

# Will the next war end all life on earth?

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by TIM FEHER

In just a short while we are about to witness the passing of another decade. Without trying to sound melodramatic, I seriously wonder if we will still be here to marvel at such an occurrence again. The growth of the world's military machine has reached magnitudes never even imagined when our parents were growing up. As the arsenals of the major powers continue to overflow with sophisticated weaponry and nuclear hardware, the odds of an accident or provocation become increasingly possible. Existing nuclear stockpiles of the military are sufficient to destroy the earth 50 times over. It is needless to say therefore that the next "war to end all wars" would end all life on this planet forever.

World figures show that 23 million soldiers are under arms. One half of all scientists and engineers working in the areas of research and development perform those functions for the military. The world spends \$1 million per minute on military forces and weapons. One tax dollar in every six goes toward military purposes.

The insanity of such policies in humanitarian terms is, obvious. When looked at in social and economical terms, one can't help but question certain governments and what they choose as their priorities. For instance, global military expenditure has reached the horrendous level of \$400 billion per year. The military sector consumes in one day more than the total amount of annual aid that flows to the world's 25 least developed countries. Developing nations despite severe food shortages, use five times as much foreign exchange for the import of arms as for agricultural machinery.

## Canadian contract

Canada is an active participant in this insanity. With 20 per cent times as much foreign exchange, poverty line, some one million members of the work force unemployed, and a damaging rate of inflation, the Canadian government, this past summer, has seen fit to make a purchase of 130 foreign built fighter aircraft at a cost of \$3.5 billion. This is of course added on to Canada's annual defense budget of \$4 billion. With cuts in health, social services and education fresh in our minds it is important to realize just where funds are being directed.

The increase in Canada's military spending is all part of its damaging and costly commitment to the North Atlantic Treaty Alliance (NATO) and North American Air Defense (NORAD) headed by Canada's overseer, the United States.

Since 1959, Canada has been involved in a Defense Production Sharing Program with the U.S. This agreement integrated the production of weaponry in the two countries, meaning that Canada has also played a major role in the production of nuclear arms.

The steady growth of arms production in North America has given birth to the profiteers of

war, the corporate sector. This military industrial complex, against whose dominance the late President Eisenhower warned, is headed by huge corporations like Exxon, General Electric, General Motors and International Business Machines (IBM). They receive government contracts for the manufacture of tanks, missiles, artillery pieces, electronic equipment, napalm, fuels and war gases.

## Business

Other corporations involved are Lockheed, Boeing, McDonnell-Douglas and North American Aviation, who manufacture missiles, bombers, fighters and other hardware. Just what are their rewards? In 1976 nine U.S. companies each had military contracts from one to over two billion dollars. In 1973 the profit rate of the large American concerns producing civilian consumer goods was roughly 10 per cent while those corporations concentrating on arms production had a profit rate of more than 56 per cent. This did not mean an increase in jobs. The arms industry has a negative effect on employment opportunities, as I will show later on.

In order to procure bigger and better Pentagon contracts it helps to have the right connections. And, to be sure, they have them. U.S. Senate and Defence Department surveys found 768 high-ranking officers employed by the 100 largest military contractors in 1959, and 2,072 in 1969. You can estimate for yourself today's figures. A current IBM Director, John M. Irwin was an assistant secretary of defense, and held various other key government positions. Another IBM Director, Cyrus Vance, was during the 1960s respectively Secretary of the Army and Deputy Secretary of Defense. He is now the Secretary of State in President Jimmy Carter's cabinet.

The ugliest piece of hardware to come out of North American arms production is the neutron bomb. The bomb's destructive capacity is contained in its ability to release massive doses of radiation. The blast is minimal, therefore structures would be left standing but all inhabitants and living matter would perish. The soil would be left in a state of sterility for years.

## Pushing the neutron

When both the USA and the USSR did most of their research on nuclear weapons (in the sixties) the aim was to steer away from such concepts as the neutron bomb. It is known today however that the U.S. secretly pushed neutron bomb development at the Livermore Radiation Lab in California, then directed by Dr. Harold Brown. As early as 1963 Brown tested a neutron weapon in Nevada. Brown later became one of the directors for IBM and today sits in President Carter's cabinet as secretary of defense.

The development of the neutron bomb has continued over the years in the U.S. They come in all shapes and sizes now, the very smallest (fired from a gun) would have the explosive force of 100 tons of the most powerful TNT.

The fact that the Soviet Union has not yet pursued production of the neutron bomb should put even more pressure on the United

States to dismantle such weaponry.

## Planned paranoia

I will now try to dispel some of the myths that the Pentagon and the corporate sector have implanted in the minds of North American Society.

1) The Russians are coming. Commie, Pinko, etc. This is probably the most common reason given for armament in the West. However it has no substantial historical or philosophical backing. If you can't understand what I'm talking about it only proves my point. Continued ignorance of other societies, peoples and political systems is excellent ground for spawning hatred and fear. Many experts agree that the so-called "threats" from the East is not military but rather ideological.

2) Defense spending created jobs and a cut in such spending would increase unemployment. Several U.S. studies including one by Senator Edward Kennedy have shown this statement to be false. Since defense industries tend to be very capital intensive, each dollar spent in almost any other area of the economy. In the United States each increase of \$1 billion in military spending meant the loss of 11,600 jobs as compared with spending the money in other ways. In Canada, our disadvantaged position in relation to the U.S. economy would indicate a direct loss of between 90,000 and 176,000 jobs on the proposed \$4 billion in expenditures on military hardware over the next five years.

Canada's branch-plant economy is strained even more with its military commitments to the U.S.A. and NATO. We import nearly 70 per cent of our machinery in this country. We also pay high research and development costs to our American neighbors. Therefore military development in Canada only increases the number of dollars that flow out of this country. It is needless to say that continued borrowing for military development, an industry which has in the first place a negative effect on the economy, can only add to Canada's huge deficit of \$12 billion.

A study by Dale Martin entitled: The Economy Benefits from Utilization of Funds Intended for Military Use in Canada, looks at the negative effect of military development in social and economic terms.

According to the report, if we were to cut \$1 billion from the defense budget and direct the money towards the construction of affordable housing we could create 50,000 to 83,000 new jobs and make thousands of homes and apartments for Canadians.

The study also shows how the military can easily be converted to a system which would be beneficial socially and economically. Diversification through avionics, electronics, computers, industrial machinery, telecommunications and mass transit would sustain most jobs presently in the military and create even more jobs.

3) Deterrence and security mutual terror and the escalation of mutual terror is the path to peace. This is a favorite of the war mongers, however, it also has no historical backing. If anything, history proves it wrong. The logic is not even worth discussing if we seriously consider ourselves civili-

zed modern peoples.

Consider some other factors. Eighty per cent of liquid nuclear wastes in the U.S. are not from nuclear power plants but from the manufacture of nuclear weapons. Consider also the fact that of the 41 Polaris submarines employed by NATO, 20 are constantly on the prowl, hidden in the deepest parts of the oceans. Each is equipped with 160 weapons each with an explosive force several times that of the Hiroshima and Nagasaki bomb combined. These submarines, their crews and their arsenals are under the command of one person.

## Subs in question

Should the safety of these subs, the sanity of one commander or the stability of a Polaris crew be trusted as collateral for the existence of mankind? It is reported that malfunctions have already occurred within the Polaris fleet and that several have

been destroyed at sea.

Equipment malfunction, human error, vandalism, all could touch off a chain reaction that could never be stopped.

There is only one solution to war and that is disarmament. The simultaneous dissolution of the two opposing military blocs, NATO and the Warsaw Pact.

Initiatives for the promotion of detente (cultural exchanges and public awareness) are the first steps. The signing of SALT II on June 18 of this year was an extremely important step towards peace. The U.S. Senate, however, is still the obstacle that stands in the path of its implementation.

With organizations like the World Peace Council represented at the United Nations and its members like the Canadian Peace Congress, the peace movement is gaining strength. Let's grow up - not blow-up.

## The mods are back

The punks are out and the Mods are back - in Britain anyway.

For those of you who are too young to remember the early Sixties, 'the Mods' was a name given to a youth movement whose members were dedicated followers of fashion. It also spawned a distinctive style of rock and roll as performed by such groups as the Rolling Stones, the Kinks and the Who.

Well, the Mods disappeared with the advent of heavy-metal rock. But the recent release of the

new Who movie, "Quadrophenia," has spawned a new Mod revival.

At least two new Mod bands have just signed recording contracts in London. And the Who has decided to offer a complete line of Mod clothing the Christmas season.

The men's line includes such items as suits with three-button fronts and narrow lapels, and shirts with button-down collars. For the girls, there are stiletto heel shoes, ribbed sweaters, stretch ski pants and suede mini-skirts. (Newscrip)



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