

USA-NATO's Dangerous Path Towards Military Aggression: A Universal Call for Peace through the Total Abolition of Militarism

The Peace Movement's Vision

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Militaries Are Outdated and Should Go, Like Hanging and Flogging

Dear Friends,

I would like to offer my congratulations to IFOR on this its 100th anniversary. I once asked Fr. Dan Berrigan, the great American anti-war activist, for some advice to me in my life as a peace activist. He replied 'Pray and resist'. The IFOR members will appreciate this advice, coming as they do from their roots in 100 years of building International Fellowship and Reconciliation between peoples of all faiths, traditions (and none), many of whom believe in the need for prayer in order to strengthen their spiritual lives, and many take their prayer, very seriously. Our Muslim brothers and sisters show us great example by their very beautiful lives of prayer, (5 times a day), and fasting at Ramadan.

But I would like to ask how serious are we about Resistance?

What is our Vision?

And how does Resistance fit into this? What do we need to resist? How can we resist effectively?

And what methods are allowed? In resisting, what are our aims and objectives?

I would like to propose that IFOR and the Worlds' Peace Movement adopt a vision of the total abolition of Militarism. Such a Vision would empower us to know where we are going. It would inspire and energize each of us to pursue our different projects, be it arms trade, nuclear abolition, nonkilling/nonviolence, culture of peace, abolishing arms, drone warfare, human rights, environmental rights, etc., We will know as we work towards this vision of a demilitarised, disarmed world, that we are part of an ever growing new 'consciousness' of men and women, choosing to uphold human life, the right to individual conscious, loving our enemies, human rights and international law, and solving our problems without killing each other.

Why Resist militarism? We are witnessing the growing militarism of Europe, and its role as a driving force for armaments, and its dangerous path, under the leadership of the USA/NATO towards a new 'cold' war and military aggression. The European Union and many of its countries, who used to take initiatives in the UN for peaceful settlements of conflicts, particularly allegedly peaceful countries, like Norway and Sweden, are now one of the US/NATO most important war assets. The EU is a threat to the survival of neutrality, as countries are being asked to join NATO, and forced to end their neutrality and choose



(unnecessarily) between West and East.

Many nations have been drawn into being complicit in breaking international law through US/UK/NATO wars in Afghanistan, Iraq, Libya, and etc., Germany being the third largest exporter of military hardware in the world, continues to increase its military budget and is complicit with NATO, facilitating USA bases, from which drones leave carry out illegal extrajudicial killings on the order of the US President, in countries such as Afghanistan, Pakistan, etc., Germany has also provided Israel with its nuclear submarine and continues to be complicit under the Geneva Convention, in Israeli war crimes against Gaza and illegal Occupation of Palestine.

I believe we need to abolish NATO and increase our task of dismantling the Military Industrial complex, through nonviolent and civil resistance. The means of resistance are very important. As a pacifist and person deeply committed to nonkilling/nonviolence as a way to bring about social/cultural/political change, I believe we need to use means consistent with the end, and it is wrong to use violence.

Our message that Militarism and War do not solve our problem of violence, challenges us to use new ways and that is why we need to teach the Science of peace at every level of society. We are all aware there are forces at work that are determined to continue their agenda of the militarization of our societies and there are Gov./Corporate/Media attempts to make violence and war acceptable. The greatest danger to our freedoms being eroded, by Gov., and endangered by 'armed' groups, is a fearful, apathetic, civil community, refusing to take a stand for human rights and real democracy, and against violence and war.

We can take hope from the fact that most people want peace not war. However, we are facing a civilization problem. We are facing a Political/Ideological challenge with the growth of what President Eisenhower warned the USA people against - the Military/Industrial complex. He warned it would destroy USA democracy and he has been proven right in this. We know now that a small world group made up of Military/Industrial/Media/Corporate/Academic elite, whose agenda is profit, arms, war and valuable resources, is now holding power and have a stronghold on our elected Governments. We see this in the Gun and Israeli Lobbies, amongst others, who hold great

power over American Politics. We have witnessed this, in ongoing wars, invasions, occupations, and proxy war, all allegedly in the name of 'humanitarian intervention and democracy'. However, in reality they are causing great suffering, especially to the poor, through their policies of arms, war, domination and control of other countries and their resources.

Unmasking this agenda of war and demanding the implementation of Human Rights and International Law is the work of the Peace Movement. We can turn around from this path of destruction by spelling out a clear vision of what kind of a world we want to live in, demanding an end to M/I complex, and insisting our Governments adopt policies of peace, just economics, etc.

We the Peace Movement are the alternative to militarism and war, and as we want a different world, we must be part of building it. We must not be satisfied with improvements and reform to militarism but rather offer an alternative. Militarism is an aberration and a system of dysfunction. Militarism should be outdated and go like hanging and flogging!

I hope that IFOR will join in a Universal Call for peace through the wholesale abolition of militarism.

Mairead Corrigan Maguire is a member of the TRANSCEND Network for Peace, Development and Environment. She won the 1976 Nobel Peace Prize for her work for peace in Northern Ireland. Her book The Vision of Peace (edited by John Dear, with a foreword by Desmond Tutu and a preface by the Dalai Lama) is available from www.wipfandstock.com. She lives in Belfast, Northern Ireland. See: www.peacepeople.com.

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