



E-Newsletter January 2007

Greetings, here is our third Environment Working Group e-newsletter. We hope you find it useful and would be very grateful if you could forward it to anyone in your Section and beyond, who would be interested and/or could use the information to further WILPF's aims. Thank you for your contributions and comment.

URGENT REQUEST FROM BERGEN

The Norwegian group in Bergen's main focus is on the work against Depleted Uranium weapons. WILPF's Susanne Urban is calling on as many groups as possible to **join the International Campaign to Ban Uranium Weapons**. On the ICBUW members' list of 85 members in 22 countries, there is plenty of room for our WILPF Sections. For example, organisations from Norway, UK, India, USA, Japan, Sweden, Switzerland and other countries, where we have WILPF Sections, have already signed up. PLEASE SIGN up as WILPF. You can do this via the ICBUW website <http://www.bandepleteduranium.org/en/i/10.html>

Please also see an excellent WILPF resource, about Uranium Weapons, in the Resources Section below.

Just a reminder: The UK Section would like to speak with any Section in WILPF who would be interested in helping to fundraise specifically, to assist the translation and production of the book about Uranium Weapons. Contact Lorraine Mirham – lorraine@mirham.orangehome.co.uk (this address was incorrect in a previous e-news, sorry)

A Peace Dividend for 2007

Marguerite Finn, a WILPF member in the UK Section, sent us this column that she wrote for her regional newspaper. She speaks about the true costs of replacing Britain's nuclear submarine, Trident. She also reflects on the enormous cost of keeping the military-industrial complex going, diverting money from health, education and tackling climate change.

'Every gun that is made, every warship launched, every rocket fired, signifies in a final sense, a theft from those who hunger and are not fed, from those who are cold and are not clothed. The world ---- is spending the sweat of its labourers, the genius of its scientists, the hopes of its children.'

Dwight D. Eisenhower. President of the United States, 16 April 1953.

President Eisenhower's prescient words in 1953 went unheeded as the world drifted into the Cold War. His farewell speech in 1961 was laced with words of wisdom which are as relevant now as then: *'In meeting (crises) --- great or small, there is a recurring temptation to feel that some spectacular and costly action could become the miraculous solution to all current difficulties.'* (The words 'shock and awe' spring to mind!). With extraordinary foresight, the President warned: *'We must guard against the acquisition of un- warranted influence, whether sought or unsought, by the military-industrial complex. The potential for the disastrous rise of misplaced power exists and will persist.'*

There were hopes when the Cold War came to an end that reductions in arms expenditure would release large sums for investment in development and social programmes. This was to be the much-heralded and longed-for 'Peace Dividend'. It has still to happen.

The US military budget for 2006 was a massive \$441 billion. The share of national income spent on US defence has risen steadily since President Bush took office – yet, in 2003, Pentagon officials admitted they couldn't account for over a *trillion dollars* of past spending. Their inventory management was so weak it lost track of 56 airplanes, 32 tanks and 36 missile launchers! The head of the Washington Project on Government Oversight, said: 'Another agency would have been closed down but the Pentagon is 'Teflon'. Any challenge to the Pentagon is seen as unpatriotic.' This regressive mind-set facilitated the disappearance of millions of dollars earmarked for the post-invasion 'reconstruction' of Iraq.

Things may be about to change.

The Human Security Report (2005) listed a number of positive developments like the decline in international and civil wars since the end of the cold war. Greater global economic inter-dependence has increased the costs of cross-border aggression while reducing its benefits. The report highlighted a change in public attitudes to war. Prior to the 20th century, warfare was a normal part of human existence - for governments, it was an instrument of statecraft. Since 1990 there has been an upsurge in conflict management, conflict prevention and post-conflict peace building activities involving NGOs and the international community, spearheaded by the United Nations. The International Criminal Court was established to tackle the culture of impunity.

Today, the forcible acquisition of territory is universally seen as blatant transgression of international law, while resorting to force against another country is only permissible in self-defence or with the sanction of the UN Security Council. The 2003 Iraq invasion and the Israeli wall encircling Palestinian cities are just two deviations from this norm.

The end of the Cold War removed a major driver of ideological hostility from the international system. Rather than replacing one 'enemy' with another, to keep the military-industrial complex afloat (or submerged, in the case of our Trident nuclear submarine!), the challenge for governments is to change the concept of national security into one of human security.

Between now and March 2007, we have an unprecedented opportunity to highlight the benefits of a 21st century approach to security by cancelling any replacement for Trident. Every day we hear of hospitals, post offices and schools closing, inadequate old-age pension schemes, cash-less councils and climate-change horrors. Our way of life seems under threat – not from some evil 'enemy' abroad, but from the reckless mortgaging of billions of our hard-earned money on weapons of mass destruction we may never use and which breach every ethical imperative. Rather than providing 'insurance' against unspecified future threats, replacing Trident will increase the danger of nuclear proliferation and contribute to a new nuclear arms race – the logic being that *all* states need nuclear weapons to defend themselves, if *we* do.

The £25 billion needed to replace Trident could be better spent in providing 60,000 newly qualified nurses and 60,000 new secondary teachers for the next ten years and in tackling climate change – a far more realistic security threat.

There *is* time to make the right decision – having carefully considered the options in line with Britain's true security needs. *Festina lente* – hasten slowly – says the old Latin motto that I had to write out a hundred times, many years ago, as a punishment for racing down a school corridor!

The EWG is very interested in the environmental cost caused by the military-industrial complex and would be pleased to receive WILPF articles, information or resources to share and learn from.

RESOURCES

Thank you to Susanne Urban who has sent us an excellent leaflet they distribute to the public on their monthly information stand in the main square in Bergen. It is a small comprehensive leaflet and there is only one paragraph that would need altering if a section wanted to use it (highly recommended). The paragraph, using a Norwegian example, could be replaced by the WILPF Section's country information.

Please find the leaflet by following this link:

[http://www.ukwilpf.org.uk/NewsArticles/Uranium Weapons Bergen Leaflet.pdf](http://www.ukwilpf.org.uk/NewsArticles/Uranium%20Weapons%20Bergen%20Leaflet.pdf) or email Lorraine (lorraine@mirham.orangehome.co.uk) and she will send it to you. It is currently a pdf file but can be made available in word (please note some of the formatting will be lost).

IF YOU HAVE RESOURCES TO SHARE, PLEASE TELL US.

Did you see this URGENT request from our Reaching Critical Will project? Your action is needed. Don't Downgrade Disarmament <http://www.reachingcriticalwill.org/action/saveDDA.html>

REMEMBER TO SEND YOUR CONTRIBUTIONS AND IDEAS TO:

Lorraine Mirham

Please note my new email address: lorraine@mirham.orangehome.co.uk

We will aim to have the next e-newsletter to you in February. I will advise you of the deadline for material.

Thank you

E-News produced, this time, by Lorraine Mirham and Mary Alys

