

Does tit-for-tat work for disarmament?*Carlos Alberto Afonso*

The issue of development assistance should always be dealt with from the perspective of a central strategy of sustainable combat against poverty, with the goal of eradicating it. This is the reason why official development assistance (ODA) must have one central goal, which is to effectively contribute to human development. This commitment towards sustainable human development was taken by participants at Copenhagen's Social Summit (1995), and requires that all agents involved-- donors and beneficiaries-- are engaged in a joint project which will benefit all of humankind.

This is the view of human development which many non-governmental organizations (NGOs) embrace as their goal as agents of change in their countries. On the other hand, it must be remembered that there is no such thing as the "NGO community", especially if we are looking for common strategies and priorities, even though most will share the same mission. The ensemble of NGOs in each country, or even in each grouping of organizations with similar fields of activity, is extremely diverse, resulting in an extensive array of varying proposals and approaches to unleash or participate in processes towards a common goal.

Thus, we are here trying to explain the view from a Brazilian NGO (namely, IBASE) which has been internationally known for its innovative actions in the struggle against social exclusion and poverty.

Although one of our priority projects is a close follow-up of how the national budget relates to human development, IBASE has not specialized in analysis of military spending. We do know, however, that military outlays in many countries (developed or otherwise) as compared to other government expenditures vary widely both as percentage of GNP and of social expenditures (even the ones which may be characterized as social development expenditures instead of maintenance outlays), and a positive correlation between higher military spending and lower human development is not so obvious.

Who would imagine the horrible re-enactment of fascist atrocities against civilians in