of IPB's former Vice-President Bertha von Suttner, who won the Nobel Peace Prize in 1905. She challenges us to design a gender-sensitive human security system.

BEN SOUTHWORTH, World Development Movement

- Gave a rapid survey of the development scene, in the wake of the great mobilisations around the Global Campaign Against Poverty, the G8 meeting and the Make Poverty History coalition.

- Main focus of GCAP is on aid, trade, debt, and AIDS. Some impact on political decisions has been noted, even if there is far to go still. Important to analyse: How did we get there?

- Some evidence that development agencies are adopting a more holistic view; in part this is due to the 'anti-globalization' movement. They are moving to more of a rights-based approach, factoring in more environmental and conflict issues. They are also decentralising to some extent.

- Conversely, human rights groups such as Amnesty are looking more closely at economic rights. Tear Fund is devoting 30% of its work on climate change. 'Environmental justice' and 'trade justice' are concepts that grow in importance. Development groups are working more on small arms.

- WDM is moving away from specific issues to look more at overall mechanisms and also corporate behaviour. Multi-sectoral approaches are very much needed, and also an alternative vision of globalization.

BRUCE KENT, former IPB President

- Agreed that development agencies are moving to include in their perspectives war and violence, for example, Oxfam's Cut Conflict campaign. However, not to talk about military spending is like providing a hospital that doesn't tackle cancer. There is a taboo against military spending. The social costs are substantial: in 1899-1900 there were no government pensions at all in the UK, due to the costs of the Boer War.

- The issue is cited in the UN Charter, Art. 26. Also in the Final Declaration of the first UN Special Session on Disarmament. (1978)

- During the G8 protests, a small group led by the Movement for the Abolition of War carried a banner reading 'Make War History' - well received.

- The classic text on military spending is the series of books written by Ruth Sivard (16 volumes, last one 1996): *World Military and Social Spending*. Needs updating, large agencies have huge budgets, they could take up the issue but need to be pressured to do so. Obstacles: 1) the culture of militarism. Today is Trafalgar Day in Britain. We still maintain military statues, ceremonies, TV shows, movies etc. Defence expenditure is a very tender subject, in part due to loyalties to regiments etc. 2) legislation - eg UK tank museum has charitable status!

DISCUSSION

- There are constraints on development agencies; their supporters don't necessarily share a critique of militarism.

- We should draw the parallels with gender - it is being gradually mainstreamed, thanks in part to civil society pressure; also there are agreements that went through UN processes and conferences.

- Need for a critical approach to band-aid policies which don't get to the roots of the poverty problem. Ultimately these play a conservative role.

Main debate: how to respond to the emergency in Pakistan-Kashmir? Shouldn't we urge that governments use NATO military capacity to deliver aid? Some oppose this - it would give legitimacy to NATO - nuclear armed alliance etc. Compromise position: we could argue that the equipment/personnel be put at service of the UN. Nordic debates now reflect a shift towards use of military primarily in peacekeeping and emergencies. Another step forward would be a permanent UN standby force for humanitarian relief, funded out of the growing military budgets. BUT: we note that previous (early 1990s) votes in US Congress have reduced military budget, but the dollars were not transferred to social programmes.

Other points

- Importance of working with World Social Forums. Even the altermondialists don't see militarism as central. Cutbacks in welfare are required to pay for military expansion. Disarm-Dev is a message not just for the South.
- Dangers of mixing military and humanitarian operations, eg in Afghanistan.
- The policy shift to make is from military intervention to civilian crisis management.
- The military is essentially a hierarchical structure, whose purpose is protecting state interests, eg access to resources.
- The effects of disasters on social change: some are negative such as post-Tsunami tensions in Sri Lanka; others more positive - eg people to people solidarity after Greek and Turkish earthquakes; origin of Nicaraguan Sandinista movement in sense of injustice re aid distribution.
- The development debate is 'too abstract'; human security concept is not known among the general public.

COLIN ARCHER, IPB Secretary-General

- Introduced the IPB programme '**Disarmament for Development**'. Rationale: Tension between need for both breadth (outreach, holistic approach to peace issues) and depth (focussed work, more effective, fundable). One way forward for IPB is to adopt a theme that is well-focussed but has broad appeal. The programme also provides a vehicle that can better link our members North and South.
- Context: Increasing levels of military spending (\$1000 billion per annum worldwide, War on Terror = main cause). Strong public concern for poverty issues: G8, WSF etc. Revival of the Disarmament-Development debate through the 2004 UN Expert Study, which has given a new lease of life to an issue that has been dormant in UN circles for 20 years. It includes, not only military spending, but also issues like small arms, landmines, terrorism and wider security questions.
- Possibilities of funding from development agencies. There is a gap in the field of international NGO coordination: no organisation is working at a broad global level on military spending and related arms-and-development issues.
- IPB's intention is to create a) a new network on military spending and b) develop some partnerships around weapons and development.
- Main activities for 2006: enhanced website, Geneva seminar (spring 2006), Helsinki conference (Sept 06).

This was followed by 4 presentations on related themes:

1. RICHARD MOYES, Landmine Action

- It is good to set landmines in broader context

- The campaign shows that a specific issue can mobilise broad constituencies
- These weapons have cyclical impacts on development; including increased dependence on foreign humanitarian agencies.
- Role of military experts - have been very useful in this campaign
- International humanitarian law can present some dilemmas
- Cluster Munitions, a new campaign issue though it's already 30 years since they were used in Vietnam - new Coalition developing well (CMC).

2. LAURA CHEESEMAN, International Action Network on Small Arms

- The problem has reached as epidemic level in some countries: Brazil has 38,000 gun deaths /year. Often the poorest countries are heavily affected.
- Strain on health care and education systems; impedes work of aid and emergency workers; victims can become a burden on families; causes forced migration and displacement; increasing problems of crime and gang culture.
- There is a lack of joined-up thinking between human security agencies and human development agencies
- High costs of weapons collection programmes which have long-term benefits prevent funding for these projects.
- Examples were given from several countries of integration of small arms into the development agenda: through public awareness campaigns, youth work, former combatants, civil society campaigning.
- Combine weapons exchange with programmes to combat poverty
- Most IANSA members are giving priority to national gun laws, as well as international initiatives, which are moving slowly.

3. ANN FELTHAM, Campaign Against Arms Trade

- Offered a critique of UN Expert Group report. It doesn't seem to take account of new developments in the arms trade: esp. greater role for private companies, and globalisation of the trade.
- The private corporations are pushing up military spending. Governments promote them, using taxpayers and EU money.
- Conversion: now the tendency in weapons production is towards high-tech products, highly-skilled workers, and use of robots. Many companies are merging at European level.
- Export credits (not included in military budgets) go to large scale projects: aircraft, major weapons platforms, as well as prestige projects like dams. There is a new campaign to cancel these credits.

- CAAT is focussing on the investors - for example pension funds.
- Another important trend is the privatisation of military roles, use of mercenaries .

4. CHRIS LANGLEY, Scientists for Global Responsibility

- Introduced his new report *Soldiers in the Laboratory*, which shows the extent of military-related funding in modern scientific research.
- Total global military spending is in fact \$1,400 billion if the funding for military research is included.
- Stressed the 'mercenary' aspect: ie scientists will work for whoever pays. Increasing commercialisation of all scientific fields.
- Changes in military technology. Intense pressure to reduce civilian casualties, leads to increased funding to develop smart/surgical/'non-lethal' weaponry. But sustainable development could be supported by similar technologies. Technical choice is a highly political decision.
- Human Security/basic needs orientation - science can be used as a humane and intelligent response to environmental and development challenges.
- Spread of the idea of a scientific 'Hippocratic oath' - cf. the pledge developed by IPB member Fundacio per la Pau in Spain, great success there. But there remain dilemmas over dual-use technologies.
- This a landscape very few people know about; it is important to get the mainstream scientific organisations to take positions.

DISCUSSION

- Peace education has been combined effectively with disarm-for-development work: eg Hague Appeal for Peace projects in Albania and elsewhere.
- Funding: each group relies on a variety of sources: some from govts, others from foundations or members.
- Developing effective alternatives to violence is vital; there are some dilemmas for groups working with the military, eg in Somalia, military protection is necessary for aid convoys in a country run largely by armed gangs. Aid is not the long term answer. Employment alternatives are desperately needed. If military are used to provide humanitarian assistance, then there must be a clear exit strategy.

SPECIFIC IDEAS FOR THE IPB PROGRAMME:

- Most important is to stimulate our members to develop the campaign in their own countries. This can be our contribution to IANSA, ICBL, CMC etc. For example, IPB Italia have developed a project on EU arms regulation.

- Build partnerships with large development agencies. Write to leading members of the Make Poverty History coalition, invite them to join a dialogue with us about the importance of military spending and other Disarm. for Dev. Themes. Agreed to draft a document addressed to them with 10 'Talking Points' on why this is a development issue.

- Engage the politicians and political parties.

- Regionalising, eg funding from EU for work with EU countries.

- Set it in the wider context of the abolition of war, and the development of alternatives to the use of force.

- Build on existing partnerships between peace and development groups at national level.

- Explore proposals such as a binding treaty to reduce national budgets by 1 - 5% per annum; also support for Peace Tax campaigns.

- Hold a major commemoration of the 20th anniversary of the 1987 UN conference - maybe in New York? Link it to Disarmament Week.

NOTE: Many of the issues and proposals raised during this Consultation were developed further in the IPB Council meeting, held over the ensuing days in London.

For more information on the progress of the programme, please contact the IPB Secretariat in Geneva: mailbox@ipb.org or visit www.ipb.org

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