International Security : A feminist perspective for the future

A Seminar in Memory of Inga Thorrson on International Women's Day 1995

compiled by Sharon Riggle

The International Women's Day (officially 8 March) this year was commemorated at the United Nations in Geneva by women and men from around the world. On 15-17 February 1995 the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom celebrated this annual event for the 10th year in a row by holding an international seminar on women's peace issues.

Wednesday, 15 February 1995

Opening Plenary Session

Welcome - Barbara Lochbihler

We are searching for a way to redefine feminism and security. This year's theme of "International Security : A feminist perspective for the future" encompasses all of our past themes by including Security and Development, Security and Disarmament, Security and International Relations and Security and Environment. We see peace as a holistic concept, viewing it from a human perspective rather than a militarist or nationalist one. Peace and security must be considered in the *truest* sense of the word: access to education, health, personal security and general freedom to live a life as the individual sees fit.

This year we pay special tribute to Inga Thorsson, a former Ambassador of Sweden to the UN and the Conference on Disarmament and a prominent WILPF member. She was a true pioneer and helped change the course of history by redefining the way in which disarmament was treated. She was the first and most vocal proponent of the connection between disarmament and development. She also was a leader in the fight to give greater access to the debates to the NGO's. She left a legacy that lives on today both in the governmental and non-governmental communities.

Tribute to Inga Thorsson - Ambassador Lars Norberg

Ambassador Lars Norberg of Sweden gave a personal and touching recollection of his acquaintance with Inga Thorsson. He described her as a very powerful woman, by many definitions. She had a strong commitment to women's issues, she knew how to mobilize women to action and she was a grand lady in her own right.

Born in 1915 to a bourgeois family, she made the most of what were very limited opportunities for women in that era. At 25, she attended the university, which few women were doing, and met a professor who became her mentor. Women's rights were the primary cause for women in that day, so she became involved in the struggle for equal rights. She believed that the situation of women was a reflection of the state of society–and they both were in need of reform, especially by women. In 1936 she joined the Socialist Party, and in her role as a "socialist woman" she changed Swedish domestic and foreign policy. She was also one of the first people to mobilize women around security issues. She was successful in those endeavors.

In 1968, Sweden rejected the "nuclear answer," thanks in no small part to the influence of Ms. Thorsson.

Ambassador Norberg's personal recollections of Inga Thorsson start with his mother's discussion of her and her work when he was just a boy. After many years of knowing of her, he finally met Ms. Thorsson in 1976 here in Geneva, when he was fortunate to work with her for 5 or 6 years.

She exuded confidence in her co-workers and thus inspired great loyalty from them. Her lifestyle was that of a grand lady, which enhanced her role as a woman to be taken seriously. Ambassador Norberg opined that he does not know of any Swedish official who has been as effective as Inga Thorsson. One of her secrets was, of course, her great intellect, as well as thorough and complete knowledge of the subjects with which she dealt. Another characteristic that would amaze her colleagues was her ability to change the direction of a conversation if she didn't like the way it was going. As a chairwoman, she was no-nonsense and would expect the same from those around her.

Ambassador Norberg also classified Ms. Thorsson as a "political visionary" who from the outset was very against the nuclear option for Sweden. She also had the cause of the environment close to her heart and was instrumental in the success of the first world conference on the environment in 1972. Conversion was also high on her agenda long before the international community as a whole recognized it as a vital part of disarmament.

The social side of Ms. Thorsson was also an important part of her

personality. At social gatherings, she inevitably became the center of attention and had the ability to mix everyone together, much as she would do in her work in the Conference on Disarmament.

Remarks from the Participants about Inga Thorsson

Maud Frolich (Swedish Peace Council) - She had the great privilege to work with Ms. Thorsson as an NGO representative. Ms. Frolich characterized her as a very clever negotiator and diplomat. The peace movement was in her heart and she was truly "one of us." Even after her official retirement from government service, she was still quite active on disarmament issues. Up until the end, she was interested and involved in what was going on both nationally in Sweden and internationally on these issues.

Kirsti Kolthoff (WILPF Sweden Section) - She admired Ms. Thorsson very much, and met her in 1983 at a WILPF meeting in Sweden. She described her as a very lively woman who was always sharing her knowledge and love of life with those around her. She was very supportive of WILPF work. Ms. Kolthoff expressed her desire to see women involved in the peace movement carry out their responsibility to follow up on her good work.

Eleanor Romberg (WILPF German Section) - She described Ms. Thorsson as a truly international personality. Ms. Romberg met her in 1985 and remembers her voice filling the room in which she spoke. She gave so much of herself and her experiences. Ms. Thorsson wrote several good books on her areas of expertise. She also supported the idea that there needs to be a new definition of security, not one confined to military terms. She took a big part in the Peace Journey, which was based on three principles: 1) primacy of international cooperation in the UN; 2) establishment of a dialogue between people and government; 3) accountability of governments to the people of the world for what they do or do not do for peace.

An Overview of UN and NGO Activities in International Security

Thérèse Gastaut, Director, United Nations Information Service and Spokesperson of the UN Secretary-General

In her speech, Ms. Gastaut focused on two aspects of security: 1) the need for collective security, 2) disarmament. In her view, peace is not just the absence of war. A more holistic view of security and peace is needed. In this context, international relations are important. In 1989, we saw the end of the cold war. This had an important and concrete

impact on peace efforts and collective security in general. Suddenly the Security Council could act and not be blocked by bilateral vetoes. With the two superpowers, the UN was inert, but in the post-cold war world the UN's powers have increased.

Collective security

There are two significant contributions of the UN regarding collective security: 1) the UN has helped to define international law, and 2) it has been able to appeal to public opinion and help sway certain situations. Another contribution to peace has been UN peacekeeping operations in some areas of the world. These forces are only deployed once both sides agree to have them there. The UN can also assist by helping to relieve suffering in conflict zones.

Disarmament

During the cold war period, there was an arms race, especially in nuclear arms. There was sort of a "balance of terror" created by the arms race (a quote from certain countries, not the UN.) Throughout this period, the UN continued to carry out negotiations on treaties that sought to stop the race.

The most important of these treaties was the NPT (nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty.) The NPT limited the spread of nuclear weapons to the five declared nuclear states. It also called on the NWS (nuclear weapon states) to negotiate complete disarmament, and to transfer non-weapon nuclear technology from the NWS to the NNWS (non-nuclear weapon states.)

There have been other treaties as well, e.g. creating a non-nuclear zone and banning special weapon types.

We have tried to create the rules, acceptable by all, to create a better world and one that is less dangerous.

Edith Ballantyne, President, Women's International League for Peace and Freedom

Inga Thorsson saw in her lifetime the evolution of this concept to which she largely contributed: the change from a narrow military concept of security to a wider, holistic one. There is a belief today on the part of many citizens that modern weapons and warfare and war strategies create insecurity. By their nature they are indiscriminate. They are used over wide areas with lingering dangers to the physical safety of people.

Their harmful effects on development and on the environment and their waste of resources and colossal costs ruin our economies. There is a recognition also that poverty and misery and gross injustices within societies and among nations, create unrest and tension to the point of explosion. There are gross violations of human rights in many parts of the world. And there is the exploitation and abuse of the human environment, among other things, from the ruthless exploitation of natural resources and destructive methods of production which threaten the very survival of our planet.

These problems are inextricably linked. How can one feel secure when people can be disappeared by authorities who will not tolerate opposition and use any means to maintain themselves in power. How can one feel secure while large sections of populations do not have enough to eat and cannot have the most basic health care, have no shelter and lack education and training - have no future - while the financial institutions impose conditions that worsen their lives. How can anyone feel secure when nuclear weapons and other mass destruction weapons continue o be produce, tested, deployed and stored in our countries? How can anyone feel secure when cities are bombarded, when children die because medicines are food are blocked from reaching hospitals and dispensaries? How can anyone be secure when people are discriminated against and persecuted because of the color of their skin, beliefs, ethnic origins or sexual orientation? How can one be secure when more than half of the world's population–women–are marginalize, violated and abused?

The search for security is not a new phenomenon. It has been ongoing. But more recent developments have given it new impetus. Among them are the defeat of the socialist system in the Cold War and the collapse of the Soviet Union, the Gulf war, many other conflicts and wars in many regions of the world, mostly within countries or between republics of broken unions. These and the advent of the United Nations 50th anniversary have stimulated a renewed search for global security. The search is on many levels, in many fora, both governmental and non-governmental.

As new structures are being shaped, we must make our voices heard. If we do not take part i the debates now, invited or not, we again will come in after the shapes of things have been decided on male terms. What I though we should explore together here are the discussions that are going on within the United Nations concerning the restructuring of the organization because the decisions that will be taken are very much a matter of international security.

There are a number of facets: the restructuring of the UN secretariat and of the political bodies of the organization concerned with economic

and social issues and disarmament matters. Here, I want to focus in particular on the discussion concerning the reform of the Security Council.

The UN Charter gives the Security Council the primary responsibility for maintaining international peace and security. At present, the Council is composed of 15 members of which five are permanent members with the right of veto. They also happen to be the five declared nuclear powers. The other ten members are elected by the General Assembly for two-year terms, with "due regard being specially paid, in the first instance, to the contribution of Members of the UN to the maintenance of international peace and security and to the other purposes of the Organization, and also to equitable geographical distribution."

Attempts to reform the Security Council have been many, but without success, except for an amendment to the Charter to increase the elected members from five to ten with some consequent modifications. The main bone of contention has been the Council's undemocratic nature of having five permanent members and their right to veto any decision.

The disappearance of the socialist governments in Eastern Europe and the disintegration of the Soviet Union has changed the basis of the permanent membership and veto. The Gulf war and domination of the Council Western permanent members, especially the US, as well as the lack of transparency of the Council's ' procedures and decision-making, and lack of its accountability to the UN membership\, prompted many governments to force a serious debate on reform. Questions were raised as to the scope and mandate of the Security Council, its decisions in relation to military action, and of its accountability to the UN membership as a whole, that is to the General Assembly. An open-ended working group was formed and the debate is in full swing.

However, the debate became focused on the question of the increase in membership, including the proposal by the Western powers to add Germany and Japan to the permanent membership list. T make this more acceptable, the West was prepared to admit two or three larger countries from the poorer regions to the privileged club as long as the increase did not exceed 20 members. This would mean that half of the Council members would be permanent, presumably with five of them having the right to veto decisions.

Speaking on behalf of the Non-Aligned States, the Indonesian Ambassador said, and I quote: "We are firm in our view, that the veto powers which guarantee an exclusive and dominant role for the permanent members of the Council are incompatible with the objective of democratizing the United Nations. It must therefore be reviewed

inline with the on-going reform of the Organization, which as we all know is intended to bring about greater democratization and transparency in the functioning of all the UN organs."

The Permanent Representative of Colombia stated: "...The right to be part of the Security Council should not focus on a few powerful nations that owing to their military, technological and economic capacity could contribute with the Organization's operations. Notwithstanding this capability could be considered by some sufficient to give access to the Security Council, the UN Charter is not to be interpreted in terms of belligerency, military intervention and possession of mighty military forces. Any interpretation of the relevant provision of the Charter should look at the willingness to solve international situations and conflicts and to ensure peace through the peaceful settlement of disputes and diplomacy. Otherwise, we would be inducing Members States o build up arsenals, including nuclear capability, and develop aggressive instincts to be eligible for the Security Council."

As women, we know what it means to be marginalized and discriminated against. We must speak out loud and clear that we do not want to see the continuation of an undemocratic Council, in which a privileged few, because of their economic and military, or potential military strength can impose their will on the poorer, vast majority of nations. There is much talk by the Western powers about democracy. Let them practice democracy in the United Nations.

There seems to be a consensus among a sizable number of countries to add five more members to the Council, making 20 members, all to be elected by the General Assembly. Not permanent members ar needed. The United Nations must become a truly democratic institution, and this is the beginning of making it so. I wish to propose that form here we send this message to the UN Members and the UN Secretary-General and that each of us follow up on this message in our own countries, in our own organizations, political parties and institutions. The debate must be brought to the people.

We have to realize that the United Nations will be no more and no less than the sum total of its individual parts, its Member States. But we as citizens can, and as women we must, help shape those individual parts. Let us also realize that while we must labor to democratize the structures, this alone will not eliminate the misery, poverty, deprivation and environmental degradation we have all around us. And changing structure alone will not help us women to achieve full equality. Only a fundamental change in economic, social and political relations and laws that are promulgated and implemented to defend the interests of all citizens equally, within and among nations, will accomplish that. We have to work for the full, peaceful transformation of our societies realize

the promise of the UN Charter, and to realize the rightful place of women in our societies.

Discussions following the speeches

Thérèse Gastaut

The debt of the member nations to the UN is now at $3.5 billion. As of 31 January, the due date date for fees, only 19 of the 185 members nations had paid.

Janet Bruin

The world financial institutions are also at fault here. There needs to be greater accountability of their activities. Transnational corporations also need to be monitored.

Afternoon Plenary Session

SECURITY AND DEVELOPMENT: *Jane Corpuz-Brock, Third World Movement Against the Exploitation of Women*

With the collapse of the Soviet Union and the Eastern European communist states, a vital shift has occurred in our collective consciousness. This shift is characterised by doubt about any project that seeks to advance the position and welfare of the majority. We doubt projects of social revolution, and attempts to overcome social, economic and political injustice. Lines of solidarity between peoples, and within peoples between different social classes are in tatters.

This shift is exploited by those who benefit from the state of insecurity known as the market economy. The leaders of Western governments, transnational corporation, and proxies in countries of Asia, Africa, Latin America, the Middle East, Pacific and the Caribbean trumpet a new world order. The dramatic economic growth in the newly-industrialised countries of Asia, as well as Chile and Argentina among others has changed permanently the world order that progressive people lamented. Our analysis is yet to catch up with implications, but we must, for the changes are not towards greater justice nor greater security.

The most significant change is that in China, as it records a 12% growth rate in the shadow of the deaths of a Tianamien Square. Its rush to

"modernisation" under lip-service to socialism is as crucial in the intellectual "triumph" - in inverted commas - of free-market capitalism as the collapse of the Soviet Union. In China the ideal of greater social justice and a more human society did not collapse; it was subsumed in a rush for economic advance that saw "conversion" of a nation to the free-market. This is a ringing endorsement.

But let us remember some basic ideas that were not replaced in 1989 or since. Market economies exclude those lacking economic power. Women, the racially oppressed, the marginalised indigenous peoples, and the working class watch from the sidelines at best. The market scorns solutions that seek to implement a just and humane order. Markets promote profit for the few, and not just distribution. Any language of rights, or of equality is foreign to the market setting. Human relations are not about fraternity, community, building trust and hope. They are based on competition, pride and winning.

The economic globalisation we witness in this age has led to the transformation of societies and the world in general. It has created a state of security at the global level, and between the states of the West and the North. However, the greater conflicts in the South and the East reflect the insecurity more and more of us must encounter. Decades, even centuries, of tensions fanned by the United States and other forces who saw these as tools in the relentless war against the ICM (or "International Communist Movement") are now emerging as brutal and bloody conflicts. Decades of counter-insurgency, total war, and psychological warfare have left their mark. Will those responsible pay for war damages, and the crimes occasioned by their past activities?

Progress, and profits smother the grim reality of too many. Our state of insecurity is no longer characterised by fear of the end, the total destruction of our world. That is mostly due to resolute people's movements against the nuclear madness of the Cold War years. The gains of liberation and pro-democracy movements across the world (from South Africa to Latin America, to Palestine, Asia and Eastern Europe) need to be nurtured. The security of the powerful should not be achieved at the expense of those less powerful and on the margins of the market.

In this post-Cold War era, what would be the reasons for keeping arsenals of war? I believe the same reasons as during the Cold War. "The Third World accounts for 60% of world arms imports . . ." Reports of a decrease in arms sales in the late 1980's were not due to political arrangements but to the economic incapacity of many developing nations to afford to buy arms.

For the authors of national security, manufacture and trade of military

hardware is one element of it. Security concepts encompass all aspects of economic, political and cultural interests of those powers who are behind it.

Other points covered:

• A large portion of the wealth of countries goes to military expenditures.

• The maintenance of a "war economy" diverts much wealth to military research and development.

• Establishing an arms industry has been justified as a shortcut to industrialisation, however, the evidence is that the stimulation of civilian industry from a military starting point has failed, e.g. Brazil.

• The possibility of developing new technologies is also cited, though it must be remembered that military technologies require redesigning before they can be used for civilian or commercial purposes.

• In any case, we should recognise that a large proportion of capital investment is diverted to military production.

• A militarised economy has not been a boon to development, but instead a heavy economic burden, as in the case of Israel where 40% of its debt may be attributed to military loans.

• Military training sees training skewed away from the needs of the population to the needs of the military and takes skilled workers from other more essential or productive areas.

• The military itself feeds on and infiltrates civilian economies, as in the case of Thailand and Indonesia.

• Third World indebtedness is in large part due to the purchase of unproductive military hardware, while repayment of military loans draws scarce foreign exchange away from competing civilian imports.

• The impact of unproductive military expenditures on government budgets and national economies in such that there is a greater trend towards requiring outside budget support, with the consequence of IMF- and World Bank-imposed conditionalities and Structural Adjustment Programs (SAPs).

• In many developing countries the national security policies of industrialised countries, especially the USA, penetrate deep into the fibre of government policies. In the Total War policy of too many governments in the developing world (such as the Philippines) the policy took the form of destroying people's initiatives who seek change.

Community development workers became the targets of harassment and assassinations. In the Philippines this involved many women, who are the majority of those giving training on community development, health literacy and child care. Rape and assassination were amongst the violations practised on them, as the community development efforts from the grassroots were hampered and in some cases stopped.

ODA-tied aid includes much military aid. The Philippines receive secondhand helicopters and military vehicles, this becoming a part of the debt.

Maintenance of a large military infrastructure including armies and navies, undermines development. The visits of such armies and navies to countries like the Philippines and Thailand distorted development through encouraging prostitution, and the spread of HIV/AIDS.

The hidden agenda in international policy is not just a question of the national interest, but refers to the TNC's existence across the borders of nation states.

Women carry the heaviest burden in security policies:

• When men go to war, women are left to cope single-handedly with child-care for a long period, or perpetually if the husband is killed in war; in agriculture-based countries, women do all food production activities, as men fight in battlefronts.

• Women are raped in wars as a consequences and often as a part of total war policies.

A change in total security policy is what we should call for. Disarmament is one important element, but we must also have security of food, social services, employment, housing, the environment, etc. Our weapons industries should be turned to productive uses, such as for agriculture. The money used for military research and technology should be used in research to help developing countries in producing their own food, build shelter and to provide for health and the social services to the marginalised of the society. I also dream that someday we clean up our seas of warships, so children will not be missing their fathers.

I share the hope of the 100,000 young people who gathered in Manila, in a rally called "Walk for Peace." Two days later elementary students gathered in front of the Film Center of the Philippines and burned war toys in observance of the International Year of Peace.

I believe that the challenge to all peace activists is to struggle for change . . . to contribute in the efforts of genuine people's organisations

and mass movements all over the world to change the whole development model from a market inspired development model to a holistic one which human beings, women and the environment first.

SECURITY AND DISARMAMENT: *Rebecca Johnson, Women in Black, England and Sverre Lodgaard, Director, United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research*

Rebecca Johnson, Women in Black, England

"Men have to fight wars to protect their wives and children" is one of the myths used to sustain patriarchal power and justify war.

"And the government has to make sure our soldiers have the best possible equipment, to reduce casualties" is another, to justify ever increasing military expenditures, research and production of new weapons.

So does it make us more secure to have more and bigger and better weapons, and if not, what can we do about it?

Women in Black

I'd like to tell a short story to illustrate some of the themes I want to discuss, and because it also relates to Women in Black. I heard this story - and many similar ones - from Bosnian refugees when I volunteered to drive aid trucks from England, before I came to Geneva. I had asked how the war reached them, what happened in their villages, where formerly Muslims, Serbs and Croats - all Bosnian - had lived side by side. I was told how the men began to gather in cafes in increasingly separatist groups, especially as the economy collapsed their jobs disappeared. The women said that they couldn't afford the time for such talk, there was food to be taken to the market, children to be looked after, work to be done. They did this with their friends and neighbours, as they had always done, regardless of whether Muslim, Serb or Croat. But, they said, the men began to bring out the guns each had as part of Tito's national army, cleaning and polishing them. Two villages began to emerge: the women's village, still working together, still mixed; and the men's village, where Croats drank with Croats, Serbs with Serbs, Muslims with Muslims, polishing the rifles of the Yugoslav National Army, and talking about war. Then some of the men began to insist that the women cut off from neighbours or friends who weren't the same as them, and many women braved husbands and sons to carry on visiting

each others' homes or go to market together. Meanwhile young and old, the men began to play games in the forests or fields, planning their defence of the village. By this time the men were completely engrossed in their fantasies. They were responding to recognisable roles as war came closer. So it wasn't that difficult for quite small gangs from one or other side to split those villages apart with a few selected rapes or murders. The men's response to the prospect of war had already accomplished half its aim, whereas it took rape or torture and the burning of their homes to make the women turn against their neighbours. Not the idea of war, the war itself.

This is not to deny or underestimate the political, economic and nationalist causes of the war in the former Yugoslavia, yet the fact is that the actual armies engaged on the side of the Croats and Serbs were not so large, though they were equipped by what had been the sixth largest arms producer (Yugoslavia pre-1989.) I found this story - and ones like it from several different women from different regions - significant for what it says about the mechanics of how war spreads through the population in something that was not a simple case of villages being overrun by a large army from outside, although outside gangs of militia were clearly responsible for the initial attacks and much of the barbarity.

Three groups of women that I got to know on those trips work with rape survivors, with refugees and with deserters. They are based in Zagreb, Zenica (in Bosnia) and Belgrade. And despite all the difficulties, these women, some of whom are themselves refugees from places like Mostar and Sarajevo, share information and resources. Recently one of my colleagues linked them with Prishtina in Kosova (where there is a war waiting to happen) and Sarajevo by email so that they can all communicate more effectively despite the war. These women are all opposed to nationalism, ethnic apartheid and militarism, and have the courage to try to prevent the war practically as well as politically. Belgrade Women in Black has demonstrated every week for over 3 years in the centre of that city in opposition to their government's war mongering policies, and has sought to inform the people in Serbia of more of the real story than they can get from the government controlled media.

Insecurity and Armaments

The theme of this conference is international security, which consists of many interdependent strands. Looking specifically at disarmament we have to look at the hardware of war, the weapons: to see what role they play in the culture and psychology of fighting; in the economics of business, buyer as well as seller; the sexual symbolism and significance; as mechanism for the distribution of power and favours by

elites; as tools of death.

Armaments encompass everything from the handgun used for killing in the streets of Los Angeles to over 20,000 nuclear warheads still in the arsenals. They include the high tech smart weapons that swooped on Baghdad and the 100 million cheap little mines scattered round the world in place like Afghanistan, Cambodia and now Bosnia, which continue to kill and maim civilians, mostly again rural women and children, long after the soldiers have left.

Just looking at this century, even in World War I where our images are of brave soldiers in muddy trenches, more civilians were killed than soldiers. In World War II the ratio was much higher. In addition to the 6 million Jews and a further estimated 6 million gypsies, communists, gays, lesbians, disabled and other minorities, civilians in cities from London to Dresden, Leningrad to Tokyo were systematically bombed. Not by accident, by strategy. Despite the fact that the Hague and Geneva Conventions prohibit making non combatants targets. In Vietnam the ratio was 13 civilians for every soldier killed; and the Vietnamese were not threatening many wives and children back in the US. And who is now being killed in Chechnya, Bosnia, Rwanda, and in all those other 'low intensity war' being fought around the globe? And who end up raped, homeless, hungry, and crowding out the refugee camps? Civilians, mostly women and children. And who is threatening them? Soldiers, disciplined or undisciplined; armed to the teeth from locally made arsenals or arms sold to them to boost the balance of payments in countries like the US, Russia, China, Italy, UK, Germany, Sweden, France . . . your country perhaps.

Do women have an interest in disarmament and security? You bet we do. Do feminists have a perspective? In the hope of stimulating ideas for discussion in the working groups tomorrow, I will try to identify some of the questions and tools of analysis. In particular I would like to make a distinction between the term male, which I regard as a description of gender, and masculine, which I use to indicate a social and political construct, which may differ among cultures, but has certain common traits. In taking a feminist perspective it is necessary to critique the present day constructs of masculinity, which tend towards control and dominance, coercive power (or power over,) and compartmentalisation of function and responsibility. Not all these traits are common to all males nor absent in all females. However it is very noticeable that the overwhelming majority of people using or authorising the use of weapons are masculine, and the women bear a disproportionate burden from war, including rape, violence, torture and death, as well as homelessness and poverty.

The Personal is Political

One of the axioms of feminist analysis is that the personal is political. This does not mean that we only consider our own experience to be valid, or that we develop political theories based around our own solipsistic universe. It is however a recognition that our experience *is* valid. Feminist analysis requires that we relate our perceptions and needs to political frameworks, that we test whether a 'given' political structure or analysis addresses the real world as we experience it; that we interrogate the institutions and cultural norms around us for their relevance and truth for our own lives. All too often we discover that what are held up as 'human nature,' 'normal,' 'necessary,' and 'practical' are simply what promotes or perpetuates the interests of the power-holders. And ideas that are 'crazy,' 'idealistic,' and 'impractical' may instead be just inconvenient or threatening to a powerful sector of society.

The fundamental purpose of asserting that the personal is political is that we examine and take responsibility for our actions and beliefs. This means that we do not necessarily do something because:

i) that's how it's always been;

ii) someone in authority has told us it is necessary and/or right;

iii) someone more powerful than us has told us that he - or she - will assume the responsibility.

If you can't fool yourself that you are 'just following orders' you have to think about whether you want to be responsible for killing, raping or torturing someone; for making the weapons or devices for killing or torturing; or even for investing in banks or companies which make the weapons for killing and torturing. Abstaining doesn't, by the feminist analysis, absolve you of responsibility, for silence is taken by the power-holders as consent, and they will act accordingly. We each have responsibility.

It is interesting that a philosophy of responsibility emerged initially from some of the most powerless members of society.

Lowering the Moral Threshold

Numbers and killing power are not the only consequences of developing a new weapons system. War fighting doctrines or strategies may change. There are also psychological and moral implications. It is sometimes pointed out - not least by the nuclear weapons states - that conventional weapons kill far more people daily than nuclear weapons. Even if we take into account the silent deaths from nuclear weapons production and testing- which *they* don't - this is true. Nevertheless I think that nuclear weapons have had an effect on wars since 1945 that

must be looked at more carefully.

The demonstration bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki had significance way beyond the numbers that were killed.

i) That a single small bomb could kill on such a massive sale put a distance and remoteness between the decision and the slaughter, and between the trained soldier and his victims.

ii) The duration between decision-making and mass destruction has become grossly shortened, leaving little time for repeal.

iii) At the centre death is instant, with no escape.

iv) At the periphery death may be prolonged and hidden, creeping up slowly. As well as death in the present, nuclear weapons inflict future death, with genetic damage from radioactivity, thereby killing a culture through its generations.

With this ability, nuclear weapons set a new moral threshold for combat and war, and this has had the effect of increasing the levels of barbarity in wars fought with conventional weapons. Once the human race accepted the *concept* of use of nuclear weapons, other weapons, other means of genocide through mass rape, mines, mortars, guns and torture don't seem as terrible. The unthinkable becomes almost moderate by comparison. But at the same time, all other weapons seem inadequate, so governments and armies and street gangs all over the world spend more and more money producing and buying more and more weapons that make them feel less and less secure.

This then drains a community or country's resources. I don't think there is a straightforward peace dividend argument in terms of money being transferred across. Dismantling is also costly, especially for nuclear weapons if safety in terms of the environment and health of the workers is taken seriously; while the high costs of militarism also cover the workforce and infrastructure, and not only the weapons themselves. However, if we look at resources, it is much clearer: the resources you devote to arms are not therefore providing clean water, food, literacy, health care and shelter for the people. And as all development analyses show, women bear the brunt of poverty and underdevelopment. So the masculine fetish over armaments contributes directly to our insecurity.

Amassing Weaponry

Having posses of armed security guards or lots of weapons can never protect you from the determined assassin. In fact, the existence of large numbers of weapons or their production facilities makes it both easier

and more likely that the assassin will be able to put the idea into practice. This is true whether we are talking about guns in New York City or plutonium for nuclear weapons. This is a paradox of security concepts based on weaponry.

Individual Defence Versus Collective Security

Then there is the argument that some individuals or some countries have a unique right to protect themselves with certain kinds of armament, which, in the hands of others would be terribly dangerous. The man or state that insists on the right to carry a gun or have a nuclear bomb is made more secure only as long as very few others have the same. As soon as others assert their right to equal security by acquiring the same weapon, the weapon's value for defence purposes diminishes. Deterrence is viable only in a stable context; insecurity therefore escalates as the weapon proliferates. At some point overall security is reduced so far that the security obtained through being one of the haves is outweighed by the risks from the existence of the weapon in the hands of others. At that point all parties have a collective interest in reducing the number of weapons to zero. That is: disarmament.

Some questions:

1. You can't disinvent the bomb, so isn't it better for a few responsible states to have it?

Two responses immediately jump to mind: who gets to say who's responsible? And if the logic of proliferation is as I've outlined above, it is impossible to keep a desirable weapon in the hands of a few for very long. This was recognised by the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) when it linked non-proliferation with nuclear disarmament.

2. What is the best process for disarmament?

There are conceptual as well as political differences between arms control and disarmament, and, depending upon the weapon, disarmament may require a qualitatively different mechanism. It is generally assumed that arms reduction is a linear process, that you have to reduce the numbers gradually. So for example, START I and II will bring the US and Russian arsenals down to abut 3,000 to 3,500 warheads each. Gradual reduction may work to bring down numbers that are huge, and to enable dismantling to be done safely and sensibly. However, as you reduce, the value of a single or small number of weapons - especially if retained clandestinely - will be increased. The holders of a few would potentially have inordinate power, which would be destabilising. Therefore I think that actual disarmament, once the

levels have gotten fairly low, may have to be done quickly, so that all countries take the leap to zero together, increasing confidence and commitment. Visualise several ladders attached to a diving board. If you climb down the ladder you can count every step and check on the others, but as you get your feet wet, one of you might suddenly pull back and stay on the ladder. I however you all jump together from the top, preferably holding hands, even if one of you changes her mind half-way, the worst she can do is let go of your hand; she can't prevent herself from landing in the water and getting wet. The leap traverses the same distance as the ladders, but taking the jump is probably more frightening, requires greater commitment and - probably - courage, but once taken can't be revoked.

3. What happens to all the jobs lost if you take away arms production?

As has already been pointed out by the previous speaker, armies and military production take skills from other sectors of the society. Furthermore, studies have shown that dollar for dollar there are more jobs in education, health and many other industries than defence. Disarmament will take some economic restructuring - but then that is going to be necessary if we take on board the relationship between development and international security. The arms trade is big business for the big economies and puts the developing economies into increasing debt and distortion. The world simply can't afford the human cost of the arms trade. A good example is that of Fiat producing anti-personnel mines. Under threat of a worldwide boycott, Fiat cut away the subsidiary that made APM's, and a short time later Italy announced a moratorium on the export of APM's, and has just ratified the 1980 convention on inhumane weapons.

4. Weaponry seems to bolster notions of masculinity, from handguns up to Fat Man and Little Boy (the nicknames of the bombs that destroyed Hiroshima and Nagasaki.) One suggestion for undermining this mystique would be for everyone to be trained in how the weapons work in the same way that everyone should be trained in basic first aid. This would take the operational power out of the almost exclusive domain of men. This could make it seem less 'masculine,' or less a masculine rite of passage, as it still is in many cultures. Secondly, training in how something works doesn't necessarily commit you to the mentality and rituals of using it. In both a personal and a political sense, with both small and large weapons, it would put women in a better position to disarm either the weapons or their users.

5. If you get rid of all the weapons how are you going to stop aggressors or resolve conflicts?

The weapons culture has dominated views of power, and blinded

citizens and governments to the alternatives to force. Feminism looks to power *of*, rather than power *over* - that is, building up confidence and self respect, not just among friends and allies, but among potential adversaries, as a precondition of mutual respect.

Conflict among people and states arises for many reasons: political, economic and psychological e.g. religious, ethnic or other kinds of intolerance, disputes over borders or resources such as land or water (usually because allocation is imbalanced or to gain greater control and economic benefit for one group at the expense of others.) War only decides who's left, not who's right! Exhaustion or attrition may force one side to give in, but unless the causes are addressed, a new war will arise in the future. A disarmed world would have to pay attention to the *causes*, and try to resolve conflicts in a more just and durable way. Furthermore, the freeing up of resources currently absorbed in militarism, would help to remove some of the burden and resolve some of the problems that lead to conflict.

We are not naïve enough to imagine that getting rid of weapons will overnight eliminate aggression. It will however separate aggression from power, delegitimse violence, and allow other ways of dealing with conflict to be given a chance of success.

My conclusion is this: nuclear disarmament is urgent and necessary as a first step towards unhooking weapons-based defence from concepts of security. That will create a context for deep disarmament. The appalling carnage and insecurity around the world from growing quantities of weapons of all kinds make this 'ideal' objective into a practical *necessity* for international security.

Sverre Lodgaard, Director, United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research

Paraphrased excerpts

In this post-cold war world, we need to revisit our concept of security. Traditionally this has been defined in terms of national security, focusing on the "integrity and self-determination" of the country. We have been seeing a change in this view, the 1991 action of the Security Council regarding the Kurds in Iraq is an example. The situation was seen as an "international threat," as was the one in Somalia. The forces were defending minority rights according to international rules and standards.

The relationship between disarmament and security is getting increasingly stronger. We see that there are several factors to take into account: the amount of weapons–as well as their distribution and configuration, which might matter even more.

Unfortunately, balance and stability do not always go together. It's time to look at a concept called "non-offensive defense." In essence, it underwent three phases in the 1980's: first it was ridiculed, then fought against and then everyone wondered who first thought of it. The regional variations on this idea area growing, as are the different approaches.

The Review and Extension Conference of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons is approaching this April. There is much controversy over Article VI of the treaty, which calls upon the nuclear weapons states to eliminate their arsenals. The NWS are saying that much progress has been made, and the NNWS are saying that not enough has been done. Although it's true that the US and Russia are dismantling 2,000 warheads a year, it is still hard to conclude that they have fulfilled their obligations under the treaty.

There are three outstanding issues in disarmament negotiations this year that will most likely steal center stage: a Comprehensive Nuclear Test Ban Treaty (CTBT), a cut-off of fissile materials for weapons purposes and security assurances for NNWS. Some progress has been made in all of these areas, but it still remains to be seen what can be accomplished by the end of the year.

Conventional weapons continue to be a scourge to regional and national peace. These types of weapons account for 90% of present-day war casualties. For every person killed in these conflicts, 20 more are displaced. There have been scattered and feeble attempts to deal with this problem, like attaching anti-personnel landmines to the 1980 inhumane weapons convention and requiring certificates for each weapon sold.

UN Peace Operations is an issue that has especially captured the interest of the UN Secretary-General, Boutros Boutros-Ghali. UNIDIR is currently conducting research on the progress made in certain countries in the field of disarmament. Voluntary compliance with disarmament has to come from political initiatives.

On an encouraging note, the relationship between the two major powers right now seems to be relatively good. This of course could change in the future, and the role of public opinion cannot be underestimated. We need to keep pressing for a nuclear-free world.

The "peace dividend" would redirect military funds to development. One participant noted that we haven't seen much of the said dividend yet. Past donors to economic and social development programs in developing countries have started to question their contributions, seeing it now as a possible "bottomless well."

After the cold war, situations that were previously frozen suddenly exploded into multiple conflicts. This has put the UN in a totally new context, one in which it is forced to constantly readapt, reassess, etc., to survive in this new environment.

Preventive diplomacy is an area that is getting more and more attention from the UN system and the international community in general. It is a very good idea, but quite challenging to actually carry out. The media makes it especially difficult. Also, governments tend to act in the short term, since they are only elected for the short term. Even after efforts at diplomacy to prevent future conflict, both parties do not always end up in agreement. One successful example, however, was that of Macedonia where forces were deployed and it stemmed the tide of hostilities.

Peacekeeping is another focus for the peace operations of the UN. There are currently 70,000 "blue helmets." It started as a program with $500 million and has now reached $3.6 billion. The Security Council is increasingly interested in this form of intervention. The domestic situations in the affected state are taken into account more now before action is taken. Peacekeeping is playing a different role now, too. It can enter a country to replace a government that no longer exists. The UN is no longer neutral in many situations, it takes sides. The need still exists to encourage negotiations through democratic means.

There is also quite a bit of hypocrisy in international relations. Governments often pass resolutions on certain issues then do not support the measures with money or people.

Forty countries involved in the peacekeeping operations of the UN identify groups of troops that will be placed at the disposal of the UN on standby. But when it comes down to sending the men, the countries decide if they will actually go or not. There is also a rapid deployment force of about 10,000.

Disarmament has entered a new era. There have been some results with steps taken like START I and the CWC. The NPT will need to be prolonged, otherwise it would spell a catastrophe for the world. The CTBT is advancing slowly and has a turned into a bit of a tug of war. But there is still an important role for NGO's to play in those negotiations. Conventional weapons are a big problem, with APM's

accounting for fully 1/2 of the arms trade. There is currently work being done on a protocol on the <u>use</u> of them.

We are currently at a crossroads. There are 185 members states to the United Nations, but we need more means to survive. The UN will either be given a mandate or it will be marginalized.

SECURITY AND INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS: *Beryl Carby-Mutambirwa, World Young Women's Christian Association*

Conflict and war and their devastating effects on human life and society - presented as noble and heroic deeds have occupied the history of mankind since time immemorial. Indeed in many instances they are history itself.

All major religions have a mystical vision of the peaceful kingdom. For the Greeks it was the Elysian Fields, the Hebrew Bible and the Holy Mountain of Zion, the Koran refers to the sanctuary in the desert and so on. In all these peaceful Kingdoms people live in peace and equality.

On the other hand, all major religions justify the Holy War and/or divinely legitimated violence. It is this culture, the Holy War culture characterized by the glorious male warrior who submits only to the warrior male God, and demands the subjection of women and other aliens to the warriors and to God that provides the paradigm for all our social institutions from government to the family.

In 1945, the United Nations (UN) was established to ensure peace and security among the nations of the world and this was to be achieved through the General Assembly and the Security Council. Member States are expected to abide by the UN Charter's principles. The charter outlaws war and commits states to seek peaceful settlements to disputes.

The UN system was to be further assisted by other agencies to deal with specific issues that may threaten peace and security.

The state of economic chaos that resulted after WWII provided the pretext for the establishment of institutions with the aim to establish economic equilibrium and international economic co-operation.

In April 1944, monetary and financial institutions (the World Bank, the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development - IBRD and the International Monetary Fund - IMF, known collectively as the Bretton

Wood Institutions,) were established to implement these principles.

Their responsibility was to address the issues of reconstruction finance for the reparation of war-torn Europe, currency stabilization and trade restoration. GATT was established at the same time to monitor Tariff and Trade issues.

Other agencies include UNDP, with the mandate to reduce poverty, and the ILO who, for instance, in 1994 vigorously restated its fundamental belief that without social justice there could be no peace and that poverty anywhere is a danger to prosperity everywhere. The UNHCR's function is to assist refugees and to alleviate suffering, and UNCTAD exists for the purpose of trade and development negotiations between the Group of 77 and the Group of 7.

The world after WWII - a bipolar world dominated by two superpowers - armed to the teeth and fighting for ideological supremacy - waged war in many countries especially in developing countries. It was in effect a struggle between capitalism and communism. The United States (US) dominated Western Europe and the United Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR) dominated Central Europe where opposition of any kind to communism was brutally crushed and severely punished.

The UN itself was dominated by the ideological struggle between East and West. Action by the UN in trying to achieve peace in conflict areas were hampered by this ideological struggle.

The UN's actions such as the deployment of peace-keeping forces could only be undertaken with the agreement of the Security Council. UN troops (mostly US forces) took part in the Korean War in the 1950's only because the USSR did not use its veto in the Security Council because it was absent from the Security Council when the vote to send troops to Korea was taken.

Yet despite this ideological conflict, UN peace-keeping forces were sent to the former Belgian Congo, (now Zaire.) Where the US and the West perceived their national interests to be threatened, they worked extremely hard to get the UN involvement in conflict resolution. The best example is the 1991 Gulf War when the US got the Security Council to sanction the Western Allies to war with Iraq and to impose severe and the most comprehensive sanctions to date on that country.

Old empires and dynasties of the past gave way to 19th Century internationalism of imperialism. The 20th Century marks the defeat of imperialism: nazism, colonization and communism - and replaces them with nationalism. This new phenomenon as a political phenomenon, is based on the belief that the world's peoples are divided into nations and

that each nation has the right to self-determination. Civic Nationalism maintains that the nation should be composed of all those who subscribe to the nation's political creed, regardless of race, color, creed gender, language or ethnicity. It provides the practical structure for political, socio-economic and cultural operations. But as a cultural ideal, nationalism claims that it is the nation which provides the primary form of belonging. This form of nationalism is strongly charged with passion and emotion. These strong feelings have consistently overridden principles of international solidarity and political or religious universalism.

It is this new phenomenon of nationalism that has dominated the 20th Century and is predicted to dominate the 21st.

The fall of the Berlin Wall in 1989 and the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1992, drastically altered the international situation. Communist regimes in Eastern and Central Europe fell and ethnic and nationalist feelings long suppressed by communist governments exploded with fury. Neither NATO nor the UN were prepared for these tragic and violent outbursts in the former Soviet republics and the former Yugoslavia. The UN has sent peace-keeping troops to the former Yugoslavia, to Bosnia, but has been unable to keep the peace. Not only does the violent conflict in Bosnia continue, it has also divided the US and its European allies on the steps to be taken to end the conflict.

UN intervention in Somalia was a dramatic failure and all UN troops will be withdrawn by March 1995. UN involvement in Angola was inadequate and failed to immediately end the conflict between UNITA and the government. It must, however, be acknowledged that UN negotiating for the time being has succeeded in getting the parties in conflict to sign a peace treaty, which is currently on hold pending the arrival of UN peace-keeping troops to oversee it. The UN has had successes in other areas as well. It was instrumental in the settlement and achievement of Namibian independence and the Soviet presence in Afghanistan. It successfully organized elections in Cambodia and Mozambique. In many troubled spots of the world the UN continues either directly or through regional organizations to work to end conflicts.

Most of the present conflicts have a very different character from those that the UN was designed to address. The threat of interstate war is still highly possible - the Ecuador and Peru border dispute is a recent reminder - but civil war represents the major threat to peace and security. It threatens the cohesion of states and the international community at large and is expressed in brutal ethnic, religious, social, cultural and linguist strife. Civilians are most often the targets in these regional battles.

The deepest causes of these conflicts lie in socio-economic despair, injustice and oppression. The security of individuals translates into the security of the state and of the international community.

The global market has triumphed. With the globalization of the economy comes the expansion of world trade in goods and services, movement of massive international capital, the interconnectedness of the financial markets and the expansion of multinational enterprises.

The debt crisis, and the imposed Structural Adjustment Programmes (SAP's) with their debilitating conditionalities of the IMF and the World Bank, the flawed developmental model with its resultant recession, the present market-oriented economy and its effects have all caused the resuscitation and heightened resurgence of racism, fascism, xenophobia, increased crime, violence and intolerance.

The debt crisis in some areas has triggered the renewal of civil historical differences resulting in civil conflict.

When the bills for the expansion of the former Yugoslavia in the 1960's and 1970's and its foreign indebtedness increased, it triggered resentment in the two richest republics: Slovenia and Croatia. Croatia claimed the right of national self-determination. Nationals of states experiencing political and/or economic disintegration in their attempt to belong and be protected are vulnerable to the fuel of nationalistic rhetoric promoting ethnic nationalism. We cannot escape our history and too often we see politicians striving for survival using negative past history to fuel conflict. When this situation results in conflict, unprecedented violence results, as seen in the former Yugoslavia and Rwanda. It is said that Burundi is now poised to follow suit.

The job crisis worldwide is ominous and growing. Industrialized countries are experiencing the highest unemployment rate since the Great Depression of the 1930's. In the OECD countries, 38 million people are unemployed, which does not take into account those who have become unemployable because of having been unemployed for too long. This number is expected to rise as job cuts continue. Unemployment, already high in developing countries, continues to increase. An estimated 30% of the world's labor force is not "productively" employed.

For the employed, working conditions have deteriorated. Trade unions have been weakened. In the EPZ - Export Producing Zones - of developing countries where labor laws are side-stepped, working conditions are appalling. Workers are even denied the human right of association. The bulk of the employees in these EPZ's are young women.

Young people make up more than half of the world's population. More than half of the world's population is below the age of 25, about a third are between the ages of 10 and 24. If the present socio-economic and development trend continues, most will be without hope. This is a threat to security.

Women and children are double victims of SAP's and of the civil conflicts that result from the present international economic system.

As the rich get richer, a record number of almost 2 billion people worldwide are living in poverty. Most of them women. Earning the phrase the "feminization of poverty."

Repayment of debt is squarely placed on the shoulders of the poor. Due to their multifaceted roles, women bear the brunt in many areas. As more land is needed for market crops, women lose access to the land which is so vital to their survival. Where they are given land, it is usually less fertile and may be miles away from home. Their long arduous day is made much longer. Because food for national consumption has been replaced by market crops, food is scarce and very expensive. Women's health suffers. Their unborn and born children suffer. Prenatal care has long been a thing of the past for these women; child immunization a luxury. With the rise in cost of school fees, lunch fees, books, clothes, etc., education has been put on hold for many children. The girl child, already disadvantaged in education because of her gender, is even worse off.

UNICEF has reported that half a million children die each year as a result of SAP's.

In all areas of conflict, Chechnya, Somalia, Liberia, Bosnia, Sudan, Rwanda, Angola and others, women and children suffer the most. In Bosnia it was reported that rape was used as a policy of the conflict. Beside physical suffering women and children suffer the traumatic and psychological experience of the loss of their male and female relatives and the consequences of life without them. On 13 February 1995, *The Guardian* newspaper reported the following: The Ghanaian soldiers (in Liberia as a part of Ecomog) are accused of one of the greatest abuses - the soaring increase in child prostitution with girls as young as eight forced into selling sex.

Conflicts and wars produce refugees.

There are 26 million refugees worldwide and a much greater number of displaced persons and the numbers are increasing daily. Seventy percent of this 26 million are women and seventy percent are Muslims. Already in Chechnya another 400,000 refugees can be added to the

figure above.

The overwhelming majority of refugees and displaced persons are in developing countries. An influx of large numbers of refugees on already economically strapped country poses a threat to the security of that country.

Never before in history has there been such a mass movement of people in the world.

Given the complexity of our world today and the unprecedented speed with which political, economic and military developments occur, it is difficult for the UN to fulfill its mandate of ensuring international peace and security. Now that the Cold War is over the US, Europe and Russia are not interested in conflict in the developing world - conflicts that they have previously financed and fiercely supported. Because of the Somalia experience the new US Congress is unwilling to place its forces under UN command in any further peace-keeping operations. In fact, it is reluctant to pay for peace-keeping operations or be involved in them unless the US national interests are threatened.

In conclusion, it can be said that the collapse of the Soviet Union has destabilized peace and security. That the existing international economic, developmental policies and unfair trade system have contributed to this destabilization and triggered and fueled new ethnic and nationalistic conflicts. Conflicts whose magnitude no one anticipated.

With the collapse of the bipolar world, the domination of the two Superpowers has ended. This is most evident in Bosnia, where neither the US nor Russia has been able to, if I may say, impose their wishes on their allies. In this situation the UN efforts at ending conflicts and achieving peace and security around the world have been considerably weakened.

Yet despite its deficiencies and inadequacies, the UN, not necessarily in its present form, is needed by the international community. As a body it is best qualified to address and try to resolve international conflicts. It is the only organization in which small and large countries can still engage in discussion and negotiations to resolve their conflicts.

It is also clear that new initiatives and ways of preventing internal disputes are needed, new ways are needed to deal with civil conflict if they occur. Concurrently, new socio-economic and development models, fair trade, disarmament and the abolition of the arms trade are needed along with the development of a culture of peace.

Security must go beyond territorial security to facilitate human well-being.

To end, I would like to quote Oscar Arias Sanchez, 1987 Nobel Peace Prize Laureate: "In order to speak of disarmament and security in a language that is understandable from the different perspectives of the industrialized and developing nations, it is necessary for both parties to assume the shared responsibility taken by peoples who live in the same neighbourhood. Let us adopt, then, the idea that our planet has shrunk to the point that the peace of some is impossible of the peace of others is not guaranteed."

SECURITY AND ENVIRONMENT: *Solange Fernex, Women for Peace, WILPF France*

Paraphrased excerpts

The dinosaurs of the old ways of thinking still exist. We need to devote ourselves to a new, constructive approach. We need to address the human side of these issues and the suffering that exists because of the narrow visions of a handful of militaries. The health effects alone are staggering.

Nuclear weapons affect *everyone*. Radioactive fog has longlasting effects. Nuclear devices were intentionally designed to poison the environment.

The damage resulting from these weapons are against existing conventions banning inhumane weapons. The effects of the these weapons were studied in the Sahara and in other areas. It is an incredible irresponsibility to cover this up and call it a "military secret."

Governments should open up their files on these issues like the US and Kazakstan have done. In Kazakstan 40 men were tested on without their knowledge.

We need to demand clarity and transparency in knowing what happened and on these issues in general.

Overview of the Conference on Disarmament: *Lucy Duncan, Counsellor, Permanent Mission of New Zealand*

I have been asked to give an overview of the work of the Conference on Disarmament (CD,) the only organ of the UN disarmament machinery

where negotiating powers are lodged. Speakers before me have described the dramatic changes in the international political situation over the past five years. There has been a decrease in the risk of global conflict, but certainly no decrease in the need for disarmament and arms control efforts. Local conflicts, often ethnically driven and involving tragic violations of human rights, as well as weapons proliferation, pose a continuing challenge to international order. The need for a body like the CD undoubtedly remains, and it is important that the CD fulfills its negotiating potential in this fundamentally changed world.

…The Conference on Disarmament has a special place in the disarmament process as it is the only multilateral forum for the negotiation of universal disarmament agreements. It was established as a result to the first United Nations Special Session on Disarmament in 1978, replacing a series of earlier disarmament conferences arranged by the US and the former Soviet Union.…The CD is funded by the UN regular budget, is housed in the UN's Palais des Nations [in Geneva,] and is serviced by UN personnel. For all that, the Conference claims full autonomy in respect of its agenda, composition and procedures, although within the wider UN membership there are different views on this question of sovereignty.

The CD reports to the UN General Assembly and receives guidance from it as to its programme of work.… The CD draws its agenda and programme of work each year from the permanent agenda–the so-called "decalogue" agreed at the time of its establishment. Resolutions of the General Assembly are not legally binding on it, but when adopted by consensus–as were those on the CTBT [(Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty)] and the expansion of the membership [of the CD] at the last session–they are expected to define the CD's approach to the issue and the priority to be accorded to it.

…Membership of the CD does not include all countries. In 1978, it was agreed that the Conference should comprise 40 states, including the five nuclear weapons states. At the time this figure represented about a third of the total UN membership. The CD's composition reflected the geo-political and military realities of the time–including 10 from the Western European and Others Group, 8 from the East European and Others Group, 21 non-aligned or neutral countries, and China.

Unlike other multilateral bodies in the UN system, the CD does not hold elections for existing seats or provide for rotation among interested states. It was agreed at the time of its establishment, however, that the CD would regularly review its composition; the expectation even then must have been that the CD would need to adapt to a changing world.

In fact, in this area the CD has so far been unable to do so. It has lost

rather than gained members due mainly to developments in Europe at the end of the Cold War. The CD currently has 37 sitting members which, with a couple of exceptions, continue to caucus in the 1978 groups derived from the Cold War, to the evident discomfort of many.

In recent years, between forty and fifty countries have observed the CD as non-member states, New Zealand among them. Non-members states may participate in formal meetings of the CD by making statements and proposals, but have limited rights of access to the informal processes which prepare for them. Non-member countries do not participate in the CD's decision-making.

…The General Assembly has also made known its concern in a unanimous resolution urging a rapid expansion to at least sixty countries. This figure is, incidentally, about a third of the current UN membership, the same proportion as when the CD's original membership was set.

The CD's composition, no doubt, was considered representative in 1978, but that is no longer the case. The post-Cold War world is no longer composed of opposing military blocs or countries politically non-aligned. This would not be a matter for great concern if it were not for the fact that the CD's present structure risks becoming an obstacle to progress across the range of substantive items on its agenda. There is a risk that opportunities to produce concrete results will be missed.

…[For example,] can the non-proliferation as well as the disarmament goals of the treaty be assured when the negotiation is taking place without some key players as decision-making participants? …[Another reason is lack] of resources. It has again been very difficult this year for the Conference to find enough candidate delegations with the resources and relevant expertise to carry forward its programme of work, even on the CTBT which is the Conference's highest priority.

…What I have said about the work of the CD is the perspective of a non-member State which wants to be a full participant in its work. This is not only in order to advance New Zealand's national interests in disarmament and arms control but also because my Government believes strongly that bodies such as the CD must respond positively to the changing needs of the international community. The price of exclusivity for the CD in today's world may be increasing loss of touch or even ineffectiveness.

Thursday, 16 February 1995

Attendance at the Conference on Disarmament

Seminar participants attended the Conference on Disarmament on Thursday morning. A statement had been prepared and signed by participants of the seminar to be read to the Conference on Disarmament's delegates (see text of statement on page xx.) The Secretary-General of the UN at Geneva, as well as Boutros Boutros-Ghali's personal representative in Geneva, Mr. Vladmir Petrovsky, read the statement to the delegations. It was very well received by the members of the CD and observer states, with several supportive comments given by the individual delegations.

In the afternoon, participants met with members of the Conference on Disarmament to gather information and share with the governments their broad, non-militaristic vision of peace.

The day ended with a reception, which was attended by participants, members of various NGO's and government representatives.

Friday, 17 February 1995

Working Group Sessions

The morning of the first day, the seminar participants attended one of the discussion groups, each group dealing with one of the four security topics. The results were reported and discussed in the afternoon plenary session.

Afternoon Plenary Session

Discussions on the keynote speeches were deepened in the following workshops: Security and Disarmament & Security and Environment (combined), Security and Development, Security and International Relations.

Summary and Conclusion

Participants reported back from the workshops on the issues discussed.

Several other ideas were presented to the group for consideration.

• Using the example of the Canadian Women's Budget, one way to show how funds could be redirected from the military to more useful purposes.

• Use the mass media more effectively, always with the understanding that it is owned by a select few who control what is shown. There are innovative ways to exploit this medium, e.g. putting the issues in form of a human interest story.

• An international database could be established along with an email system to promote women and security issues. NGO's need to keep up with current technology to remain effective.

• There are two dimensions to peace: 1) trust, and 2) the absence of war.

• The misuse of tribalism and nationalism is used to divide many countries, but it actually serves to hold the US together. Women have traditionally been the carriers of culture and men the carriers of tribalism.

• The "secret" power behind many parliaments is not so secret, it is those want a free market system.

• There are several initiatives happening on the environment and security front: UNESCO has implemented an environmental education program, there is a sustainable tourism program in place, the Legacy Project deals with military base safety, PEER program tackles toxic accidents - especially their prevention, the earth charter program and the Green Cross program.

• Regarding the environment and war, from the military perspective everything is geared towards the "worst threat case scenario." So matter the damage it does to the environment or to people, the military continues its activities.

A statement to the Security Council was presented to the group (see below.) Reform and democratization of the Council was identified as two needed elements to make it responsive and efficient.

It was also decided to send a letter of support to the Committee of Soldiers' Mothers in Russia who are fighting against the conscription of their sons and husbands in the war against Chechnya.

The group decided as well to send a letter of solidarity to the women in the former Yugoslavia from the conference through the Women in Black

organization.

• It was discussed that women have a different concept of security. Women's issues need a greater presence in the matters of security and disarmament.

A summary was given on the preparatory work that had gone into the process for the UN Fourth World Conference on Women to be held in Beijing, China, in September of 1995. At the European regional conference peace organizations tried to see included: disarmament; connections to environment, testing and health; the promotion of women in peace negotiations and conflict resolution; and peace education. They only managed to include language on women in decision-making positions and within the UN system. There didn't seem to be any emphasis recognized of the connection between security and disarmament.

For Beijing, peace organizations are busy preparing for participation in the Peace Tent, one of the thematic tents at the NGO Forum. There should be a coalition of groups to work on this.

WILPF gave a brief update on its activities regarding its *WILPF Peace Train* project. There will be many stops at which the 200+ participants on board will meet with local women. The route was intentionally chosen to go through areas in or near areas of conflict or through areas in social and economic transition. The idea is not to arrive with a program already in place but to elicit from the women in the region what they think we all should be talking about.

On the Peace Train there will also be a Rolling School at which younger participants will be able to learn about the UN process and prepare themselves for what will happen in Beijing.

Seminar on International Security: A Feminist Perspective

15-17 February 1995, Palais des Nations, Geneva, Switzerland

To the Members States of the United Nations:

"We are women gathered at a *Seminar on International Security: A Feminist Perspective* which is being held in memory of former Swedish Under-Secretary of State, Inga Thorsson, and in honour of her life-long efforts to help build a world in which all people can live a decent life in full security.

Among other, we discussed the proposals being considered by the General Assembly's Open-Ended Working Group on Security Council Reform. We did so because of the Security Council's important role under the Charter in the maintenance of international peace and security, and therefore our interest and concern about its future structure, scope and relationship to the General Assembly now being debated. In this regard, we believe that the public has not only a right to be informed about the deliberations, but must be given the opportunity to participate in them.

The time has come now to urgently implement the possibility held out in May 1994 by the President of the 48th General Assembly in his address to the NGO Conference on Security Council Reform and Restructuring organized in New York by the International NGO Network on Global Governance and Democratization of International Relations, that the Open-Ended Working Group would organize a public hearing with NGOs.

Having read the government statements we were able to obtain, we wish to express our strong view that, as part of the general democratization process of institutions and public life in which our societies are engaged, and which is so strongly encouraged by most of the UN Member States, this is the time and opportunity to democratize the Security Council. We urge you to opt for an increase in the number of the Security Council's members, by adding at least ten new permanent members exclusively adding ten new non-permanent members, all to be elected by the General Assembly.

It is our ardent wish that, in the not too distant future, the Security Council's membership will be fully elected, and that there will no longer be a privileged group of permanent members with the right to veto

decisions taken by a majority of Member States. In the meantime, it is our strong conviction that it would be a great disservice to the peoples of the United Nations, and against the interests of the organization itself, to add to the number of privileged Permanent Members, or any another category of privileged members in the Security Council.

Any attempt to give recognition to concepts of new "global powers", rewarding military strength and intervention capacities with permanent or "standing" seats would be an affront to the Charter principles of the equal rights of nations, and to the mandatory obligation of countries to prepare for the peaceful and negotiated settlement of conflicts, including through disarmament. Adding new permanent members would be a retrogression and an insult to the overwhelming majority of smaller states who have made signal contributions to the UN efforts for peace thr`oughout the existence of the organization.

As women we know what discrimination and domination mean. We oppose them with all our strength, and work for the democratization of society. We will do our utmost to prevent the institutionalizing of further privileges at all levels in all areas."