

Development Assistance

disease, a modern holocaust which is related to the \$1 trillion which we spend every year on military equipment and the military.

We will all remember that last July it was estimated that the total population of our world finally passed the 5 billion mark. For 5 billion people on our planet we are spending \$1,000 billion on arms. That works out to \$200 for every man, woman and dying child on this planet. If we compare that expenditure of \$200 per capita for every human being on this planet with the Gross National Product per capita of some of the poorer countries, we will see just how immoral this whole situation is.

In 1982, Haiti, the poorest country in the western hemisphere, had a Gross National Product per capita of \$290. Bangladesh had a GNP of \$140 per capita; Nepal, \$160; Burma, \$190; Laos, \$90; Chad, \$80; Ethiopia, \$150; Mali, \$170; and Zaire, \$180.

These are 1982 figures, and I presume they are up slightly since then. However, it gives us some sense that the total income per capita of some poor countries is less than what the world spends on an average on munitions.

Of course, these poor countries are not at all guiltless when it comes to their own spending priorities. With extremely limited public revenue many of the poorest countries have spent a disproportionate amount of their funds on the military. This can perhaps sometimes be understood in the light of the need for some defence against a real enemy. However, too often these expenditures are used by the military and dictators to repress their own people.

While we can all recognize this link in general terms, I think we need to explore it in a little more detail. In fact, if we look at the situation we will see that military expenditures in the Third World account for 25 per cent of the total debt burden of \$950 billion held by developing countries. Military expenditures result in a bad disproportion of the economic priorities of these countries. The need for money to pay for military hardware leads to an increased emphasis on cash crops for exports. To get those cash crops peasants are forced off land which had been used for generations for subsistence farming.

We see increasing evidence in our world that when every Third World country is pushing exports of basic commodities, basic commodities tend to glut world markets and the price is driven down, forcing nations ever deeper into debt and forcing them to submit to the IMF prescription which cuts back on social programs, cuts wages, and insists on opening up their economies to foreign ownership.

This is a vicious cycle. Instead of military spending actually defending the sovereignty of these countries, it actually betrays their sovereignty. In Third World countries a military elite tends to attract the best and brightest of the educated young people. Instead of going into medicine, education, business, engineering, or one of the trades, they go into the military. The sectors that are more closely related to the needs of the people

are ignored. Many young people go into the military because they are concerned about their families. The military gives a dependable income that cannot be found in an otherwise harassed economy.

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Military expenditures lead to the militarization of political power. All over the Third World we have seen a proliferation of military dictatorships. Finally, the very heavy spending on the military leads directly to the start and prolongation of local wars.

Since the end of World War II, the Armed Forces of some 90 different countries have been involved in war—war is defined as a state where more than a thousand people per year have been killed. The territory of more than 80 countries has been involved in war. We see the direct effect of military expenditures on the Third World.

How about the developed world? The two superpowers, the United States of America and the U.S.S.R., account for half of the trillion dollars expended for arms throughout our world. It is very difficult to get accurate figures, particularly from Russia which claims military expenditures of some \$22 billion a year, while western experts estimate that it would probably be ten times that amount. The United States is more open about its spending which totals approximately \$300 billion a year. Those two countries account for more than \$500 billion of arms spending a year.

What are the effects of that spending on those two countries? We are all aware of the shortage of basic consumer goods in the United States, and the growing pockets of persistent poverty characterized by malnutrition. There is hunger in the United States, lack of decent housing, deteriorating cities, and a lack of access to health and education services. This poverty in the richest nation in the world contrasts with the growing affluence in some of the sunbelt states that profit from military contracts. The spiralling deficit in the United States is directly attributable to military spending. As in the Third World, the armed forces and military research take a disproportionate share of the best and brightest of American and Russian youth.

The ostensible purpose of all this spending is to provide us with more security. Earlier this year our Minister of National Defence released a White Paper calling for massive expenditures in order to obtain nuclear submarines for Canada. This is supposed to increase our security as Canadians. We all know that it will do no such thing.

In recent weeks one event more than any other has given an increased sense of security to Canadians and to other people throughout the world. It was the agreement reached by President Reagan and Gorbachev to get rid of some 1,000 nuclear missiles from Europe and the Soviet Union. Getting rid of these nuclear missiles brought a sense of increased security, not the hardware itself.