



Peace Talk

Building a Culture of Peace

Vol. 29 No. 1

The Co\$ of War: Ike Was Right

In 1953, President Eisenhower revealed a sentiment unusual for a career military man. In a speech before the American Society of Newspaper Editors he said, "Every gun that is made, every warship launched, every rocket fired signifies, in the final sense, a theft from those who hunger and are not fed, those who are cold and are not clothed." From the beginning of his presidency to the end, Ike seemed to presage how military spending threatened our economic security.

During the Eisenhower years, most believed we could have both guns and butter. In that era, with an expanding economy, it was possible. Businesses got contracts, jobs were created, and budget deficits and unemployment stayed relatively low. Corporate profits were sky high bolstered by the racist pay differential enforced by segregation, while McCarthyism tore apart the leadership of movements advocating for social and economic justice.

The narrative for fast tracking military spending during Eisenhower's peacetime was the Soviet threat; later it became the Communists in Vietnam. Now it is Al Qaeda, "the war on terror," or just "security." By the time President Eisenhower left office, he recognized that all was not well with the comfortable arrangement that had developed between corporations, the Pentagon, and Congress. He knew that this collusion endangered democracy and put foreign policy on a permanent war footing. In his televised farewell address he looked straight in to the cameras and without notes warned us that, "In the councils of government, we must guard against the acquisition of unwarranted influence, whether sought or un-

sought, by the military-industrial complex. The potential for the disastrous rise of misplaced power exists and will persist."

It has not only persisted, it has flourished. Now 58% of federal discretionary spending goes to the military while 4% goes to education, 5% to health, and 3% to transportation. The base Pentagon budget in 2010-2011 is \$533.8 billion; not including the wars. According to Robert Higgs, senior fellow for political economy at the Independent Institute, "A well-founded rule of thumb is to take the Pentagon's (always well publicized) basic budget total and double it."

In 2010, the Military-Industrial Complex found that 3,834 contractors were awarded a total of \$247 billion in defense contracts. Most of these were non competitive bids. This amounts to about half of the Pentagon's base budget. Since October 2006 contracts have totaled \$1.1 trillion.

While out-sourcing itself is not necessarily a problem, in the case of the military it makes war a profitable pursuit rather than an option of last resort. Apart

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from the ethical considerations, is it valid to argue that the military is a good source of jobs? A look at the raw numbers appears to call in to question this idea.

To field one soldier in Afghanistan for one year costs \$1 million, according to the Pentagon. In NC, \$1 million could provide jobs for 22 teachers or firefighters. Still, the military contributes about \$23 billion a year to NC's state gross domestic product. That's only 7%. More than 416,000 individuals are directly or indirectly employed by the military, but that accounts for only 8% percent of total state employment. While this is not insignificant when you're talking about one source, it's not hard to imagine that number of people training for jobs in the design, production, and sales of green energy systems, or even as teachers and firefighters. It's a matter of priorities.

As it is now, weapons production is highly specialized and spread over 30 states and hundreds of cities and small towns around the country. This means most Congresspersons have a vested interest in maintaining high levels of Pentagon spending thus assuring a permanent state of war. A reorganizing of local economies will be needed. It will require a deliberate plan to shift from one industry to another with the full involvement of the companies and workers themselves.

In the 1970s, the Oil, Chemical and Atomic Workers (OCAW) drafted ideas for converting military production to civilian. They focused both on the plants and their communities. They called on the Federal government to establish enterprise zones to ease the transition. Military contractors will have to be compelled to find ways to reinvest and utilize new technologies in order for civilian production to replace military contracts.

Companies need to become a part of developing new sustainable local economic development. They won't

do it as long as lucrative no-bid contracts are doled out from the Pentagon. They will do it, however, if those dry up. Reining in military spending and redirecting funds to the civilian economy will save lives, create more jobs, and develop an economy that preserves the planet.

by *Judith LeBlanc*
National Field Organizer



Letter from the Director

by *Betsy Crites*



It's been 50 years since President Eisenhower coined the term "military industrial complex" (MIC) in his farewell address. In January, the NC peace community gathered in Greensboro to discuss what had changed--or not. Excerpts from speakers Judith LeBlanc, Peace Action's national field organizer, and Mia Austin-Scoggins, NCPA Board member, reveal the influence of the MIC as more pervasive and destructive than ever.

The Cost of War: While budget debates rage, \$1 trillion/year for the MIC goes nearly unquestioned. Welcomed exceptions are Barney Frank and NC's Rep. Walter Jones who cooperated in the bi-partisan Sustainable Defense Task Force.

Conclusion? The Pentagon budget could be cut 25% over 5 years without compromising "security." NC taxpayers' share of the military budget for 2011 is \$19.9 billion. The entire NC State budget is \$19 billion. That money could fund 383,546 teachers for a year or 3.5 million scholarships for university students. NCPA is building alliances with many sectors affected by these upside down priorities.

Afghanistan: Nearly two-thirds of Americans now say the war in Afghanistan is no longer worth fighting, according to a new *Washington Post-ABC News poll*. President Obama has waded in to his own war of empire. This is not the stuff of Nobel Peace Laureates. Obama needs to take major steps toward withdrawal or face a serious "enthusiasm gap" from his base. Peace Action and its affiliates are circulating a petition to Obama on Afghanistan with optional check boxes to note the level of past support. You can sign the petition at www.peace-action.org or request a copy to circulate to your friends. Please write to: director@ncepeaceaction.org or 916 Knight Dr., Durham, NC 27712.

To learn about other activities of NCPA, visit our website or call us to speak in your area. We welcome the opportunity to exchange ideas and support local actions.

The Human Cost of War: “Extra Casualties”

The official tally for troop deaths in US wars since 1950 is 101,000 killed and 296,000 wounded. With the Vietnam war, however, there were an estimated one million veterans, apart from the official casualty list, who suffered long-term mental psychological, and physical damage. This has naturally affected family members as well.

Out of Desert Storm there were at least 300,000 soldiers and veterans struggling with Gulf War Syndrome -- an amazing number considering the official casualty list, for both dead and wounded, is only about 750.

In our current wars, the “extra casualties” resulting from Post Traumatic Stress Syndrome and Traumatic Brain Injury, suicides, and other violence is approaching half a million more. This brings the tally to nearly 1,800,000, and does not count the toll on affected family members.

When the official figures are added in, the human toll just on the US side comes to nearly two million American soldiers whose lives have been deeply scarred or ended by their journey through



Above: *Mia Austin-Scoggins*. Photo by Jerry Markatos

the Military Industrial Complex.

While these figures are inexact estimates, they are all reasonable descriptions of an overshadowing reality, and the forces behind them cannot be dismissed or discounted.

The financial impact of injuries on this scale is in the trillions. On September 29, 2010, Nobel Laureate Joseph Stiglitz, Ph.D., and Harvard economist Linda Bilmes testified before the House Committee on Veterans' Affairs Chairman Bob Filner (D-CA), and members of the House Veterans Committee. The hearing was held to discuss the “true cost of war.”

In 2008, when their book, *The Three Trillion Dollar War: The*

True Cost of the Iraq War, was published, Stiglitz and Bilmes were believed to have overestimated the cost of the war in Iraq. Two years later, the economists find those projections to have been “extremely conservative.”

In their testimony last September, Dr. Stiglitz and Ms. Bilmes estimated that “social costs” to veterans of Iraq / Afghanistan will be higher than their 2008 estimate of between \$295 and \$400 billion. These costs include physical illness and injury, mental trauma and debility, homelessness, unemployment, poverty, domestic violence, divorce, substance abuse, the burden of care giving or just a diminished quality of life.

These social costs are not included in the federal budget. They are borne by the veterans, by their families, and by society. They are among the hidden costs of war. For years, for lifetimes, for generations, these “unfunded liabilities” are America’s latest “Extra Casualties” of war.

by Mia Austin-Scoggins

Board Member & Media Coordinator for
NC Peace Action

Join NCPA or Renew Your Membership Your Participation Matters!

Each membership in NC Peace Action helps build the peace movement. It says there is money and commitment behind our ideals. It also entitles you to join in shaping the organization. Your renewed membership now for the year 2011 does all that AND helps us save money on mailing costs. Please fill out the enclosed card and return it in the blue envelope. Thank you.

On September 24th, I awoke to four FBI agents at my door in Durham, NC. They talked about a terrorism investigation and questioned me repeatedly, even though I told them I had nothing to say without a lawyer present. Finally they left, but two agents persisted in monitoring my house throughout the day. Later that day I went to talk with an attorney and then an antiwar activist about what happened. Within hours, that activist had more agents at their door trying to probe into our connections and conversations.

Persecution of Anti-War Activists

Below: Photo by Justin Valas



I wasn't the only one the FBI visited that day. Over 70 agents raided homes, issued subpoenas, and visited antiwar and international solidarity activists in Minneapolis, Chicago, Michigan, California, and Wisconsin. 14 activists were subpoenaed before a federal grand jury in Chicago on a material support of terrorism investigation. In December, 9 more subpoenas were issued to Palestinians and Palestine solidarity activists in Chicago.

So far all 23 subpoenaed activists have refused to participate in this FBI witch hunt against the antiwar movement. The Committee to Stop FBI Repression has organized demonstrations in cities across the country. On February 19th, we held a conference at UNC School of Law, bringing together over 100 activists from across the South to hear our cases. This case is not just about the 23 - it's an attack on everyone's democratic rights and civil liberties. Please join us in this struggle for justice. Visit stopfbi.net for more info. We need all activists to stand together against FBI repression; defend freedom of speech and the right to organize!

by Kosta Harlan

“A nation that continues year after year to spend more money on military defense than on programs of social uplift is approaching spiritual doom.” -- *Martin Luther King Jr.*

March 28th - April 18th 2011

Forty muralists from around the world (including a team of Greensboro, NC students) and dozens of Afghan school children have contributed their work to create this memorial to the human cost of the war in Afghanistan. The collection is a powerful testimony to the violence of war. It is also a story of resistance and the human spirit. We invite you to think of these works both as windows to war and a mirror to ourselves.

Exhibit Hours: M-Th 7:30a – Midnight | F 7:30a - 6p | Sa 10a - 9p | Su 12p—Midnight

Sponsored by: American Friends Service Committee, Carolina Office, w/ NC Peace Action support.

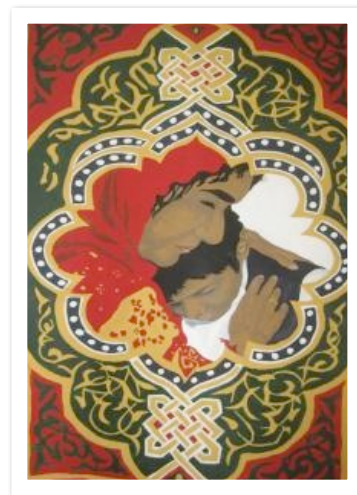
Guilford College Library Atrium
5800 West Friendly Ave.
Greensboro, NC 27410

For More Information: visit
www.afsc.org/greensboro, AFSC
(336)854-0633, mfair@afsc.org

Schedule of Events:
(check website for locations)

- ◆ **Friday, March 25, 2011:** 7 p.m.
Opening Reception.
- ◆ **Sunday, March 27:** 5 p.m.
Youth Group Tour & Discussion.
- ◆ **Thursday, March 31:** 7 p.m.
Muslims in America & Islamophobia.
- ◆ **Tuesday, April 5:** 7:30 p.m.
Christianity and War.
- ◆ **Friday, April 15:** 7 p.m.
The Economic Cost of War.

Windows and Mirrors



School and youth group programming available by request.

◆ Collaborations are Crucial ◆

Recent News: NCPA hosted **Kevin Martin**, Executive Director of *Peace Action* on a Triangle tour, March 11-13th. As director of the largest grassroots peace organization in this country, Martin is a key leader in the movement. His dynamic presentations helped us all see the bigger picture and feel the importance of our work. NCPA is proud to be affiliated with Peace Action.

APRIL 18 TAX DAY Take Action in Your Locale

As taxpayers mail their last minute returns on April 18th, show how much tax money goes to pay for wars and wasteful weapons systems while our schools, jobs, and healthcare are threatened. North Carolina's share of the 2012 Pentagon budget is \$15 billion; enough to provide 2.8 million people with healthcare or 2.7 million scholarships for university students for a year. Email director@ncpeaceaction.org for an organizing kit.

Right: Wally Myers, NCPA Vice Chair, at the MIC@50 conference. Photo by Jerry Markatos

APRIL 9

“Speaking Truth to Power: a Permanent State of War”

Speakers: *Gareth Porter*, investigative journalist, historian specializing in US security policy. *Ray McGovern*, former US Army Intelligence Officer, 27 year CIA veteran and analyst. Plus: Wikileaks “Collateral Murder” company vet *Josh Steiber* and fellow veterans.

Details: Starts **8:00 PM**. \$18 or \$10 students/seniors. At the Diana Wortham Theatre in Asheville, NC

For More Info: *Facebook* - “Speaking Truth to Power: a Permanent State of War” page. Sponsored by Veterans for Peace & NC Peace Action. *Call:* 512.797.7709



APRIL 17-22

Statewide “Pilgrimage for Justice and Peace”

Join Witness for Peace Southeast, the NC Council of Churches, NC Peace Action and others for the 25th annual Pilgrimage for Justice and Peace during Holy Week (April 17-22). The pilgrims will walk in Goldsboro, Charlotte, Winston-Salem, Greensboro & Graham, Cary, and Raleigh to protect immigrants' rights, reform trade policies, and justice for all workers. For more information call (919) 856-9468 or email witnessforpeaceSE2@gmail.com.



Above: Photo by Alexandria Jones

NOVEMBER 13-15

Lake Junaluska Peace Conference

"Abundance, Poverty and Peace: Seeking Economic Justice for all God's Children"

The root and cause of war: the economic system. **Keynote speakers** will include David Beckmann, President of *Bread for the World*; George McGovern; Bishop Nkula Ntanda Ntamba, and more. <http://www.lakejunaluska.com/Peace/>



Student & Young Adult Peace Legacy Programs 2011

North Carolina Peace Action (NCPA) seeks to *build a culture of peace by developing opportunities for the new generation of peacemakers* to:

- **learn the principles and practices** of peaceful social change
- **expand their understanding** of peacemaking and civic engagement
- **engage their creativity and critical thinking** as they seek ways to contribute to a more peaceful world.

The following programs are planned for 2011.

- ◆ **“Peaceful Means” Workshops** explore the theory and practices of nonviolence as taught by Gandhi and Martin Luther King, Jr. *Call to schedule for your group.*
- ◆ **Student Peacemaker Award Program** for age 18-24, essays or art forms on the question: "How

could tax money being used for war be redirected to meet human needs?" The *grand prize* is travel with Witness for Peace to Latin America. Deadline for entry: **October 1st 2011.**

◆ **“The Cost of War”** interactive seminars discuss the trade offs we make as a society when we fund weapons and wars over the needs of people. Offered to all age groups. *Call to schedule.*

◆ **Internships** in *organizing*, especially in *graphic design, data management, and social media.*

To support the next generation of peacemakers, please donate to NCPA’s “Peace Legacy Fund.” Contributions are marked for support of these programs.

Ask about our Sustaining Sponsors. Call [\(919\) 381 5969](tel:9193815969) or email director@ncpeaceaction.org.

NC Peace Action



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