



BONN INTERNATIONAL CENTER FOR CONVERSION

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The Price of Peace

by Dr. Oscar Arias

In the turbulent world of the late twentieth century, we frequently lose sight of the human being as the principal impetus of all governmental action. World leaders must make human security, in contrast to the traditional concept of security linked to military capacity and economic power, the priority for the 21st century. Human security represents the degree to which human beings are protected from ignorance, sickness, hunger, neglect and persecution. It is the level at which human life and dignity are respected. Human security is a concept that crosses all borders and does not discern between differences of ethnicity, religion, geography, or gender.

When human security needs are not met, we have failed to address the structural causes of conflict, such as poverty and marginalization. Until the demands for human security are properly addressed, discord will continue to boil in all regions of the world and periodically escalate into violent confrontation. Yet, instead of addressing the root causes of conflict, many countries often build up their armies in order to control increasingly desperate populations.

Imagine what we could do if a portion of world military spending was redirected toward investing in human security. In 1995, world military spending totaled nearly \$800 billion. If we redirected just \$40 billion of those resources over the next 10 years to fighting poverty, all of the world's population would enjoy basic social services, such as education, health care and nutrition, reproductive health, clean water and sanitation. Another \$40 billion would provide all people on the planet with an income above the poverty line for their country. Unfortunately, half of the world's governments dedicate more resources to defense than to health programs. Such distortions in national budgets contribute to poverty and retard human development. War, and the preparation for war, is one of the greatest obstacles to human progress, fostering a vicious cycle of arms buildups, violence and poverty.

"...Costa Rica is not a unique, irreplicable case..."

In Sub-Saharan Africa, military expenditures totaled nearly \$8 billion in 1995. This figure is simply appalling, given the fact that, as a region, Sub-Saharan Africa has the highest proportion of people in poverty and their numbers continue to grow. The industrialized world must take two urgent actions to help Africa solve its problems. First, it is immoral to sell arms to Africa. Africa is disintegrating, and its people deserve more modern health and educational systems, not more modern weapons. Second, given the fact that the total value of all loans to troubled debtors in Sub-Saharan Africa is equivalent to one percent of the GDP of the OECD countries, it is inexcusable that lender nations as well as the Bretton Woods Institutions continue to extract payments from countries whose populations are literally starving to death.

In South Asia, an arms race has been taking place between India and Pakistan due to a conflict over the Kashmir territory. India alone spent

more than \$12 billion on arms purchases from 1988 to 1992, more than Saudi Arabia or Iraq spent in the same time period. Pakistan increased its defense budget sevenfold from 1978 to 1991, and defense spending accounts for nearly 40 percent of all government spending. It is simply unforgivable that India and Pakistan are spending exorbitant amounts on an arms race while their people are engaged in a race against time to meet their basic needs. South Asia, home to 525 million poor people, desperately needs nutrition and education programs, not fighter jets. The Kashmiri people have seen 200 of their schools burned down and their children are dying at alarming rates due to unsafe water. When will we put an end to this destruction? Dialogue, not battle, resolves conflicts. Food and schools, not guns and grenades, are long-term solutions to our problems.

In the last few years, two countries in Latin America have taken historic steps toward ending once and for all the vicious cycle of poverty and militarism. Following the restoration of democracy to Panama in 1989 and to Haiti in 1994, I encouraged those countries' leaders to consider the long-term benefits of complete demilitarization. I addressed the parliaments of both countries and asked them to pass a constitutional

amendment abolishing the army, as Costa Rica did in 1949. Today, Costa Rica and Panama share the safest border in the world, as neither country has an army. Haiti, the poorest country in the western hemisphere, and one that has also been plagued by an oppressive military that carried out 25 coup d'états since independence, is now a nation without an army. These historic decisions have shown the world that Costa Rica is not a unique, irreplicable case. The abolition of national armed forces is not a utopian dream, it is a viable option for many countries.

The reduction of military expenditures is the first step in a long journey toward converting the military industry to civilian purposes and redirecting resources toward human development. I believe that systematic conversion efforts will in turn produce social benefits that improve human security. It is true that demilitarization and conversion are not free of cost; though, in the past, no one seemed to fear the price of war. Why should we now fear the price of peace?

Dr. Oscar Arias, former President of Costa Rica, is a Nobel Peace Prize Laureate, founder of the Arias Foundation for Peace and Human Progress and a member of BICC's International Board. An extended version of this article was presented under the title "Demilitarization: A Necessary Step in Poverty Reduction" at the launch of the United Nations Development Program's *Human Development Report 1997* in Bonn, Germany, 12 June 1997.

Staff Spotlight:



Steven E. Sokol

A recent addition to BICC's staff, Steven Sokol was appointed as Head of BICC's Project Management Department in April 1997. Prior to coming to BICC, Mr. Sokol spent four years as a Program Officer in the German Marshall Fund's Berlin office. There he was responsible for developing fellowship programs for professionals from eastern Germany and for soliciting projects to promote the exchange of experiences among opinion leaders and professionals involved with regional and cross-border economic development. He also previously worked at the International City/County Management Association (ICMA) in Washington, DC, where he focused on environmental and urban issues and was responsible for coordinating the efforts of the ICMA Environmental Mandates Task Force. Mr. Sokol brings this unique experience with foundations, non-profits and project management to BICC.

As head of the Project Management Department, Mr. Sokol seeks ways in which the knowledge gained through the documentation, research, and analysis of the conversion process can be applied to practical projects. The Department itself carries out this objective by providing consulting services to institutions in the public and private sector, providing technical support, developing (re-)training programs, establishing networks of conversion practitioners, and organizing conferences, workshops and study tours. Given his previous work on regional economic development, Mr. Sokol is particularly interested in further developing BICC's base re-use and industry conversion areas.

Mr. Sokol holds a master's degree in International Relations and International Economics from the Johns Hopkins University's Paul Nitze School of Advanced International Studies (SAIS) and completed his undergraduate studies at Wesleyan University in Connecticut. He has also studied at the Ruprecht-Karls-Universität in Heidelberg and at the Freie Universität in Berlin.

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As an independent, non-profit organization, the Bonn International Center for Conversion (BICC) supports and promotes the processes by which people, skills, technology, equipment, financial and economic resources are shifted from the military or defense sector towards alternative, civilian purposes.

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Capacity-building in Southern Africa

Since 1989, the two main sources of conflict in Southern Africa—the Cold War and Apartheid—have disappeared and the region is witnessing a transformation from wars to relative peace. NGOs play an important role in this process by collecting and sharing information, conducting policy research, and involving an ever widening group of people in the debate of policies and initiatives that will shape the future of their societies. In several ways, BICC is involved in building this NGO capacity and thus assisting the process of transition in southern Africa.

As one example, BICC supports and advises the South African Group for Environmental Monitoring (GEM) in its efforts to strengthen the capacity of South African civil society to monitor, support and implement the conversion process. In a project funded by the Heinrich Böll Foundation (Germany), GEM seeks to educate and empower the people directly affected and facilitate public debate about disarmament, security and development issues. The four areas that GEM focuses on are: reuse of military land, demobilization/rationalization and reintegration of former soldiers and guerrillas into society, conversion of the arms industry, and the creation of a landmine-free zone in southern Africa. BICC supports the project through direct advice and exchange visits, while GEM is able to draw upon BICC's specific conversion expertise and relevant experiences outside South Africa.

Together with the Centre for Conflict Resolution (CCR) in Cape Town and other institutes in southern Africa, BICC plans to conduct a research program examining the dynamics of demilitarization and peace-building in the region. The project aims to support and facilitate the achievement of sustainable peace and human development by identifying practical policies and interventions for peace-building, establishing an electronic database containing military and economic information, and using information and communication technology to promote a greater sharing of information and ideas among researchers and policy makers in the region.

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MILEX On-line Military Expenditure Newsletter



A new addition to BICC's internet service, the MILEX Newsletter is designed as an interactive forum for the exchange and dissemination of information on trends in military expenditures. A product and outlet of BICC's project on "Changing priorities of military expenditures and the result of the Peace Dividend"—supported by the MacArthur Foundation—the goal of the newsletter is to:

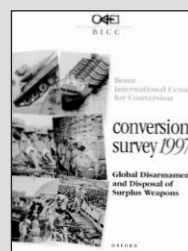
- compile data on trends in worldwide military spending;
- present current analysis of these trends;
- facilitate the exchange of information and experience by promoting dialogue among researchers;
- provide easy access to military expenditure related sites on the Internet.

Additional aspects of the newsletter include a bibliography and review section of recent literature on military expenditures, an events listing announcing upcoming conferences, and an archive of editorial comments of topical interest.

We invite you to visit the site and welcome any submissions or suggestions you may have:

→ <http://bicc.uni-bonn.de/milex>

Conversion Survey 1997: Global Disarmament and Disposal of Surplus Weapons



How to order:

The *Conversion Survey* is available either from the Bonn International Center for Conversion (BICC) at a price of 45,- DM (incl. postage and handling), in the UK from Oxford University Press UK (price £17.99) or in the US from Oxford University Press US (price \$35.00).

Further information on the Survey can be obtained via Internet:
<http://bicc.uni-bonn.de/general/survey97>

BICC Publications

In addition to its annual *conversion survey* and other books, BICC publishes series such as *reports, briefs* and *papers* which analyze the background of the international conversion process, report on conversion projects and experiences, and offer scientific as well as practical know-how in the various fields of conversion. Recent publications include the following:

report 11: Keith Cunningham, Base Closure and Redevelopment in Central and Eastern Europe, July 1997

brief 10: Yitzhak Shichor, Peaceful Fallout: The Conversion of China's Military Nuclear Complex to Civilian Use, October 1997

paper 12: Susanne Kopte, Nuclear Submarine Decommissioning and Related Problems, August 1997

paper 13: Peter O'Meara Evans, Destruction of Abandoned Chemical Weapons in China, September 1997

Forthcoming:

brief 11: Judith Kiss, Industrial Conversion in Hungary, winter 1997

Upcoming Events

The NATO Scientific and Environmental Affairs Division will sponsor a workshop on **Conversion of Military-Industrial Technologies to Civil Use**, 8–10 October 1997 in Kiev.

A **Roundtable on International Cooperation for Military Industry Restructuring** will be held 13–14 October 1997 in Beijing, jointly sponsored by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and the China Association for Peaceful Use of Military Industrial Technology (CAPUMIT).

BICC will host a conference on **Converting Defense Resources to Human Development**, 9–11 November 1997 in Bonn.

Kristna Fredsrörelsen (Swedish Fellowship for Reconciliation), in association with Saferworld (UK), will host a conference on **European Arms Export Control**, 13–14 November 1997 in Stockholm.

A workshop on **Controlling the Global Trade of Light Weapons: Policy Options for National Governments and the International Community** to be convened by the American Academy of Arts and Sciences and hosted by the Carnegie Commission on Preventing Deadly Conflict will be held 11–12 December 1997 in Washington, DC.

BICC Notes

BICC officially released its **Conversion Survey 1997: Global Disarmament and Disposal of Surplus Weapons** (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997) on 27 May in Bonn and a month later, on 26 June, in Washington, DC. A first for BICC, this dual transatlantic launch served to introduce the Survey to a broader audience as well as facilitate interaction with the US research and policy community. As one guest to the Washington launch noted, the Survey “has already become a standard in the arms control and research community.”

In the first half of 1997, BICC secured grants for its work in several program areas. For its March workshop on regional conversion experiences, BICC received grants from the **Fritz Thyssen Stiftung**, from the **Robert Bosch Stiftung**, and from the **European Union COST Program**, in support of the participation of scholars and practitioners from Eastern and Western Europe and the United States. Additional funding was provided through a grant by the **McArthur Foundation** enabling Rutgers University to bring US participants to the conference. In June, BICC received a two-year grant from the **Ford Foundation** in support of its surplus weapons project “Managing the Remnants of Conflict.” The **State of North Rhine-Westphalia**, one of BICC’s core funders, will contribute funding to the upcoming conference on “Converting Defense Resources to Human Development” and has also contributed seed funding for a multi-year project in conjunction with the celebration of the 350th anniversary of the Peace of Westphalia (see below).

In commemoration of the 350th anniversary of the Peace of Westphalia, BICC is conducting an arts competition entitled **ConverArt**. The competition aims to tap the creative potential of the arts towards the conversion and reuse of former military resources by attracting promising artwork from students of arts colleges in the German states of North Rhine-Westphalia and Brandenburg, as well as their international partner institutions. The submitted works will be displayed at an exhibition in Münster in Autumn 1998, at which time a jury of experts will select prize winners. The ConverArt project is taking place under the patronage of Anke Brunn, Minister for Higher Education and Research, NRW and additional sponsorship is currently being sought.

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