

Every gun that is made, every warship launched, every rocket fired, signifies, in a final sense, a theft from those who hunger and are not fed, from those who are cold and are not clothed.¹⁹

More than twenty years later, Prime Minister Pierre Trudeau told the House of Commons "an arms race while millions die of hunger as is a veritable scandal."²⁰

Perhaps the oldest and one of the most often quoted references to the idea of a relationship between disarmament and economic well-being is found in the Old Testament. It is a reference that suggests that disarmament could be pursued not only in its own right but in order to facilitate development.

...and they shall beat their swords into ploughshares, and their spears into pruninghooks: nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more.²¹

These inspiring, and many would hope prophetic, words are carved into the smooth stone face of the wall on 1st Avenue in New York, directly across from the United Nations General Assembly building. They have, perhaps, helped inspire the United Nations to take up the disarmament-development debate. Yet, upon closer examination this biblical reference reveals some of the very controversies and contradictions that are found in that debate and in trying to establish a relationship between armament and under-development.

"They", in the swords and ploughshares quote, is of central importance. Who disarms? When? Under what conditions? A fuller reading of the text from Isaiah suggests that it is only some who shall convert their weapons into agricultural instruments. Others, God's chosen people, shall continue to raise up swords and smite their enemies. The text of Isaiah and its references to Zachariah reveal a different picture of swords and ploughshares: disarmament and development.

¹⁹ Disarmament and World Development, p.13. For a more complete text of Eisenhower's speech and commentary see Securing Our Future, pp.116-124.

²⁰ House of Commons Debates, 15 June 1981.

²¹ Isaiah, Chapter 2:4, Holy Bible, King James Version.