

The Way of Peace

Anzac Centenary Edition 1915-2015

#4 Militarism and the Arms Industry

“War is irrational; its only plan is to bring destruction: it seeks to grow by destroying,” said Pope Francis. *Greed, intolerance, the lust for power: These motives underlie the decision to go to war and they are too often justified by an ideology...*” www.news.va

The arms industry is one of the largest industries in the world. Billions are spent on the research and development of more deadly and sophisticated ways of killing people and destroying the environment, even moving into space. Militarism is promoted as necessary for defence and most nation states regard war as an acceptable tool of foreign policy.

Many nations are economically reliant on the ‘industrial military machine’. The arms industry needs wars to keep it functioning. Corrupt governments and people are given easy access to arms, which helps keep them in power and profits the arms manufacturers. The film and communication industries feed the appetite for militarism and the arms industry.

The majority of conflicts currently taking place are, in fact, within nations rather than between nations. Syria, Iraq, Sudan, Nigeria and Democratic Republic of Congo are the target of small arms dealers. The small arms industries are among the most destructive.

Landmines are the most serious culprit. Women and children are usually the victims.

The use of drones has changed the face of militarism. It has become killing by remote technology. Innocent citizens are casualties.

“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.” Ex USA President Dwight D. Eisenhower

Armed response to conflict teaches a defence consciousness that will only disappear through disarmament and education on non-violent responses.

While the Christian tradition has long held to the principles of a ‘just war’. In the face of new and ever more deadly weaponry, increasingly these traditional reasons are no longer valid. Therefore the argument for a ‘just war’ is difficult to defend.

The cause for taking the military response against the perceived enemy may seem to be just. However, history shows that military might has not brought peace in the Middle East. It has spawned the conditions for hatred and anger which has made things more complex and difficult. The catastrophic consequences are great for the future of the planet and its peoples.

Just as the conditions for war are spread culturally, so the conditions for the abolition of war are spread, culturally. We need to grow a culture of peace.

Source: en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Nonviolence_malmo_P7130029.JPG





Cartoon source: Michael Leunig; www.leunig.com.au

"We cannot be both the world's leading champion of peace and the world's leading supplier of the weapons of war."
 Ex USA President
 Jimmy Carter

Fact File

The first use of aerial bombing occurred on 1 November 1911 in the Italo-Turkish War in Libya. Bombing was inexact and initially caused small numbers of death and casualties to civilians. As its use increased, so did the number of civilians killed and injured. Military leaders began to look at the practicality of bombing an enemy into submission, defeating them by totally demoralising them and causing absolute damage to their cities and to the populace's everyday life.

Landmines

The first use of landmines was in WWI when they were developed from old shells as anti-tank weapons. During WWII fields of large plate size mines were laid to protect areas or to deter attack. These weapons were designed to kill.

Modern mines are smaller and are designed to wound and maim. They are often smaller than a hand.

In 1992 the International Campaign to Ban Landmines (ICBL) formed, was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize in 1997.

Nuclear

The development of firstly atomic and then nuclear weapons heralded the beginning of an era of constant development then deployment of a variety of bombs, including weapons of mass destruction.

(*Medical Association for the Prevention of War*).

Re-focusing

Australian taxpayers are paying \$325m for the commemoration of Anzac 2014-17 (*Anzac's Long Shadow: The Cost of Our National Obsession*, James Brown)

The real threats to global security are climate change, competition over resources, global militarisation and the marginalisation of the majority of the world. (*Oxford Research Group: Abbott, Rogers and Slobada*) www.opendemocracy.net

Profile of a Peacemaker



Activist, writer and speaker, Donna Mulhearn was a human shield during the 2003 invasion of Iraq and returned several times as an aid worker and human rights activist. She is a journalist, former political adviser and completed her Masters at the University of Sydney Centre for Peace and Conflict Studies.

During her fifth trip to Iraq in 2013 she researched the effects of toxic weapons on the civilian population, particularly mothers and babies in the city of Fallujah. She coordinates the Australian Campaign to Ban Uranium Weapons which is part of an international movement working towards a ban on depleted uranium weapons.

Featured on ABC's Australian Story program, her book, *Ordinary Courage*, a memoir about her experience as a human shield, was published in 2010. Inspired by the Peace Prayer of St Francis of Assisi, she describes herself as a 'Pilgrim and Storyteller.'

"War is expensive. Peace is priceless."

These will hammer their swords into ploughshares, their spears into sickles. Nation will not lift sword against nation, there will be no more training for war.

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Discuss:

What is your response to the claim that militarisation makes us more secure?

"Mankind must put an end to war or war will put an end to mankind." John F. Kennedy

Useful Links

The Enduring Effects of War, a series of lessons for Years 9/10 prepared by He Medical Association for the Prevention of War, Act for Peace and the History Teachers Association of Victoria:

www.mapw.org.au
www.actforpeace.org

Women in Sahara disable landmines:

www.youtube.com/watch?v=O94RT7PC1zE

International Campaign to Ban Landmines- Australia:

australia.icbl.org/index.htm