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Never Enough

BY J. DARYL BYLER

If Congress grants President Bush's request to add \$14 billion to the 2002 Pentagon budget, annual U.S. military spending will have increased by nearly \$100 billion from just five years ago.

In 1998, the U.S. defense budget—which includes Pentagon spending and Dept. of Energy nuclear weapons programs—stood at \$268 billion. With the president's latest appeal, it will be \$365 billion in 2002.

More of the same is ahead. The president's five-year budget calls for spending \$470 billion by 2007—another \$100 plus billion increase!

How does one put all these figures in perspective? The president's \$396 billion military budget for 2003 is more than:

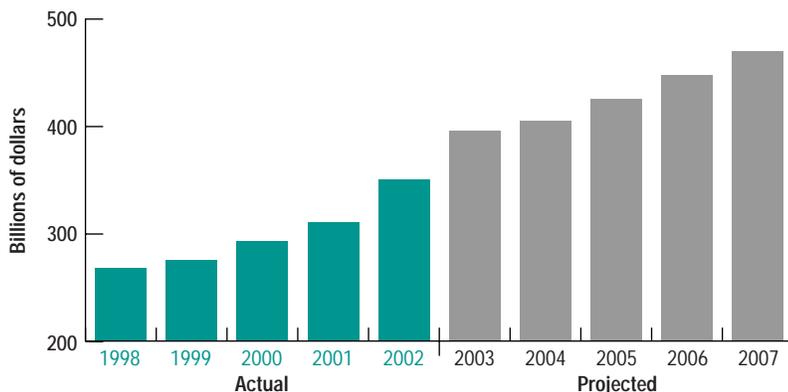
- the *combined* military spending of the next 25 countries—including Russia, China and Japan.
- 26 times the *combined* military spending of the countries the U.S. considers its most likely adversaries—Cuba, Iraq, Iran, Libya, North Korea, Sudan and Syria.
- 11 times the total U.S. spending on domestic food and housing programs.
- 39 times the amount the United States spends on international development and humanitarian assistance.

While global military spending is declining (from \$1.2 trillion in 1985 to \$812 billion in 2000), U.S. military spending is rapidly increasing, in real terms as well as a percentage of the whole.

This issue of the *Washington Memo* highlights some of the reasons that U.S. military expansion is a problem. Elisabeth Harder writes that it means much less money for domestic human needs (p.5). Rachele Schlabach, Patrick Neri and guest writer Dr. Muhammad Legenhausen emphasize the negative impact on U.S. relationships with countries like North Korea (p. 6), the Philippines (p. 6) and Iran (p.7). Martin Shupack notes how little money by comparison the United States spends to enhance global human well-being (p. 4). Finally, David Whettstone writes about efforts in Congress to re-introduce the draft (p. 3).

Military spending can never be enough. For it misses the point of how God intends to create global security. ■

A DECADE OF U.S. MILITARY SPENDING



Sources: Center for Defense Information and Council for a Livable World

BY J. DARYL BYLER

The way of the cross looks
puny and weak on Good
Friday, but mighty powerful
on Easter Sunday!

Relevant Pacifism

Is pacifism still relevant?" I've heard the question many times since Sept. 11, as if that day unmasked pacifism's naivete. I would offer seven reasons why pacifism is more relevant now than ever.

1. *It is the direction that God is moving history.* The prophet Isaiah speaks of the day when nations "will beat swords into plowshares" and "no longer learn war" (2:4). Pacifism is not only relevant. It is visionary, the sign of what is to come.

2. *It is what Jesus taught.* Jesus said, "blessed are the peacemakers" (Matt. 5:9) and "love your enemies" (Luke 6:37-42). If this is what Jesus taught, and if Jesus is Lord of all, then pacifism is relevant, whether the world believes it or not.

3. *It is what Jesus modeled.* When faced with the option of using violence, Jesus chose nonviolence (Matt. 26:52-56). Paul writes that when we were God's enemies, God reconciled us through the cross—the path of nonviolence (Rom. 5:8-10).

4. *It is truly patriotic.* After President Bush's "axis of evil" speech, an Iranian friend expressed concern about growing U.S. militarism and affirmed that pacifists are America's "true and unknown patriots." Indeed, to be patriotic is not to be willing to kill for one's country. It is to act in the best interest of one's country—and the entire global family. Pacifists point the nations toward true security—built on a foundation of justice, mutual respect and equitable sharing.

5. *Violence can't fix violence.* Walter Wink writes about the "myth of redemptive violence"—that violence is acceptable if it is used by the right people for the right reasons (i.e., when used by "our side"). But the current cycle of Israeli-Palestinian violence reminds us that violence only creates greater mistrust, anger and the desire for revenge.

6. *The world lacks imagination.* More than 110 million people were killed in wars during the 20th century. Folks long for alternatives. One pastor has said, "Every time our country starts bombing, it is an admission that we have run out of creative ideas for resolving conflict."

7. *It is the only force capable of overcoming evil.* President Bush has spoken often about evil since Sept. 11. Responding to evil with more death and destruction only feeds evil's power. Nonviolence exposes evil's weakness. In his willingness to suffer to the point of death, Jesus proved that God's resurrection power is stronger than death and destruction. The way of the cross looks puny and weak on Good Friday, but mighty powerful on Easter Sunday!

But is nonviolent peacemaking the relevant ethic for the state? How do we reconcile Isaiah's vision of swords to plowshares with Romans 13, which speaks of the state bearing the sword?

Isaiah points towards God's standard: the day when nations will no longer learn war. Romans 13 offers interim guidelines for a state that does not yet recognize the way of Jesus. The parameters for government's role are contained in the *plain* reading of Romans 13. The state is only permitted to punish "the wrongdoer" (13:4).

This narrow "authority" would certainly wipe out modern-day war with its high rate of civilian casualties. It suggests very limited, focused actions—more akin to police powers and judicial processes.

Peacemakers must model and hold before governing authorities God's vision of swords to plowshares, and remind them that, even now, their role in restraining evil is itself tightly constrained by Scripture. ■

WASHINGTON MEMO is written by Mennonite Central Committee U.S. Washington Office staff. It interprets national legislation and policy, seeking to reflect biblical concerns for justice and peace as represented in the work and statements of MCC U.S. and Mennonite and Brethren in Christ churches. All biblical quotes are from the New Revised Standard Version, unless otherwise noted.

Staff: J. Daryl Byler (Director), Elisabeth T. Harder, Patrick Neri, Rachele Schlabach (Managing Editor), Martin Shupack, David Whetstone.

To contact the MCC U.S. Washington Office, please see our address on the back page. See our weekly commentary at www.thirdway.com and visit our web site at www.mcc.org/us/washington.

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Mandatory Military Service?

BY DAVID M. WHETTSTONE

It was five days before Christmas and not much was stirring in the House of Representatives. Then, Rep. Nick Smith (R-Mich.) introduced the “Universal Military Training and Service Act” (H.R. 3598). It is the closest approximation to a draft since conscription ceased in 1973.

Young men, ages 18–22, through the Selective Service System, would be required to do basic military training and education for a period of six months to a year. Young women could volunteer to do the same. The bill “excludes conscientious objectors from combatant training, but otherwise requires them to take basic training before a permitted transfer to a national service program.”

H.R. 3598 requires an education program that includes “physical fitness, international relations, military tactics, homeland security, U.S. and world history, and vocational training.” It proposes a 10-year phase-in starting with those who graduate from high school or turn 21 after July 2004.

The bill’s only cosponsors are Reps. Curt Weldon (R-Pa.) and Roscoe Bartlett (R-Md.). Both serve on the House Armed Services Committee and are from districts with significant concentrations of Mennonites.

The Selective Service System, the President, Secretary of Defense, or any branches of the armed forces have not suggested the need for this bill. Rather, the Secretary and heads of the armed forces have said that a draft is not necessary at this time.

While it is not likely that Rep. Smith’s sweeping draft bill will pass, it may stir congressional efforts for future restoration of the draft. If a draft were to occur, young

men who turn 20 within the current calendar year would be called first. Depending upon which procedures Selective Service uses, persons claiming conscientious objector status may have as little as two weeks to prepare their case.

The introduction of H.R. 3598 provides a good opportunity for peace advocates to share with Congress their concerns about renewing any form of a military draft.

Micah 4:3 asks nations to “study war no more.” We should ask our elected members for leadership that does not succumb to fear and short-sighted approaches to building security. Rather, let us encourage each other toward new commitments to peace-making. ■

CAPITAL QUOTES

“[Civilian casualties] are probably on the low end of any we have ever seen in combat. We obviously could just bomb the heck out of the thing. But that’s not the American way.”

—Gen. Tommy Franks, who is leading U.S. military efforts in Afghanistan (Ahead of TIME Newsletter, March 3, 2002).

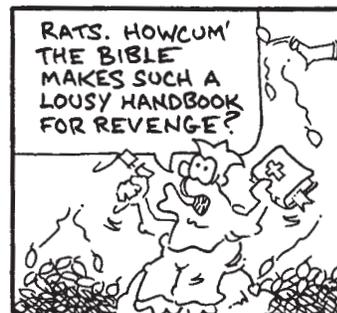
“You can go on and kill every one of their terrorists and hang bin Laden in front of the White House and you still have not solved the problem—and you probably have created hundreds of new terrorists.”

—Col. Richard Dunn, former chief of the U.S. Army’s internal think tank.

“We will not create a safer world with bombs or brigades alone. [While poverty does not itself lead to violence], it can provide a breeding ground for the ideas and actions of those who promote conflict and terror.”

—James Wolfensohn, World Bank president (Washington Post, March 7, 2002).

Pontius’ Puddle



Foreign Aid for a More Just and Secure World

BY MARTIN SHUPACK

Give, and it will be given to you. A good measure, pressed down, shaken together and running over, will be put into your lap; for the measure you give will be the measure you get back (Luke 6:38). —Jesus

In the wake of Sept. 11, there is a growing recognition that achieving global security requires efforts to reduce economic misery. In fact, international development aid is already saving lives and bringing hope. In Pakistan, international aid has been used to build schools for girls and train women teachers. In Haiti and Honduras, aid finances schools and health care programs. In Uganda, aid and debt cancellation made it possible to enroll two million more children in primary school. International aid has helped extend the life expectancy of people in developing countries by 20 years, primarily by cutting child mortality rates.

President Bush agrees in principle that development assistance, if used wisely, can help bring a more secure world for everyone. But he resists making the full commitment required.

The Bush administration's request for foreign "development and humanitarian assistance" in 2003 is approximately \$10 billion. In contrast, the president's military spending request is \$396 billion! U.S. aid to poor countries is only one-tenth of one percent (0.1 percent) of U.S. national wealth, plac-

ing the United States among the least generous of affluent nations. This amounts to ten cents ("one thin dime") out of every \$100 in our economy. European Union countries, on average, give over three-tenths of one percent (0.33) of their wealth.

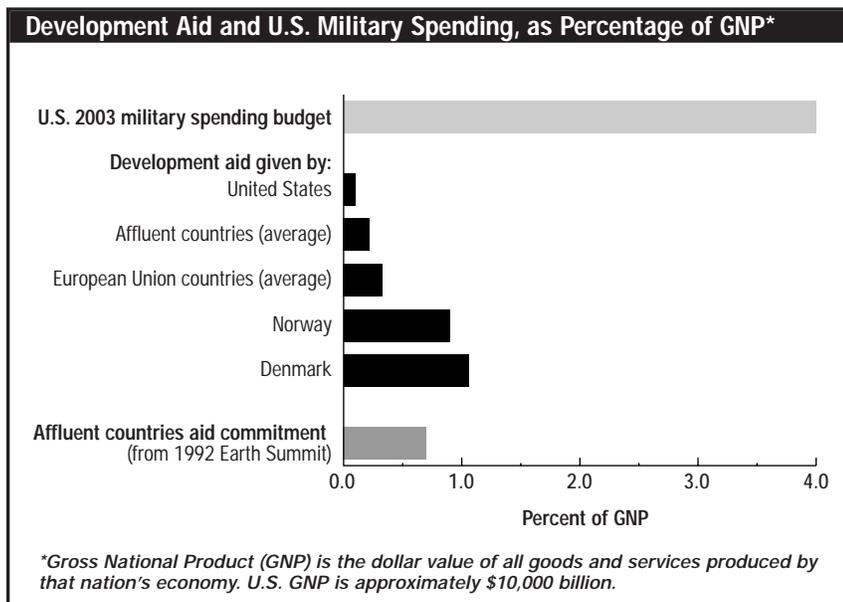
President Bush recently said he would ask Congress for cumulative increases in development aid for three years beginning in 2004. Aid spending for 2006 would be \$5 billion more than in 2003, with no decrease thereafter. This would raise U.S. aid for selected poor countries by 50 percent to around \$15 billion yearly. However, aid would only be available to countries that meet stringent political and economic conditions.

At the same time, the president rejected a proposal by Great Britain and U.N. Secretary General Kofi Annan for affluent countries to *double* their development aid to poor countries. And the Bush administration ignores the 1992 commitment of affluent countries to increase their aid levels to seven-tenths of one percent (0.7) of national wealth.

Foreign aid has an admittedly mixed record. During the Cold War it was used to purchase the loyalty of corrupt military dictators. Nor has aid been coordinated with other vital anti-poverty actions. In addition, aid amounts are not large enough to make a difference at the country level. By contrast, in successfully re-building post-war Europe, the United States gave 10 times more per year, as a percentage of its national wealth, than it currently provides globally.

Economic aid is one of several tools for bringing a more just and secure world. Deeper debt cancellation, full funding for the Global AIDS Fund and more just trade laws are also needed. As Mennonite conflict transformation expert John Paul Lederach writes, "At the deepest core, the quality of our security at home is related not to the size or quantity of our weapons, but to the quality of our relationships and the well-being of the human family." What a difference it could make if the United States would commit more of its resources to enhancing human well-being than it does to building weapons and dropping bombs! ■

U.S. aid to poor countries amounts to ten cents ("one thin dime") out of every \$100 in our economy.



Getting Our Priorities Straight

The problem is that when you have a situation where the country is at war . . . you only have so much money.”

This sobering assessment was made in March by Tommy Thompson, Secretary of Health and Human Services, testifying before the U.S. Senate. Senators responsible for renewing the nation’s primary assistance program for low-income working families had raised concerns that the Bush administration proposes to keep funding for the program at 1997 levels.

The Secretary’s words illustrate well that in the United States today, defense spending—particularly under the guise of fighting terrorism—trumps funding for education, health and human services.

The president’s budget calls for an 8.5 percent increase in discretionary spending for defense-related programs. In contrast, spending for all other programs would increase by a mere 2 percent—well below the 3.8 percent increase needed just to keep up with inflation.

In addition, an ample portion of the budget this year and in the future will go toward tax cuts for the wealthiest individuals and corporations. President Bush proposes to make last year’s tax cuts permanent and to add new ones, at a cost of \$665 billion over 10 years. The Center on Budget and Policy Priorities estimates the actual cost could reach \$1 trillion.

What, then, is left over for domestic programs? An answer begins to emerge from the following examples.

Poverty Alleviation: Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (TANF) would be funded at 1997 levels for the next five years—a 22 percent decline in real value by 2007. This program funds state initiatives to move low-income families into employment, and provides some with a limited amount of cash assistance. Also funded at 1997 levels would be social services for the elderly and disabled, and childcare subsidies for low-income parents that work outside the home. Stagnant funding does not take into account that more childcare is needed as work par-

ticipation rates rise under TANF. Nor does it facilitate fair wage increases for childcare providers—many of whom are persons of low-income.

Education and Job Training: In accordance with a major education bill signed by President Bush this year, Title I spending for schools in highly impoverished communities would increase by \$1 billion. Department of Education funding would increase by 2.8 percent in 2003, in contrast to last year’s 16 percent increase. Job training programs for adults and youth would be cut by \$682 million. Work is central to poverty reduction, but relative newcomers in the workforce often require education and training to make work pay.

Health Care: The president proposes to make unspent funds for the Children’s Health Insurance Program available to states, rather than revert some \$3.2 billion back to the federal treasury. This low-income insurance program still would not, however, be extended to immigrant children and pregnant women—though there is bipartisan support in Congress for doing so. The president’s budget also calls for tax credits for purchasing health insurance, but the credit amount would generally fall well short of the cost of insurance.

MCC U.S. believes priorities must be shifted. “We believe . . . that a government which is able to commit [\$396 billion in 2003] for production of weapons and preparations for war, has a moral responsibility to insure that its citizens do not go hungry, have adequate housing and access to basic health care, and are given opportunities to work at a living wage” (from *Statement Regarding Care for the Poor*, 1995).

The real issue is not how much money is available in the federal coffers, but rather what our priorities are for using it. Let us help our elected officials make the difficult decisions about how to spend our collective wealth. ■

BY ELISABETH T. HARDER

Defense spending—particularly under the guise of fighting terrorism—trumps funding for education, health and human services.

North Korea: "Axis of Evil"?

BY RACHELLE SCHLABACH

It is possible for North Korea and the United States to work together on issues of mutual concern.

In the last few months, President Bush has included North Korea in his "axis of evil" and a Pentagon document listed the country as one of seven possible targets for a U.S. nuclear strike. North Korea has reacted accordingly, refusing to hold talks with the U.S. government.

By contrast, 17 other countries have established diplomatic relations with North Korea in the last 18 months. South Korea, Japan and China—the North's neighbors—have expressed dismay over the U.S. position. South Korea's president has consistently pursued a "sunshine policy" of dialogue and engagement.

The United States and North Korea have cooperated on a number of issues over the past decade. U.S. Defense Department personnel work in-country to recover the remains of soldiers killed in the Korean

War. U.S. officials also state that North Korea is keeping its 1999 pledge not to test its missiles and a 1994 agreement to freeze its nuclear program.

MCC's work in North Korea stems from two basic understandings. As Christians, we are called to give to those in need (Matt. 25:31–46) and to love our enemies (Matt. 5:43–48). MCC's work includes providing farm equipment and hosting North Korean agricultural experts in the United States to help the famine-stricken country increase its food production.

As the agreements negotiated in the 1990s show, it is possible for North Korea and the United States to work together on issues of mutual concern. But much trust has been lost since the Bush administration's belligerent pronouncements. A significant policy shift will be necessary in order to move forward. As peacemakers, we must call on our government to do just that. ■

The Majority as the Voice of God?

BY PATRICK E. B. NERI

U.S. militarism offers false hopes to a people longing for peace.

In November 2001, the Philippine government pledged cooperation with the U.S. "War on Terrorism" and accepted a \$100 million military package from President Bush. Consequently, 650 American soldiers, along with military equipment, have been deployed to the Philippines for a joint military training exercise, code-named Balikatan 02-1.

The decision by Philippine President Arroyo to stage Balikatan 02-1 has been met with opposition from various institutions and individuals. Some question its constitutionality, while others raise issues of sovereignty, self-determination and human rights. "The use of Philippine territory . . . transforms the whole country into a *de facto* military base for the U.S. global war machine," a statement from non-government organizations said.

The Arroyo administration however, upholds the Balikatan exercises' constitutionality. It claims that the exercises are

in accordance with the 1999 Visiting Forces Agreement and the 1951 Mutual Defense Pact. A majority of Filipinos (84 percent of the country's 78 million people) are also supportive of U.S. military assistance in fighting terrorists in the Philippines, according to a recent survey.

But should Christians reckon the majority as the voice of God?

In February 2002, the National Council of Churches in the Philippines denounced U.S. militarism as "immoral and un-Christian," an "instrument of exploitation," and "idolatry of foreign gods." Truly it is. It aggravates a deeply entrenched historical conflict between the Filipino settlers and the Moro ethnic groups in Mindanao, mocks the Moro's aspirations for self-determination, tramples upon the dignity of human life and the environment, and offers false hopes to a people longing for peace. ■

American Militarism as Seen from Iran

American military power has been highlighted since Sept. 11. This emphasis on the force of U.S. arms is particularly significant for Iran. It is disturbing for Iranians to see a foreign power bombing its neighbor, Afghanistan, even if Iranians have no sympathy toward the Taliban. There is considerable sympathy for the civilian casualties, and consciousness that the bombers could be sent to Iran as well.

The Bush administration has stated that its war will continue indefinitely. It is not clear what country will be the next venue of its war, but Iran has been repeatedly referred to as part of the “axis of evil.”

U.S. naval personnel in the Persian Gulf have forcibly boarded an Iranian ship. The U.S. Defense Department has confirmed reports that it has targeted Iran with nuclear missiles. And the Farsi language service of the Voice of America continues to spotlight the son of the former shah, while it features (as it has for the last 20 years) “specialists” who tirelessly predict the imminent collapse of the current government.

What makes the U.S. threats against Iran more upsetting is that they are coupled with numerous unsupported accusations that Iran is developing nuclear weapons, that it is harboring terrorists, and most recently the CIA has suggested that Iran may have been in cahoots with bin Laden in the Sept. 11 attacks.

The accusations are dismissed by Iran as outlandish. But the very fact that such outlandish accusations are made gives the impression that the Bush administration is establishing excuses for military action against Iran if and when it seems opportune.

Aside from the dismissal of the accusations made against it, the Iranian government has responded by trying to dispel fears of

attack among its people and inspiring bravery. The Iranian government has also used the U.S. threats to rally support. Its success in this regard was dramatically demonstrated by the unprecedented mass turnout for the Independence Day celebrations in February. Both the conservatives and reformists in the government have issued stern condemnations of the American threats and accusations. Of course, the hostile noises from Washington make it especially difficult to criticize the government without appearing traitorous.

As far as ordinary people here are concerned, nobody really believes that the United States is serious about wanting to prevent terrorism because, first, terrorism does not have a military solution, and second, international cooperation is required to mount effective measures against it. Meanwhile, the United States has been insulting European officials who dare to question its policies.

As I write, today is “Ashura,” the day Shiite Muslims mourn the martyrdom of Imam Husayn who was killed by the forces of a corrupt and powerful government. This year, “Ashura” occurs just a few days before Good Friday, when Christians recall how the superpower of 2000 years ago sought the preemptive elimination of someone it saw as a potential terrorist leader, Jesus Christ. Just as Christians are inspired to stand up for justice by reflecting on Good Friday, Muslims in Iran are inspired by the courage of Husayn to prepare themselves for martyrdom. ■

IN OTHER'S WORDS

BY HAJJ MUHAMMAD
LEGENHAUSEN

Dr. Legenhausen teaches at the Imam Khomeini Institute of Education and Research in Qom, Iran. MCC has placed staff at the Institute as part of an exchange program to develop understanding and friendship between Muslims and Christians.

Unsupported accusations against Iran give the impression that the Bush administration is establishing excuses for military action if and when it seems opportune.

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SOUND THE TRUMPET!

ISSUE	SUMMARY	ADVOCACY NEEDED
COLOMBIA	In its 2003 budget request, the Bush administration requested nearly \$500 million for Colombian security forces. Then, in late March, the administration requested additional military aid for Colombia as part of a larger anti-terrorism supplemental bill. The bill also proposes using money sent for anti-drug activities for counter-insurgency instead.	Urge your senators and representative to oppose all military aid for Colombia and object to the proposal to use counter-narcotics aid for counter-insurgency.
TEMPORARY ASSISTANCE FOR NEEDY FAMILIES (TANF)	TANF, established by welfare "reform" in 1996 as the nation's primary public assistance program, funds state initiatives to move low-income families into employment. Congress must renew TANF by the end of September.	Urge your members of Congress to support a TANF bill that: makes poverty reduction an explicit goal, is adequately funded (see p. 5), encourages education and training, and is accessible to legal immigrants.

USEFUL ADDRESSES



MCC U.S. Washington
Office
110 Maryland Ave NE
Suite 502
Washington DC 20002
(202) 544-6564
mccwash@mcc.org

Senator _____
U.S. Senate
Washington DC 20510
(202) 224-3121
www.senate.gov

Representative _____
U.S. House of
Representatives
Washington DC 20515
(202) 224-3121
www.house.gov

President George W. Bush
The White House
Washington DC 20500
(202) 456-1111
president@whitehouse.gov