

International Peace Update



Volume 65 No. 3, June-August, 2000

Published by the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom

Reaching the Borders of Diplomacy

By Xanthe Hall

The Conference to Review the implementation of the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) ended dramatically on May 20th 2000, after running for four weeks in New York. Having at last reached agreement on a final paper on disarmament with the nuclear weapons states, the hard-won consensus looked about to be snatched away by the insistence of the United States that a strong criticism of Iraq be included in the final document. The diplomatic skill of Ambassador Baali of Algeria, who chaired the NPT conference, and Christopher Westdal of Canada who literally performed "shuttle" diplomacy by running back and forth between the two rooms (the delegations refused to sit down at the same table), saved the day by reaching a compromise between the conflicting parties. Nineteen hours after Ambassador Baali stopped the clock, the conference had a consensus.

In the media, much was made of the results of the conference. There was jubilation at the agreement of the nuclear weapons states to an "unequivocal undertaking" to "accomplish the total elimination of their

nuclear arsenals" without any ifs or buts, and without qualifying it as an ultimate goal, as they usually have in the past. Of course, they still don't say when, although nobody really expected them to. To be truthful, and given the present political situation, nobody could honestly say they expected even this much. And it leaves us in an uncomfortable position: we want to rejoice, but is the promise worth the diplomatic paper it's written on?

The conference concentrated mainly on how to retain and strengthen the review process established in 1995 at the Conference to Review and Extend the NPT, where the States Parties agreed to extend it indefinitely in return for a programme of action outlined in the "Principles and Objectives". There are several obstacles to the continuation of this process, which is seen by many as the glue that is presently holding the NPT together. The Principles and Objectives are an attempt to give content to the commitment under Article VI by the nuclear weapons states to get rid of their nuclear arsenals completely, which is fundamental to the commitment of other States to also uphold their commitment not to acquire nuclear weapons.

The main obstacle was the credibility of the statement by the N5 (the five nuclear weapons states), which was given in the second week of the conference, that they were "unequivocally" committed to disarmament as an "ultimate goal", and also the lack of a time frame in which this is to be achieved. The claim to being committed has already been undermined by recent developments in nuclear policies in the United States, NATO and Russia, all of which have reconfirmed their belief in nuclear weapons as essential to their defence and are all lowering the threshold for use. The development of a National Missile Defence (NMD) by the United States and a leaked US document that proposed to the Russian Federation that it retain a robust nuclear arsenal on high alert to be able to overcome

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The aims and principles of WILPF are to bring together women of different political and philosophical convictions united in their determination to study, make known and help abolish the causes and the concept of war. WILPF works toward world peace, total and universal disarmament, the abolition of violence and coercion in the settlement of conflicts and the substitution in each case of negotiation and conciliation. It also seeks to strengthen the United Nations and its Specialized Agencies, the institution of international law. WILPF strives for political and social equality, economic equity, cooperation among all people and for sustainable development with environmental protection.

WILPF is conscious that under systems of exploitation and oppression these aims cannot be attained, and that a real and lasting peace and true freedom cannot exist. WILPF aims to facilitate by non-violent means the social transformation to permit the inauguration of systems under which social and political equality and economic equity for all are attained without discrimination on the basis of sex, race, religion, or on any other grounds.

WILPF sees as its ultimate goal the establishment of an international economic order founded on meeting the needs of all peoples and not on profit and privilege.

**International
Peace Update**

Published by WILPF
Annual Subscription:
CHF 20.- or US \$15.-

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*Opinions expressed in articles are not necessarily endorsed
by WILPF.*

The Women's International League for Peace and Freedom is celebrating its 85th year of working for peace, disarmament and social justice all over the world. It is fitting that this 'birthday edition' is the start of a new emphasis for the International Peace Update. In future, we will be focusing each issue on specific themes including topics such as racism, globalization, violence against women, United Nations issues and the International Year of the Culture of Peace. To mark this anniversary, Deb Powell contributes by presenting an overview of the "WILPF Circulars", chronicling the work of our foremothers during World War II.

This edition focuses on disarmament, which, despite what we are told by those in power, is very much a critical issue. With over 30,000 nuclear weapons on the planet, 5000 of which are on hair trigger alert - how can it not be? Significant numbers of world citizens and an overwhelming majority of world leaders believe in the need for major military systems despite the clear evidence of the destruction this leads to. They argue that this is necessary to protect us but in reality militarism is about the protection of the interests of those in power. WILPF, through its dedicated members around the world, resists militarism in all its manifestations - insecurity, racism, sexism, homophobia, environmental destruction, economic injustice.

The Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty Review Conference concluded in an atmosphere of cautious hope for the future. Xanthe Hall overviews the 'month that was the NPT' including some of the hopes and most importantly, the outcomes. Felicity Hill writes of the dynamic and diverse non-governmental presence and activity in the lead up to and throughout the Conference. During this time WILPF's project Reaching Critical Will, was an invaluable resource to the media, governmental delegations and people all over the world logging on to the latest news on our nuclear future at www.reachingcriticalwill.org. Alyn Ware also provides an analysis of the progressive governmental grouping 'the New Agenda Coalition' and their effectiveness in promoting nuclear disarmament.

The Conference on Disarmament is where we expect governments to 'unequivocally' negotiate in good faith, as it is the world's only multilateral disarmament forum. Jenni Rissanen provides insights into the parlous state of affairs in the Conference on Disarmament. An issue that has yet to be addressed in this deadlocked Conference is that of small arms and light weapons. As moves towards the first United Nations conference are being made slowly, NGOs are gathering



momentum in their campaigns to raise awareness of both the legal and illegal proliferation and effects of these lethal weapons.

Wendy Cukier in her contribution addresses some of the gender dimensions associated with small arms. WILPF is an increasingly active member of the International Action Network on Small Arms. One of our strengths as the oldest and largest women's peace organization is to continue to contribute analysis and information to the current campaign about the gender aspects of militarism and specifically of small arms and light weapons proliferation.

Increasingly, links between economic supremacy and militarism are being understood at many levels of society. Steven Staples

cogently exposes these linkages in his article by outlining the key themes that bind the very worst aspects of globalization and militarism - profit and power - and how this fundamentally undermines security, sustainable development and human rights. It is essential to counteract the nexus of economic domination and militarism wherever possible.

How do we as peace and justice activists work when the sense of the impossible is so dominant? Some strategies of resistance are clearer than others. We can re-examine and transform consumption, which inhibits the rights and destiny of others. We can work to create local economies that build strong and caring communities. We can exert our democratic rights fully, demanding and defending participatory principles and actions. The

possibilities are endless, with honesty, courage and commitment to non-violence we can move away from a culture based on negative power and domination to a culture based on respect for our common dignity. It is imperative that we work together to create a vibrant, determined, revolutionary culture of peace that rejects all wars and all violence.

We hope this issue of the International Peace Update is stimulating in preparing for greater understanding of the problems and for purposeful actions towards solutions to critical global issues.

In Peace,

Bruna Nota,
WILPF International President

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**Reaching the Borders of
Diplomacy**
By Xanthe Hall

such a defence, in order to maintain deterrence, indicates that an NMD would prevent total disarmament from ever taking place. Indeed, it suggests that deep cuts in arsenals below 1500-2000 nuclear weapons would also be precluded. Moreover, given the state of Russia's decaying nuclear arsenal, it would seem likely that they would need to rearm sometime in the future, in order to be able to overcome a US NMD or to prevent the possibility of a first strike in the future. It would also ruin attempts to persuade Russia and the US to take their weapons off high alert therefore increasing the risk of accidental nuclear war. China would be put in the position of having to expand its nuclear arsenal to protect itself from the US, since its present numbers

would be too low to overcome an NMD and leave them vulnerable (should a NMD actually work) to a first strike they could no longer retaliate. This would in turn exacerbate the arms race in South Asia.

The problem of the time frame is more pressing than ever before, since the relaxed atmosphere of the post Cold War period has been replaced by tensions over NATO expansion, intervention in other states' conflicts and renewed mistrust. Two new nuclear weapons states (India and Pakistan) have emerged that are not Parties to the NPT and are in active conflict with one another. Time is running out in the Middle East, where anger at the insistence of Israel to keep its covert nuclear weapons capability has already led to states in the region trying to acquire nuclear or other weapons of mass destruction.

The N5 had signed up to nuclear

disarmament as an "ultimate" goal and some of them were linking nuclear with conventional (general and complete) disarmament, saying that one cannot be achieved without the other. A proposal was put forward early in the conference by the group of states known as the New Agenda Coalition (NAC), containing a time frame - the length of the NPT review process, i.e., five years - as a yardstick for an accelerated process of negotiation, thus underlining the urgency of the matter without setting an actual date for the elimination of nuclear weapons. This was not agreed to by the nuclear weapons states. The NAC also called for an "unequivocal" undertaking to total nuclear disarmament, not linked to general and complete disarmament and as an obligation and a priority, not an ultimate goal. This position enjoyed wide support and the working paper of the NAC provided a basis for further negotiation. The

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Reaching the Borders of Diplomacy

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accompanying set of proposals were then discussed at length by the N5 and NAC, watered down, and became the core of the final document.

Further problems are presented by the lack of fulfilment of the programme of action set out in the 1995 Principles and Objectives. Two of the most important elements - a Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty (CTBT) and a treaty banning the production of fissile materials for weapons purposes ("cut-off") - have not been achieved. Although the CTBT has been agreed upon and signed by many of the 44 nuclear-capable states, it has not yet been ratified by most and therefore cannot come into force. The ratification of the CTBT depends largely on US domestic politics and the outcome of the presidential election, whether it will be presented to the Senate for ratification again in the near future. Without ratification by the US, it is unlikely that other key states will ratify.

The stalemate on the "cut-off" in the Conference on Disarmament (CD) largely rests on acceptance of an *ad-hoc* committee on Disarmament. Here five NATO states put forward a compromise proposal to the NPT Review Conference that an *ad-hoc* working group should be set up in the CD to exchange views on ways and means to achieve disarmament. This is also reflected in the final document, which calls for the establishment in the CD of "an appropriate subsidiary body with a mandate to deal with nuclear disarmament". This will hopefully break the deadlock and enable the "cut-off" to be concluded within five years, which is the new deadline set by the NPT final document.

A major stumbling block was the continuing disagreement over the

Middle East and Israel's nuclear capacity. Israel has not signed the NPT and the US continues to block any recognition of the necessity for Israel to renounce its nuclear weapons in order for the Middle East peace process to go forward. Right from the start, delegates were worried that this subject would unravel the conference and make it impossible to achieve consensus. Indeed, the US used Iraqi non-

Only when the US realised that it had little or no support and, indeed, would be blamed by the delegates for trying to make Iraq a scapegoat for the failure of the conference to reach a consensus, did they agree to a compromise.

A noticeable area of progress is the relationship between non-governmental organisations (NGOs) and states. Many states now regard NGOs as helpful in the negotiating process because of their concrete suggestions on specific points and continuing pressure on states to take their obligations seriously. Indeed, in comparison with 1995, the usage of the words "abolition" or "elimination" of nuclear weapons has significantly increased, so that there is no discussion of whether this is the goal, only of how it can be achieved and when. This is mainly due to NGO efforts.

The NGO presentations to the Conference had a large turnout of delegates, many times more than in 1995, and some delegations actually included representatives from NGOs who advocated the abolition of nuclear weapons. Active consultation with NGOs before and during the Conference has led some State Parties to propose measures that might otherwise not have been forthcoming. Access to the Conference floor for NGOs was much greater and informal meetings with delegates easier to obtain.

In conclusion, although the atmosphere in the Conference was conducive to hearing constructive proposals and there was a sense that the Parties were aware of the seriousness of the present situation, one cannot be particularly optimistic about the future of nuclear



compliance with the Treaty as a counterweight to the Egyptian insistence that Israel be named as a non-adherent to the NPT, which then escalated into a full-scale battle at the end of the conference.



disarmament. Even though a final document was agreed, containing a programme of action, it could suffer the same fate as the Principles and Objectives of 1995, which is that it remains largely on paper. Meetings with decision-makers in Washington showed a wide discrepancy between opinions in the Congress and Senate and those being expressed in the NPT Conference. The enormous support in the US for the National Missile Defence indicates that the proponents of "peace through strength" have the upper hand, despite the fact that NMD cannot effectively protect the US from attack with weapons of mass destruction. In Russia, the belief that nuclear weapons are the only hope of standing up to the conventional superiority of a US-led NATO, and that deterrence actually prevents intervention in their domestic conflicts, hinders any possibility of nuclear disarmament in the near

future. In short, time is running out for the present non-proliferation regime and it is likely that we will see another attempt at break-out at some time in the next few years, if the N5 continue to signal that they consider nuclear weapons an indefinite requisite for their safety. There is no reason to suppose that other states will not also, like India and Pakistan, join this religious doctrine of belief in protection through strength and also develop a nuclear capability.

The borders of diplomacy constrain us, but up until now our intervention in the diplomatic process has brought us results. Through the United Nations we have achieved an advisory opinion on the (il)legality of the use and threat of use of nuclear weapons, General Assembly resolutions calling for the negotiation of a Treaty to abolish nuclear weapons, our draft of a model Nuclear Weapons Convention is a recognised UN document, the

formation of the New Agenda Coalition and now an unequivocal undertaking to eliminate nuclear weapons from the nuclear weapons states. All of this puts pressure on governments to live up to their promises and gain credibility. And yet the diplomatic efforts we make are of no consequence without the continuing grassroots pressure and protest through campaigns and direct action that is the other side of the coin, stamped with the name "Abolition 2000" – A Global Network to Eliminate Nuclear Weapons.

**Xanthe Hall works for the International Physicians for the Prevention of Nuclear War and is a member of WILPF Germany. For more information on Abolition 2000 visit: www.wagingpeace.orgabolition2000/*

☛ Useful Disarmament Websites to Visit ☛

nuclear weapons focus:

- ☛ www.reachingcriticalwill.org - WILPF International
- ☛ www.armscontrol.org - Arms Control Organisation
- ☛ www.ipcs.org - Institute for Peace and Conflict Studies
- ☛ www.ddh.nl/org/ialana - International Association of Lawyers Against Nuclear Arms

conventional weapons focus:

- ☛ www.iansa.org - International Action Network on Small Arms
- ☛ www.nisat.org - Norwegian Initiative on Small Arms Transfers
- ☛ www.bicc.de - Bonn International Centre for Conversion
- ☛ www.ploughshares.ca - Project Ploughshares

nuclear & conventional weapons focus:

- ☛ www.basicint.org - British American Security Information Council
- ☛ www.unog.ch/unidir - United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research
- ☛ www.bulletin.org - Bulletin of Atomic Scientists
- ☛ www.clw.org - Council for a Liveable World, supports Coalition to Reduce Nuclear Dangers and the Conventional Arms Transfer Project websites

Reaching Critical Will: NGOs at the NPT

By Felicity Hill



The NPT Review Conference was a month-long meeting of diplomats from 187 countries and more than 600 activists thinking about fear and hate. After all, nuclear weapons are the most perfect expression of fear and hate humanity has produced. They are a legitimate cause of fear, alarm and despair for millions of people, yet the prospect of getting rid of them arouses other emotions like hope and belief that international institutions, politics between nations and our environment and psyches can be free of this giant impediment.

The vast majority of the world's governments and people want nuclear weapons eliminated, and that message was heard loud and clear in New York from April 24 – May 17. WILPF celebrated its 85th year during the conference and nearly 80 WILPF delegates participated in the NPT as part of the celebrations in New York and stayed on for the wonderful party held on April 28.

Each day throughout the conference WILPF brought out a six-page, sometimes eight-page, newsletter, with contributions from many NGOs present or not present. News in Review can be found at the website below.



The results of this sixth Review Conference of the now 30 year nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty are worth getting excited about:

- ⊛ The first ever political "unequivocal" statement that binds the five biggest nuclear armed nation states to the "total" elimination of their arsenals;
- ⊛ A commitment to the concept of "irreversibility" (meaning no putting the weapons back together again once they have been taken apart);
- ⊛ A commitment to "reduce the role" of nuclear weapons in security doctrines and policies;
- ⊛ Promises to report "regularly" (around once a year when the NPT meets, we hope) on how the process of eliminating nuclear weapons is going;
- ⊛ Calls for non-strategic weapons (or tactical nuclear weapons, like the US weapons placed on European soil under NATO) to be part of future arms control agreements.

The forward looking action plan for the coming five year period contains all these elements, and the words appearing in inverted commas are all important because they were fought over for a month. The clock was stopped on the last Friday of the conference as delegates (also known as "delicates" at the three week mark) and NGO representatives hung around until 5am and then returned on Saturday until the gavel fell at 6pm. The cause of delay was the struggle between Iraq, that has not been inspected for some time, and the USA, that wanted explicit mention of Iraq under the theme of "compliance". That particular inquisition has not stopped and it would seem that the burning continues.

In the 55 year conversation on

nukes, some countries are standing up to nuclear bullying which has corrupted and literally polluted international relations. Those countries are Ireland, Mexico, South Africa, Sweden, Egypt, Brazil - the New Agenda Coalition. This NPT Review Conference also saw activity from other coalitions such as the Non-Aligned Movement (134 member countries) and a group of non-nuclear NATO states (Netherlands, Norway, Italy, Germany and Belgium) that pushed the issue of transparency and accountability in disarmament processes and for inclusion of the tactical nukes in future arms control negotiations (START I and II only deal with "strategic" or long-range weapons).

While the commitments will take a lot of effort to be implemented, increased activity on the part of the 182 non-nuclear governments and NGOs is guaranteed after this result, which is actually better than anyone predicted. Going into the conference, many were disheartened until Russia ratified START II and the CTBT. People were worried that the tension between the nuclear weapon states would consume the entire conference (bombing embassies is an unfortunate faux pas in the international community, and breaking out of important treaties to build STAR WARS is a bit passe). Concerns also centered around procedural issues.

However, with the help of advisors and the secretariat, Ambassador Baali of Algeria, the President of the Conference, steered the group towards consensus on 6 documents: a forward looking action plan on disarmament, a backwards looking document on the disarmament efforts of the past five years, a report on the safeguarding of nuclear materials

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Disarmament Undertakings Finally Achieved: The Role of the New Agenda Coalition

By Alyn Ware

Disarmament
Issue



After four weeks of determined negotiating, led by the New Agenda Coalition, a group of moderate states including Aotearoa-New Zealand, Brazil, Egypt, Ireland, Mexico, South Africa and Sweden, pulled the conference out of its quagmire and delivered a hopeful result. An historic undertaking was reached by China, France, Russia the UK and the US to achieve total elimination of their nuclear arsenals as required under Article VI of the NPT as well as new commitments on transparency, treaty negotiations banning fissile material and reductions in operational status of weapons. Mexico's Ambassador, Antonio de Icaza, told the meeting on behalf of the Coalition, that this signified "an important landmark on which to build a nuclear weapons-free world."

The NPT Review Conference opened gloomily with nuclear weapon states refusing to agree to any of the above, and with US plans to develop ballistic missile defence appearing set to reverse most disarmament gains that had been made in the last decade. Secret agreements between the US and Russia released by the Bulletin of Atomic Scientists indicated that the US was encouraging Russia to retain large numbers of nuclear weapons and maintain a launch-on-warning policy in order to allow an erosion of the Anti-Ballistic Missile Treaty. Chinese Ambassador Sha Zukang announced that China would be forced to increase its nuclear capability if the US proceeded with missile defenses.

The New Agenda Coalition was formed in June 1998, in the wake of the nuclear tests by India and Pakistan, with a declaration by the foreign ministers of the seven countries including Slovenia, (which subsequently withdrew), calling on the nuclear weapon states to make an unequivocal commitment to nuclear disarmament and to take interim steps

towards that goal. The success of the New Agenda Coalition at the NPT Review Conference follows two years of hard work promoting their agenda informally and at the United Nations. The Coalition also caught the attention of the international community of non-governmental organizations, including the Middle Powers Initiative, which had been calling for such a coalition. NGOs worked hard to support the Coalition's agenda through media action, engaging parliaments, and lobbying.

The New Agenda Coalition owes some of its success to its approach of taking a conciliatory yet firm middle path between, on the one hand, the nuclear weapon states and their military allies who have been resisting nuclear disarmament initiatives, and on the other hand, the Non-Aligned Movement which has been calling for a time bound framework for nuclear disarmament. The New Agenda approach found early support from non-nuclear western states, which had formerly sided with the nuclear weapon states, and with moderate Non-Aligned Movement (NAM) members who had formerly sided with the hard-line NAM countries. This early support increased like a snowball gathering snow as it rolls down a hill. The New Agenda has now become the agenda in the international disarmament environment.

A complementary approach, which also gained some prominence at the NPT Review Conference, was that of Malaysia, which highlighted the International Court of Justice advisory opinion of July 1996. The

unanimous conclusion that there is an obligation to conclude negotiations on complete nuclear disarmament, Malaysia submitted a working paper calling for the implementation of this obligation through negotiations leading to a nuclear weapons convention, and highlighted some of the elements of such a convention. The idea received considerable support from NGOs including Abolition 2000, an international network of more than 2000 organizations.

The New Agenda Coalition points towards a nuclear weapons convention when it affirms that: "The maintenance of a world free of nuclear weapons will require the underpinning of a universal and multilaterally negotiated legally binding instrument or a framework encompassing a mutually reinforcing set of instruments." However, while the final NPT document noted the International Court of Justice opinion, the nuclear weapons convention proposal was too much for the nuclear weapon states and remains to be picked up at a subsequent Review Conference or in other forums.

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For more information on the Lawyer's Committee on Nuclear Policy visit: www.lcnp.org

Another Paralysed Year in the CD?

By Jenni Rissanen



The world's forum for multilateral disarmament negotiations in Geneva, the Conference on Disarmament (CD), remained paralyzed during the first part of its 2000 session. Its last accomplishment, the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty (CTBT), was concluded in 1996, and since then it has been unable to launch negotiations due to disagreement over a programme of work. Ten weeks of consultations aimed at reaching consensus on it this year brought it no closer to agreement and many are saying that this year will be another wasted year with no progress towards new disarmament instruments.

The CD, which rotates its presidency every four weeks, had Austria, Bangladesh, Belarus and Belgium each take their turn in conducting presidential consultations aimed at getting agreement on a programme of work during the first two sessions of the year (January 17 - March 24 and May 22 - July 7). Delegations were presented with different proposals, including the first proposal by Austria to establish three *ad hoc* working groups on a ban on the production of fissile material (fissban), nuclear disarmament, and the prevention of an arms race in outer space (PAROS), the three key issues in the CD. The Bangladeshi President continued consultations trying to get an agreement on the subsidiary bodies and mandates of these three 'priority issues', and produced a non-paper proposing the establishment of special co-ordinators on nuclear disarmament and PAROS and a presidential statement on a fissban.

However, the CD was unable to reach the necessary consensus to get down to work, showing that the problem was not so much finding

the right formula for all than possessing the political will by all.

The increased use of the word "priority" during the first ten weeks indicated that positions on fissban, nuclear disarmament and PAROS had shifted somewhat compared to last year. The views of the NWS, in particular, seemed to have drifted further apart. Up until this year, delegations generally spoke of two remaining issues that stand in the way of agreement on a work programme, nuclear disarmament and PAROS. During the first part of this year's session, however, there was growing concern amongst especially the western group that the consensus mandate dating from 1995 to begin fissban negotiations was slipping away because of a new linkage being made between PAROS and fissban. China, criticizing US plans for national missile defence (NMD), says PAROS is its first priority and that if there are to be fissban negotiations, there should also be negotiations on PAROS, thus insisting 'equal treatment' for the different priorities. Russia, too, has backed PAROS negotiations as well as the Group of 21 which wants negotiations on nuclear disarmament.

Given the new linkage between PAROS and fissban, the US resistance to any talks on PAROS, and the nuclear weapons states' (except China) opposition to nuclear disarmament talks, the prospects of negotiations on any of these are gloomy. There is a feeling that the CD is held hostage to matters that are decided elsewhere and on a much higher level. It was in these circumstances that Belarus, the CD President at that time, was left to continue the consultations in the intersessional period, with the hope that the CD would get down to substantive work in the next session right after the Nuclear Non-

Proliferation Treaty (NPT) Review Conference.

Whether the outcome of the recent NPT Review Conference will provide much needed positive impetus to the CD, however, is unclear. While general statements made at the Conference showed that there were clear differences of view by some of the key players, the language of the final document indicates that regardless of these differences, and perhaps because of their profound nature, it was decided to carefully bypass the two issues at the heart of the current deadlock at the CD, fissban and PAROS.

The document speaks of 'preserving and strengthening' the Anti-Ballistic Missile Treaty (ABM), as in the common statement to the Conference by the NWS, thus allowing for free and undoubtedly very different interpretations to what such terms might mean, especially in relation to NMD. Furthermore, the Conference urged the CD to agree on a programme of work that would 'include' the immediate commencement of fissban negotiations, thus recognizing that such negotiations could begin only after there was agreement on a programme of work of which there is little prospect due to the current deadlock. There was a feeling of relief at the NPT Review Conference when it was possible, after the suspense of the last days, to adopt a final document. That the feeling may not carry through to Geneva where many fear that the CD's final session for the year (August 7 - September 22) will be 'back to usual' and the CD will not be able to establish any subsidiary bodies before it closes for the year in late September.

* Jenni Rissanen is the Geneva based Analyst for the Acronym Institute. For more information on the Institute visit: www.acronymn.org.uk

Globalization and Militarism -

The need for a human security trade agenda

By Steven Staples

Disarmament
Issue



In February last year, United States Defense Secretary William Cohen went to Redmond, Washington to meet with two hundred Microsoft workers to deliver a simple message: For all of the domestic prosperity produced by the Information Age – symbolized by the astounding success of Microsoft – U.S. economic power is still dependent on its military strength.

Cohen's visit was part of a campaign to win support outside of defense circles for a resurgence in military spending during a prolonged period of peace.

"Some soldiers in the high-tech revolution do not fully understand or appreciate the soldiers in camouflage," Cohen said. His message was not lost on Bill Gates, Microsoft's chairman, who bought \$68.9 million worth of shares in nuclear powered warship-builder Newport News after Cohen won his military spending increase from Congress soon after his visit to Washington.

Cohen was correct in his argument that the United States' economic prosperity depends is upon its military power – and billions of dollars given to weapons corporations to maintain that power. He's also correct that few people understand this connection given today's age of economic globalization dominated by a single superpower.

But globalization, while creating incredible wealth for so many of the world's elite like Bill Gates, is at the same time creating the conditions for war and conflict, and promoting the development of weapons to fight those wars.

Globalization, as a term, describes

the creation of a single global economy whereby the rules are written and adjudicated within international trade bodies. The best known of these institutions is the World Trade Organization, established in 1995 to negotiate agreements on tariffs, subsidies, intellectual property, and other areas affecting virtually all facets of human economic endeavor. The WTO also interprets these agreements when member countries disagree over the rules, convening dispute panels

empowered to rule and authorize billions of dollars in trade penalties if countries do not abide by

its decisions.

Successive panel rulings have consistently struck at the heart of national programs and policies of sovereign nations. Rulings have struck down laws governing the promotion of culture, food safety, industrial policy, and taxation. Furthermore, every environmental protection measure that has been challenged before the WTO has been struck down by the dispute panels.

However, one major area of economic activity is given a blanket exception to the WTO agreements: national security. Government policies and actions designated by the state as essential for national security, meaning the development, production, and trade in arms required for the provision of a military establishment, are completely exempted from WTO agreements. The special protection for military industries and defense policies is unmatched anywhere in the GATT and other trade agreements.

In the industrialized world, the security exception allows wealthy nations to side-step agreements which prevent discriminating against foreign goods, favoring domestic corporations, providing subsidies to industry, etc. These countries use military spending to subsidize their corporations, achieve regional development, and maintain their technological superiority through military spending.

A transnationalized arms industry presents new challenges to the nation state. The weakened government no longer has the ability to reign in weapons corporations, and is trapped increasingly by their private interests: greater military spending, more state subsidies, and a liberalization of the arms trade. The increase in military production and proliferation of weaponry is done without consideration of their costs to international diplomacy and peace, directly pitting the public interest of peace and good governance against the private interest.

The WTO and other global institutions must adopt a human security imperative. The United Nations Human Development Report 1999 notes that, "Threats to human security are being exacerbated by globalization." It calls for actions to protect cultural diversity, control global

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crime, preserve the environment, promote fairer trade - especially for the poorest countries. Under the current system, governmental powers to achieve these goals are being limited by trade agreements and dismantled by successive WTO trade panel rulings and IMF-imposed structural adjustment programs.

Security exceptions in trade agreements which provide blanket protection for government actions for military security must be reinterpreted to accord the same blanket protections to government actions necessary for human security. Governments could be free to invoke the exception for actions required for protection of the environment, human rights, and culture. Furthermore, new agreements would need to be subjected to a "Human Security Impact Assessment," akin to the more common place environmental impact assessment. A Human Security Impact Assessment would be similarly required for World Bank projects and IMF conditions for assistance.

The inclusion of the arms industry in existing agreements would allow member countries with low military spending to challenge the unfair industrial practices of the military powers. The absence of subsidies would immediately dampen the international arms trade. Moreover, it would further remove the impetus to pursue industrial development through an arms industry which was exempted from the threat of WTO challenges.

New agreements should be negotiated into the WTO where international controls are needed to prevent a "race to the bottom." The first of such agreements would control the trade in arms. A WTO

Arms Trade Agreement would subject all arms sales to international standards where prohibitions on arms sales could be set on member countries in conflict, arms races, or that violate human rights.

Clearly, there is a role for effective multilateral institutions such as the WTO. The arrival of the twenty-first century is not a time for reclusion behind twentieth century national structures, but nor is it a time to disregard the horrible lessons of the last century's disastrous wars. The WTO must adapt to the new realities of a world that is interconnected, interdependent, and of limited resources.

Activists working in other social movements, such as human rights and the environment, have developed in the last few years an analysis of globalization's detrimental effects and have shifted their attention to corporations as well as governments. This has mobilized their members to participate in coalitions and protests against corporate globalization in Seattle, Washington DC, and elsewhere. The peace movement is catching up with other movements and is taking its place in the new anti-globalization movement. In Seattle during the WTO meetings in November 1999, peace activists from Canada and the US organized a forum called, "The WTO and the Global War System." World-renowned author and anti-corporate activist Susan George remarked in her presentation that she thought the forum was "one of the most fantastic initiatives that she had seen in politics in a very long time," because it brought the peace movement together with all of the other activists working to oppose corporate globalization

corporate interests around the world

Charlene Barchefsky, the U.S. Trade Representative, admitted after the protests in Seattle that, "The single greatest threat to the multilateral trade system is the absence of public support." Today, public opinion is moving against a global economic system that does not provide benefits equitably, protect the environment, respect human rights, and promote peace and development. The global economic architecture needs to be fixed right away, or it may find itself "nixed" by those people it is supposed to help.

* Steven Staples is the Chair of the International Network on Disarmament and Globalization, a network of activists and researchers in more than twenty countries. The network was established at the Hague Appeal for Peace in 1999. For information visit: www.indg.org

race gender power
capital identity history
voice peace violence
hate justice
reparations diversity
silence conflict
reconciliation
apartheid war
complicity feminisms
privilege profit
perception
transformation

RACISM

In the next issue of
the International
Peace Update

Women and Firearms in the International Context

By Wendy Cukier

Disarmament
Issue



Weapons, and particularly firearms¹, play a significant role in violence in countries which are engaged in military conflicts killing roughly 300,000 people per year. Many of them are women and children. What is less well known is that firearms account also for another 200,000 deaths worldwide in homicide, suicide and accidents. While guns may not, in themselves, be the cause of violence, they increase its lethality, the number of victims and the ability of children to become killers whether in Angola or Jonesboro, Arkansas. While it is true that the majority of victims of gun violence worldwide are men, casualties among women and children are significant both in war and in "peace".

In many countries, guns are the weapons of choice when men kill their partner's predominantly with legally owned weapons. In Canada for example, 30% of women killed by their husbands are shot. In the USA 51% of female murder victims are shot. Contrary to popular opinion, the principal threat to most women is not a stranger but someone they know. These weapons are part of the escalating cycle of intimidation and violence. Studies of abused women around the world, particularly Australia, South Africa and Canada, report astonishingly similar behaviors: Men taking out their gun during a family quarrel and brandishing it, or merely cleaning it or shooting a family pet.

Violence is multifaceted. Victimization effects are measured not just in terms of mortality and morbidity figures but also in terms of secondary victimization such as, effects on the quality of life, the costs of services, the economic value of lost productivity, the impacts on property values, the

disruption of basic human services, the undermining of governance, the effects on investment, on business and on tourism and the inter-relations among them. Estimates of the cost of southern Africa's wars over the past two decades reach almost \$45 billion, arguably one of the greatest threats to its economic and social development. Criminal violence in South Africa has been defined as "the greatest threat to human rights" facing the young democracy.

In Latin America, criminal violence dwarfs political violence and impacts on individual security, economic development and governance. The economic costs of violence, including policing costs as well as the value of life lost, have been estimated to consume 14% of GDP. In Brazil 10% of GDP is consumed by violence but in Colombia the figure rises to 25%. Firearms figure prominently, accounting for over 70% of homicides in Colombia and 88% of homicides in Brazil. In developed countries, the economic costs of violence are staggering. In Canada, the costs of firearms death and injury (including murder, suicide and unintentional injuries) have been estimated at 6.6 billion dollars per year. Violence and the prevalence of weapons also create psychological stress that fuels other health problems and creates insecurity. In the United States a 1996 survey found respondents 65 and older living in unsafe neighborhoods to be less physically active than those living in safer areas.

The "culture of violence" is both a cause and an effect of the proliferation of firearms. A culture of arms possession, created and normalized during the militarization of societies, can contribute to individuals' resorting to a gun as their first instrument for resolving problems. A Cambodian study reported that, in areas with high

frequencies of weapons possession, youth threaten people with guns when there is a small traffic jam; those tending cows keep a weapon handy for protection; and women fear that males in the house, especially if intoxicated, will use a gun on a family member.

Guns are promoted as symbols of power and freedom, even emancipation, and this is by no means restricted to post conflict zones. Indeed, 'gun culture' is largely an American construct, which is reinforced by the absence of effective laws and the normalization of violence. It is also promoted through American cultural products, which now dominate world entertainment markets. This notion is by no means new as this tragically prophetic statement reveals:

By our readiness to allow arms to be purchased at will and fired at whim; by allowing our movies and television screens to teach our children that the hero is one who masters the art of shooting and the technique of killing. We have created an atmosphere in which violence and hatred have become popular pastimes.

Martin Luther King,
November, 1963

There is little doubt that there is a gender dimension to this: guns are closely associated with male hero's masculine identify in many cultures in the world. Toy guns and real weapons play a major role in the socialization of boys in many cultures. Indeed, the intense and emotional opposition, which emerges among the opponents to measures aimed at controlling firearms, can only be understood in this context. Particularly as many of the measures, which are vehemently

(Continued on next page)



opposed – licensing of gun owners and registration of firearms for example – are readily accepted in other contexts. Few people object to the regulatory schemes in place to control cars, or dangerous products or even pets, with the intensity that we see among the opponents of gun control. Gun manufacturers, like cigarette companies, have attempted to expand their markets by appealing to women; they attempt to play on women's fears, suggesting that guns will make them safer. But they have, for the most part, not been particularly successful: gun ownership worldwide is still dominated by men.

There is no question that addressing root causes is critical to peace building, public health and crime prevention. Whether in the domestic or international context, serving basic needs and developing equitable and effective governance is critical to sustainable peace, health and safety. It has been suggested that the effects of regulations on firearms are, both direct and indirect because of the important interaction between laws and values: countries with stricter controls send a signal about the acceptability of violence in the same way legislation has been observed to have long term effects on other behaviours such as smoking, drunk driving, and using illicit drugs.

There is also increasing recognition of the importance of effective implementation measures. Some of these include:

- ⊙ Consumer product standards and prohibitions on civilian access to certain types of weapons such as military assault weapons.
- ⊙ Measures to control access by those who are a risk to themselves or others. This

includes licensing measures, training and safe storage.

- ⊙ Increased transparency by marking and tracking the manufacture, sale and transfer to reduce illicit trade and improve accountability.
- ⊙ Codes of conduct to apply similar standards to state transfers reducing the chances of those countries selling firearms to countries at risk of committing human rights violations.



- ⊙ Weapons collection programmes, amnesties and buy backs to remove unwanted and unneeded firearms from circulation. A number of models have been proposed and implemented with varying success.
- ⊙ Effective disarmament, demobilization and reintegration as part of post conflict and reconstruction efforts.
- ⊙ Implementation and technical assistance - many international agreements are merely words on paper if the necessary resources are not provided - particularly to low and middle income countries - to develop the infrastructure for

implementing them.

The role of women has been critical in many gun control efforts. In most countries, there is a gender split on the issue: for instance a recent poll in Canada showed support among 72 % of men and 88 % of women. Polls in the US show similar gender splits; a recent poll for example showed 45% of men and 66% of women wanted stricter controls. These gender splits are also observable in the voting behaviour of elected politicians. The Coalitions for Gun Control in Australia and Canada, the Snowdrop Petition and Gun Control Network in Great Britain, Waffen-Weg in Austria and Gun Free South Africa are all led by women. Women's organizations have also been active in all those countries. The United States' Million Mom March held in May is the latest indication of the potential power of women to effect change. Although many women's organizations worldwide have been involved in the issue, there is more to be done. At the United Nations, for example, the NGO most often heard on the issue of firearms is the National Rifle Association. Although controls on firearms are not a panacea, improved controls will clearly have an effect on reducing domestic violence, peace building, economic development and equity.

* Wendy Cukier is the President of the Coalition for Gun Control in Canada, she is also a Professor at the Ryerson Polytechnic University in both the School of Information Technology Management and Justice Studies. For more information on the Coalition for Gun Control visit: www.guncontrol.ca

¹ "Small arms" have been defined in many ways, but for the purposes of this paper will be considered synonymous with firearms. The UN Panel of Governmental Experts on Small Arms defined them as: "Revolvers and self-loading pistols; rifles and carbines; submachine-guns; assault rifles; light machine guns."



Tools for Arms Project in Mozambique

By Christian Brun

Disarmament
Issue

The Christian Council of Mozambique's Tools for Arms Project (TAE) recently published their latest arms collection and incentives exchange figures since its inception in 1995. Officially launched on October 20, 1995, the TAE team has been able to collect some seventy four thousand (74,779) different types of weapons and accessories, including some four thousand seven hundred (4,747) firearms and explosives. In exchange, over two thousand five hundred (2,519) tools and material incentives were given away (most commonly sewing machines, hoes, bicycles, and a vast array of construction materials). In all, about eight hundred (867) beneficiaries were directly involved during these operations and approximately eight thousand (8,000) indirectly.

The TAE Project, short for Transformação de Armas em Enxadas was initiated by, and is currently under the supervision of, the Conselho Cristão de Mozambique (Christian Council of Mozambique, or CCM). The project has mostly concentrated its efforts in Southern Mozambique and is currently engaged in arms collections in Central Mozambique. The project began its current 3-year phase in November 1998. It plans to expand its activities further north for another three years, until it works in the whole country.

The CCM's primary objective is to establish a culture of peace in Mozambique, which has suffered nearly 30 years of war and numerous natural disasters. The TAE Project was established for the purpose of strengthening civil society by encouraging reconciliation through participation in peacekeeping and productive economic activities. The project

particularly encourages the social integration of former combatants.

The project is composed of six major components:

- ✪Collection of weapons
- ✪Exchange of weapons for tools
- ✪Destruction of weapons
- ✪Civic education of the beneficiaries and surrounding community
- ✪Transformation of the destroyed weapons into pieces of art
- ✪Post exchange follow-up with the beneficiaries*

The TAE Project seeks to find illegal arms holders, former combatants, and others who have information about arms caches. Through receiving productive, useful tools or material goods, people and their families are able to generate income and provide a service to the community. During parts of 1996 and 1997, lack of project funding resulted in no tools or material goods for exchange. Yet both the determination of the Mozambican people and the reputation of the TAE project kept the project afloat. Many provided information on arms locations and offered weapons for destruction without receiving anything in exchange.

There are many examples that reflect the direct benefits of the project. A local woman has been able to start a tailoring business by using the sewing machine she received in exchange for weapons. She is now looking to expand her business. A rural family has been able to put a new roof on their home in exchange for a bazooka. There are also examples of cooperation and partnerships taking place. Through the donation of a small land tractor by a Japanese partner, two groups of people in the Manhiça region and the Chibuto region competed for the tractor. The second group successfully raised

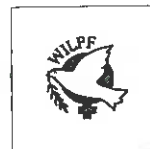
500 weapons and thus the tractor was delivered to them. These exchanges can also bring indirect effects to local communities. By reducing the number of arms in circulation, accidents and violent crimes are reduced as well.

Mozambican artists use the fragments of destroyed weapons to create works of art, which are exhibited in public places and then sold to support the project. The Nucleo de Arte, Association of Artists in Maputo has created hundreds of works of art from arms fragments - some are symbols of peace such as various types of birds and animals, others are traditional African statues, a jazz player, a motorcycle, a table and chair. Many successful exhibitions have been held in Maputo and some of the sculptures were exhibited in Portugal, Germany, Zimbabwe, Sweden, and the United States. An Exhibition Tour of Canada's largest cities is scheduled to take place in October 2000.

The Tools for Arms Project sets a clear example on how civil society can affect changes in a war torn country such as Mozambique. Since its inception in 1995, the TAE team has collected and destroyed thousands of arms, ammunitions, and explosives and has given away thousands of tools and materials incentives in exchange.

**Christian Brun is an advisor to the TAE Project. He can be contacted on Taeccm@Tisl.com.z. For more information on the TAE Project visit: www.iansa.org/documents/research/TAE/index.htm For the TAE Project artwork, visit: www.africaserver.nl/nucleo/port/index.htm*

* not implemented yet



In 85 years WILPF has seen some difficult times. The worst was probably World War Two. Not just because of the magnitude of the horror, destruction and deprivation experienced by so many people in many countries but also because any international WILPF action was virtually impossible due to the difficulties the Executive Committee members had in communicating between Europe and North America. It was described by one of the International Chairmen (sic) as, "a situation at times almost unbearable in view of the pressing and stupendous character of events which constantly demanded initiative and energetic action. But with the WILPF Constitution, action was under the circumstances impossible. In times like ours simply to mark time was humiliating."

The last Executive Committee meeting that could be held during the war took place in Geneva in December 1939. It was decided, despite an invitation from the U.S. section to transfer the International Secretariat to the States for the duration of the war, that the international work would be carried on in Geneva for as long as possible. It was agreed that Gertrude Baer, one of the International Chairmen (sic), would go to the U.S. to maintain contacts with the Economic Section of the League of Nations and the International Labour Organization (ILO), both of which had been transferred to North America. Maintaining contacts with other international organizations was obviously not going to help maintain WILPF membership, which had suffered with the outbreak of war. The United States section lost half its membership, because it was equally 'too pacifist' and 'not pacifist enough'. In Europe, sections were being silenced as the Nazi occupation spread.

Communication would be the key to maintaining whatever membership was possible and laying the groundwork for post-war work. This is how the 'International Circular Letters' came into existence borne of necessity and ingenuity. One of International Joint Chairmen (sic) wrote about this in the report to the first post war WILPF International Congress in Luxembourg, 1946:

An organization which is not or cannot be active loses its members, falls apart. The process was starting already - there were many in every country afraid to continue their membership...The last issue of Pax had appeared in February 1940 edited by Clara Ragaz; the last News Letters from Geneva had been mailed in June and August 1940... Gertrude Baer (began) to answer such inquiries started two days after her arrival, on June 15, 1940, and (began) to send out International Circular Letters, four a year, to as many countries as could be reached...The edition numbered 850-1200 according to war circumstances and up to 35 countries were included. Shipping difficulties were often very great. And when whole bunches came back weeks after they had been posted because there was "no shipping space available", the work did not seem very gratifying. But where there is will, imagination and determination, there is a way and sometimes there are even several. The story of all these difficulties is entertaining in itself but not worth taking time for being too utterly trivial in face of the monstrous things that happened to our closest friends.

The voices that speak through the more than 300 pages of letters are varied. Gertrude Baer is prominent, her voice is strong and inspiring as it weaves in and out between the

section reports, speech excerpts and publication reviews, which make up the body of the newsletters. Every so often her frustration surfaces into print: "I wish I could bring home to all who read this letter the realities of the situation in Europe which is only part of the situation all over the world. I wish I could convince everybody that this is not the time for wishful thinking but that we need very sober and clear-cut analysis of political, economic and cultural causes and factors which led up to the catastrophe we are facing today."

Emily Balch, the International President, also figures prominently, reviewing publications and reports from international organizations and writing on such topics as colonialism, global civilization and a proposal for international reconstruction camps. "It is a tonic thing and a privilege to be an active member of this gallant fellowship," she wrote in October, 1940. Other voices tell of the work that was continuing in the national sections still free to operate. Sad voices that speak of internment camps and of members whose whereabouts are not known. Hopeful voices that discuss ways and means to build a better world after the horror passes.

"This is a time of testing and one to spur us to fresh efforts. We must devote ourselves to building a new and better life for humanity. To do this we must be prepared for sacrifice, for the abolition of privilege whether of class or of race or nation. We must face and condemn the injustices, which in the past have thwarted the efforts and stunted the lives of men and women. We must combine with all like-minded people of every class, creed and country to work for world-wide cooperation and mutual help. In this way may we hope to get rid of the envious, ambitions and rivalries which
(Continued on next page)



lead to war and in this way only can we prepare for a new era of peace. For the moment direct action may not be possible but we can get together and prepare."

What struck me in reading through these letters was that the fundamental issues that these women were trying to deal with are very similar to those we work to transform - war, violence, militarism, human rights abuse and economic injustice. WILPF surviving 85 years is in part due to the legacy of these women; their intelligence, strength and courage. This article is one of a series of three, which will acknowledge the role of these women in shaping WILPF.

* Deb Powell is an educator living near Ottawa, she has been involved with WILPF for twenty years and wrote an Honours thesis on the history of the WILPF in Canada up to 1960.

Continued from page 6

Reaching Critical Will: NGOs at the NPT, By Felicity Hill

.....a report on the so-called "peaceful uses of nuclear energy", and a short paper on how the Review Process should be conducted for the next five year period. Stay tuned! WILPF, through the Reaching Critical Will project and the pages of IPU will keep you informed of how to be part of the disarmament process, through pushing for the implementation of the NPT agreements, following the First Committee of the General Assembly as well as pushing for work in the Conference on Disarmament in Geneva.

* Felicity Hill is the Director of the WILPF UN New York Office.

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Media: a tool to proliferate peace?

By Cate Buchanan



"Why so little international media coverage of events in Burundi? How many Burundians have to be murdered before the story becomes newsworthy? It is difficult to believe in claims that we live in an era of global communications, when none of the major TV channels appears even to have sent a camera crew to Burundi."

United Nations Association
Bulletin, 3 September 1996¹

These questions typify the issues raised at the WILPF International Women's Day Seminar entitled, *The Reporting of War and Disarmament: The Role of the Media in Building a Culture of Peace*, at the United Nations in Geneva, March 7-8, 2000. In considering the conditions in which cultures of peace can be created and sustained, it is critical to examine ways in which information, news and values are communicated into and across cultures globally. Journalists and the media are key actors in this process. While there are difficulties and dangers in generalising about 'the media' as a homogenous mass, some clearly consistent patterns can be observed.

The highly competitive character of contemporary journalism lends a fickle approach to the work of many journalists and media companies. The decision to report on a particular conflict depends on a variety of considerations - editorial priorities, the identities of those fighting, who may intervene, assessing the interests of the audiences and the resources necessary to report the story. In this context of the rapacious easily distracted news cycle, issues such as peace-building and preventive diplomacy rarely feature on the radar as they are deemed 'unnewsworthy'.

WILPF drew together a talented panel of participants to consider these issues. Consisting of journalists, peace activists and NGO workers, diverse views and experiences were offered to the audience of diplomats, UN staff, human rights and peace activists. Andreas Zumach, correspondent for the German newspaper *Die Tageszeitung*, provided a clear overview of the history of war reporting over the last 150 years. The Crimean War, World War II, the Vietnam War and the Gulf War marked radical moments in the evolution of war reporting. Profound changes were set with regard to investigative approaches; the use of technology; the conceptions of objectivity; the influence of propaganda and changing relationships between the media, the military and other non-government actors.

Teodora Tabacki, from Women in Black Belgrade, shared her experiences as an activist during the wars in the former Yugoslavia and how the majority of the media accepted the 'rules of the game', and were unable to conceive of new or different strategies to obtain and disseminate information within the region. Jasna Bastic, a former journalist, now working for the Swiss based organisation *Medienhilfe*, also spoke of her experiences from these wars. Originally from Sarajevo, she saw the 'siege of Sarajevo' through the eyes of both a journalist and a local. The reporting of the siege was a classic example of misleading journalism. It became a rallying point for good copy and was reported like a natural disaster with constant reference to the difficulties of life: no food, water, and no movement possible amidst the bitterly cold weather. Sarajevons eventually came to refer to this zoo-

like observation of their existence as 'weather reporting' because that's all it ever seemed to do, contributing little to any greater understanding of the issues influencing the war. An interesting addition was made to the proceedings by the screening of 'Out of Kosovo' by documentary film maker and photojournalist Nick Danziger highlighting the strengths and weaknesses of images and film to simultaneously generate empathy, connection and objectification.

Francois Vinsot and Marco Domeniconi drew on their experiences in the Great Lakes Region of Africa. Francois Vinsot, former journalist covering in the region, referred to the challenges he faced in accurately reporting the horror of genocide. Marco Domeniconi offered another perspective, informing participants of the work he performs at the Hironnelle Foundation, in particular, the establishment of Radio Agatashya which began transmitting from Bukavu, Zaire in 1994. This was a highly successful project to counter the use of radio as a medium to disseminate genocidal hatred. It soon developed a reputation as "the radio station that doesn't take sides", however it was forced to stop transmitting in 1996 after war broke out in East Zaire. Edward Girardet specifically discussed the peace journalism projects the organisation he directs, *Media Action International* undertakes in Afghanistan also using radio as the medium to provide education for girls and women who are relegated to the home and denied access to education under Taliban rule.

Critical challenges were consistently raised about the very nature and virtue of journalism. Does the media
(Continued next page)



influence conflict prevention/escalation? What is journalism for? How do journalists operate? Media analyst David Hallin has observed that the world of journalists is divided into three concentric spheres. In the centre, are concepts and values that are accepted without question - the 'sphere of consensus'. The second is the 'sphere of legitimate controversy' in which argument is contained within particular parameters. Legitimacy is decided by institutions and bodies who determine when and what 'change' is approved. Outside of this, is the 'sphere of deviancy', where people and issues unworthy of serious consideration are relegated.² Good war reporting should place events into historical, political and cultural contexts and identify the issues at the heart of conflicts. If we apply Hallin's thinking, it becomes obvious how critical issues either never or superficially receive consideration in the reporting of war and peace.

Journalists are often the first outside witnesses to early stages of a conflict, and their reports can act as the first alarm bell. Some analysts argue that it is difficult to find evidence that media coverage has explicitly led to pre-emptive diplomatic action designed to prevent a conflict from escalating.³ In fact, it seems the ubiquitous national interest profoundly influences conflict prevention/escalation with the state sizing up the costs and benefits of whether to intervene, feign a calculated ignorance or something in between. Journalists and media organisations are significant actors in legitimising, conveying and interpreting these decisions and actions to the public. Media coverage of a conflict - potential or in progress - is not the same as forcing a government to act. The power of perception often

lulls us into believing otherwise; after all, if violent conflict is being reported it means someone somewhere is probably doing something about it. Just as the mantra of national interest dominates the imagination of governments, media organisations are similarly constrained with the imperative of maximising profits - a powerful influence on what might eventually constitute 'news'.

Ultimately, only journalists can fundamentally address the decline of their profession. Joann Byrd, the ombudsman for The Washington Post has suggested that in covering conflict, journalists should add an 'S' for solutions and a 'C' for common ground to the traditional who, what, when, why and how formula of analysing an issue.⁴ Journalist Nik Gowing suggests that just as medical, legal and scientific reporting has grown more specialised, so should the reporting of war and peace. "We need to clarify our professional obligations, develop new ethical guidelines for the new situations in which we find ourselves, and commit ourselves as a profession to upholding the standards and even to be held accountable to them."⁵

As campaigners and activists for human rights and peace we also need to be strategic about utilising the media as a tool for communicating peace. Journalist Tom Gjelten suggests that four key criteria influence an editor's judgments about whether an international politics story 'deserves' to be reported: *importance* - if it has broader values, interests or resources are a stake; *dynamism* - if the story has some suspense, with events changing and the outcome uncertain; *illustrativeness* - if the story has explanatory power, suggesting trends or patterns; *its*

interest - if the story will hold the attention of readers, listeners or viewers.⁶ We can take this into account when working with the media but not necessarily be limited by it. We can also push for more sensitive reporting of conflict and war by facilitating information exchange between journalists and campaigners which provides timely and accurate analysis. The seminar was a contribution to the ongoing debates and developments in this field. These efforts all assist in supporting accurate and comprehensive war and peace reporting that strives to understand and explain the causes of conflicts as well as the possibilities for peace. A report from the seminar will be published in September for copies please contact the International Secretariat.

* Cate Buchanan is the Disarmament and Economic Justice Intern, 2000

¹ Nik Gowing, *Media Coverage: Help or Hindrance in Conflict Prevention?* p. 7, May 1997.

A Report to the Carnegie Commission on Preventing Deadly Conflict, Carnegie Corporation of New York, www.ccpdc.org

² Daniel C Hallin, 'Uncensored War' in Jake Lynch, p. 25, *News and Change in The Peace Journalism Option 2: What are journalists for?* Conflict and Peace Forums, April 1999. Contact: Conflict.Peace@poiesis.org

³ See Nik Gowing report above for detailed argument on this point.

⁴ Joann Byrd in *Media and conflict resolution in Greek-Turkish relations*, Neslihan Ozgunes and Georgios Terzis, p.72 in *The Peace Journalism Option 2: What are journalists for?* Conflict and Peace Forums, April 1999.

⁵ Gowing, above, p.25

⁶ Tom Gjelten, *Professionalism in War Reporting: A Correspondents View*, p. 23, June 1998,

A Report to the Carnegie Commission on Preventing Deadly Conflict, Carnegie Corporation of New York, www.ccpdc.org

In a Period of Transition: The Commission on Human Rights 2000

By Manjima Bhattacharjya



The 56th Session of the Commission on Human Rights was held from 20th March to 28th April 2000. For six whirlwind weeks, the United Nations in Geneva was flooded by documents, statements, draft resolutions - and hundreds of people from all over the world, highlighting their particular concerns under the vast umbrella of 'human rights'.

The approximate total meeting time was 158 hours, more than 1500 interventions were made, over 3000 individuals attended the Session and over 10,000 pages in English were issued as official documentation. 64 dignitaries from different States addressed the Commission, as well as the Secretary General Kofi Annan. Add to this the presence of crowd-pullers - Richard Gere, Arundhati Roy, Jose Ramos Horta and even Madeleine Albright. It is impossible to capture the proceedings in their entirety, what follows is a few glimpses and highlights.

WILPF organised a two-day training programme at the beginning of the Commission on behalf of the NGO Committee on the Status of Women. Participants from various NGOs were briefed on international human rights law, the structure and functioning of the UN, advocacy, and other core issues coming up at the Commission, such as racism, trafficking, torture and debates around the Optional Protocol on the Rights of the Child.

WILPF made four independent statements; on racism; the effect of the sanctions on the people of Iraq; economic, social and cultural rights of women workers in Export Processing Zones and "honour killings". As Vice President of the NGO Committee for the Status of Women in Geneva, WILPF

Secretary-General Michaela Told was one of the Convenors of the Women's Caucus. The Caucus' main focus this year was to influence the resolutions, and lobby for integrating a gender perspective into all of them. WILPF continued its pioneering work on gender monitoring as much as possible, despite constraints of human resources, and gave regular gender analyses of the Commission's proceedings to the Caucus.

The Commission closed with remarks by the Chairperson Ambassador Simkhada of Nepal and the High Commissioner, Mary Robinson. They highlighted:

- ☉ The adoption of the two Draft optional Protocols on the Convention of the Rights of Child, one against child soldiers and the other against the sale of children, child prostitution and pornography.

- ☉ The three new mandates created; a Special Rapporteur on women's right to housing rights, property and inheritance; a Special Rapporteur on the Right to Food; and a Special Representative on the situation of human rights defenders to report on the situation of human rights defenders and on possible means to enhance their protection.
- ☉ The emerging global consensus that extreme poverty does not allow for enjoyment of human rights.

- ☉ The critical importance of the issues of conflict prevention and resolution.

- ☉ The necessity of finding ways of expanding international law and treaty bodies to deal with non State actors.

Eighty-seven resolutions were passed. While most were passed on consensus, some did raise a few controversial moments. Some interesting points:

- ☉ The USA was the only

country to vote against the resolution on the right to food. Their argument was that they did not agree with the "authoritative definition of the right to food".

- ☉ The resolution on human rights and unilateral coercive measures was a unique resolution table d by the Non Aligned Movement countries, which among other things, stated that food, water etc. could not be used as political tools against a country. It was passed by a roll call vote, in which 9 countries voted against it, among them USA, UK, Canada, Germany, Japan, Norway and Poland.

- ☉ The resolutions on the Middle East, particularly that on Palestine were passed as every year, but with opposition (as every year) from the USA.

Despite gallant efforts by NGOs to prevent this, the Commission passed a 'no-action' motion on a draft resolution on human rights in China, which means that a resolution against China for violation of human rights was effectively blocked. This is indicative of the skewed power dynamics at work at the Commission, and reflective of the effect that being a veto power can have, as an obstacle to addressing human rights abuses.

Of all the resolutions, five specifically addressed women, besides certain country-specific resolutions, such as that on Afghanistan, which focused on the situation of women. These encompassed: women's equal ownership of, access to and control over land and the equal rights to own property and to adequate housing; traffic in women and girls; elimination of violence against women; violence against women migrant workers and integrating the human rights of women throughout the UN system.



+5 Special Sessions: A Review

By Michaela R. Told

UN News

These United Nations Special Sessions aim to assess the progress made by governments in a five-year period. What follows are some observations drawn from participating in two Special Sessions devoted to women's empowerment (Beijing +5) and social development (Copenhagen +5). These review conferences are the culmination of five years of preparatory meetings and activity. They represent important events in affirming and setting international consensus on policy, obstacles, achievements and action. These Sessions also attempted to reflect concerns, which have acquired greater prominence since 1995. WILPF actively contributed to these processes by consistently asserting both the need, as well as providing alternatives for bringing about economic and social justice, disarmament and peace.

"The State and civil society should not see each other as enemies but as allies....When I speak of civil society, I don't mean only non-governmental organisations, though they are a very important part of it. I also mean universities, foundations, labour unions, and - yes - private corporations. Private corporations produce most of the wealth of the world. If only for that reason, we would be foolish to ignore them."

Kofi Annan, United Nations Secretary General, 25th June, 2000 (Press release SG/SM/7465)

NGO participation is an important aspect of these review processes. The Beijing +5 preparatory process was characterised by regional meetings, with particularly well organised NGO involvement. Unfortunately, the Copenhagen +5 preparatory process received much less attention from governments and NGOs alike. Why is this the case? Perhaps, it could be argued that

Recent United Nations Special Sessions

⊙ June 5-9, 2000, New York – 'Women 2000: Gender Equality, Development and Peace for the Twenty-First Century', 23rd Special Session of the UN General Assembly reviewing the Beijing Platform for Action.

⊙ June 26-30, 2000, Geneva – 'World Summit for Social Development and Beyond: Achieving Social Development for All in a Globalising World', 24th Special Session of the UN General Assembly reviewing the Copenhagen Declaration and Programme of Action.

after decades of struggle, the women's movement refuses to allow its diverse issues and concerns to be ignored and work hard to ensure that governments take notice, and put their issues on the agenda wherever possible. Another interpretation could be that 'social development' is not prioritised by many governments even though it is inherently linked to economic development. Women's NGOs from all over the world participated in the Beijing +5 Special Session however, many of them were absent at Copenhagen +5. One consequence of this reduced women's NGO presence was less substantive analysis and commitments towards women's empowerment. Ironically, women became marginalised precisely because of 'their' Special Session. Despite some references in the final outcome document of Copenhagen +5, 'gender mainstreaming' between the two review processes was not comprehensive enough.

Another observation to draw from these conferences, is the way in which dissension rapidly erodes consensus building. At Beijing +5 major controversy arose, amongst many other issues, with regard to women's sexual rights and reproductive health. This led to difficult 'bargaining', which had a

flow on effect into other issues under negotiation. Forward looking issues were also lost in the protracted negotiation processes. Similarly, at Copenhagen +5 debate focussed on the multiple effects of globalisation. Despite a spotlight being thrown on poverty, debt relief, inequalities and the basic needs of people, 'social development' was articulated in a manner in which it does not disturb the prevailing economic system. This was also illustrated in the launch of a new report at Copenhagen +5, "2000 – A Better World for All", co-signed by the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, the International Monetary Fund, the World Bank and the United Nations. Kofi Annan remarked that the report is the product of unprecedented collaboration among the four multilateral organisations and responds to a specific request from the G-8 (the world's wealthiest nations) to help monitor poverty reduction worldwide (see Press release SG/SM/00/167).

The 1995 Beijing and Copenhagen Declarations and Platform of Actions remain important future reference points for our work. They are critical because they oblige governments to fulfill commitments. We can continue to use them for influencing outcomes



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In a Period of Transition: The Commission on Human Rights 2000 By Manjima Bhattacharjya

Finally, there seemed to be a concerted effort at reflecting on the "relevance and credibility of the Commission"¹ and taking it beyond being a political battlefield and a ground for finger pointing amongst countries. A commendable number of technical reforms on the working of the Commission were approved. Many statements emphasised the necessity of the Commission to take stronger, unbiased stands. The Chairperson in his closing statement reiterated "whenever and wherever serious infringement on the dignity and the rights of human beings take place, the Commission has to take a stand... "

There is no doubt that if the Commission wants to retain any semblance of integrity it must extricate itself from country politics and objectively focus on its true purpose. As articulated by UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan in his address to the Commission, "Once and for all, we must make clear that the rights for which we fight are not the rights of States or factions, but the rights of the individual human being to live in dignity and freedom."

* *Manjima Bhattacharjya is the Human Rights Intern 2000*

¹ Anne Anderson, Irish Ambassador, outgoing Chairperson of the 55th Commission in her opening remarks.

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+5 Special Sessions: A Review By Michaela R. Told

at the local, national and regional levels. In doing so we should focus on a few key achievements that were negotiated at Beijing + 5 strengthening the Platform for Action including: addressing issues such as 'honour' killings, marital rape, rights of inheritance and property, access to housing, gender-sensitive budgets, gender-related persecution and violence; recognition of the negative impacts of globalisation on women and needs and rights of indigenous women. Despite these improvements no benchmarks, timelines or indicators were set by governments.

The Copenhagen +5 outcome document is much weaker, some results include: for the first time ever an internationally negotiated target was set to reduce the number of people living in 'extreme poverty' by 2015; countries agreeing to work towards adopting a global employment strategy; attention to be directed towards post-conflict management strategies to address trauma recovery, reconciliation and reconstruction; and promoting gender mainstreaming. The document also urges reallocation of resources away from 'excessive' military expenditures to social programmes, and refrain from using food and medicine as 'tools of political pressure'. It was also agreed that the formulation of economic policies shall allow input from 'civil society' and developing countries should have more effective participation in international economic deliberations.

WILPF can play a two-fold role in follow up to these Sessions. Firstly, WILPF as international organisation must continue the task of monitoring these processes and addressing the need for structural economic change and calling upon the United Nation to take action towards the achievement of economic, social, cultural, environmental, and gender justice. Secondly, WILPF as women's, peace and social justice organisation ought to integrate and link women's concerns within the debates of 'social development', economic justice, disarmament and peace.

* *Michaela R. Told is the Secretary General of WILPF.*

Beijing +5 Outcome Document on Women and Armed Conflict

It was recognised that:

- excessive military expenditures, the trade in arms and investment for arms production redirects funds away from social and economic development
- there are destructive impacts from armed conflict on women
- there is increased attention to ending impunity for crimes against women in situations of armed conflict
- women are underrepresented at all levels of decision making

Actions governments committed to include:

- addressing the root causes of armed conflict in a comprehensive and durable manner
- ensuring and supporting the full participation of women at all levels of decision making and peace processes
- considering signing and ratifying the Rome Statue of the International Criminal Court
- taking urgent and effective measures to alleviate the negative impact of economic sanctions on women and children

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