

Arms Trade and Trafficking – Jesse Edgington

Isaiah 2:4 (NIV)

4"He will judge between the nations and will settle disputes for many peoples. They will beat their swords into ploughshares and their spears into pruning hooks. Nation will not take up sword against nation, nor will they train for war anymore."

Matthew 5:9 (NIV)

9"Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called children of God."

As we launch billions of people around the world closer and closer to the year 2020, a huge question remains to be seen if a vision of peace and sustainability can be seen on larger global scale. As we look through the glasses of faith, economics, politics, trade and global human rights, will we see a world moving in a stronger direction of achieving Global Sustainability Goals by 2030? As I examine the impact, influence and effects of the global arms trade, I would like to explain how I think we cannot do so without a drastic reduction in arms manufacturing, trade, sales and research. I also see many ties between arms and other SDG's that are related and have significant impact on the success or failure of those goals also. The arms trade falls into SDG #16, "Promote just, peaceful and inclusive societies." More specifically it is #16.4, which states, "By 2030, significantly reduce illicit financial and arms flows, strengthen the recovery and return of stolen assets and combat all forms of organized crime." Can we achieve perfect vision, will governments have the courage, will citizens call for action or will their sights be set on following other paths and the dream of peace be shot down? (www.un.org)

How did it all start? Can we identify a historical precedence to arms development and trade? Weapons making has been around as long as people have been hunter-gatherers, as they were in need of tools to help them catch and kill animals for that rich source of protein. The invention of the sword, axe and arrow made for effective tools to kill and the single shot musket rifle was an effective weapon, but non of these were drivers of the arms trade, at least not until the late 1800's.

According to author Pamela Haag, it was America's gun culture, born out of a few major players that propelled the invention, commodification, trade and extensive gun supply around the world. In particular, it was what birthed the political and economical gun culture that exists in the USA with an estimated 300 million guns in circulation today. As guns were being invented and perfected in the mid 1800's a writer touring an American armory commented that he hoped only a small number of these terrible instruments of carnage and destruction were ever destined to be used. He hoped they would lie in national storage arsenals, dormant and undisturbed. (Haag pg45)

The companies of Smith & Wesson, Colt, Winchester and Remington would not let that happen though, as they sought to create larger markets and ever more production of their guns as they perfected newer and better models. Almost as soon as they were manufacturing them, they were selling them worldwide. As early as

1869, Winchester had sold over 10 thousand guns and was attracting such customers as Turkish army officers who were coming to the US to buy arms and ammunition. Traders were being rewarded with commissions by their Sultans and Kings and thus started the precedent of arms dealers and traders making healthy profits off of the gun trade. It also became an act that was not illicit, covert or black market. It was simply business, a new frontier of trade and resource accumulation. It fueled new wars into the late 1800 and early 1900's as well as the continued colonization of the far reaches of the world by the European powers. (Haag, p. 132+133)

It also, very sadly was most often detrimental to the Indigenous Peoples of many nations such as America, Australia and South America. For companies like Remington, they quickly understood the need for advertising their product and the potential domestic market they had if they could convince the American public of their need for guns as more than just a tool like a plow. The sale and trade was kept anonymous and records of sale to countries or individuals were non existent or spotty at best. Initially there were no gun control laws and unfortunately, the first implementation of any such measures came at the cost to Indigenous People. The first attempt to control gun commerce was in 1876 after George Custer's shocking demise at Little Big Horn. The government past a resolution prohibiting the sale of arms or ammunition to "hostile Indians of the northwest."

The lure of such potential for larger sums of money was too much for the arms dealers though and many continued to sell and trade with the "savages." The commissioner for Indian Affairs was very concerned about it and thought there was no greater offence against the commonwealth than people recklessly putting guns in the hands of savages that they knew would be used to kill innocent white citizens. American Indians were all too often regarded as another breed of wild animal. The conquest of warding off the savage by any civilian hoisting a gun was the final element that allowed the big American gun companies the gain the success of the domestic market. It was to rid the white man of the Indian frontier within their beautiful country. (Haag, p 171-184)

The greed for gain was too much in the 1870's for any resolution to stop the merchants of arms and that pattern has followed up until present day. Americans learned to love the gun on deeper emotional, spiritual levels and now it is companies such as Halliburton, Lockheed, BAE, etc. who are driving the economic engine of arms manufacturing. An arms dealer once bragged about selling large bomb orders to Brazil, Columbia, Peru, Ecuador, Bolivia and more. Frank Jonas stated, "We certainly are in a hell of a business. A fellow has to wish for trouble so as to make a living, the only consolation being, however, if we don't get the business, someone else will." This adage has propelled companies and government to continue bigger and more expensive arms deals as conflicts and war continue to be fueled by the ever-increasing access to these instruments of war.

The gun culture cannot be fought unless the attention gets shifted from the gun owner to the gun makers and from gun regulation to corporate accountability. The arms industry has been well portrayed by the people making money off of it as a business and no more, but for people and society to tackle this issue, the morality, values and politics of it must be tied to the economics of it. It is ironic that many

corporations in the US face federal regulations to make their products safe and are open to the possibilities of civil lawsuits should their products not meet those safety standards. The American gun industry has always been exempt from that status but looking at updating legislation along those lines could be fruitful to helping gun control. (Haag p 389-91)

Illicit trade has increased from the times of sail boat merchants charting the great oceans, to the technological golden age with great merchant vessels moving arms by sea and air. It has increased options, supply and has lowered cost and waiting times. While the Second World War brought about a more conscious effort to look at global principles of human rights, some countries had other agendas too. The Policy Planning Staff of the US State Department advised in 1948 that, "we have 50% of the world's wealth, but only 6.3% of its population. In this situation, our real job in the coming period is to maintain this position of disparity. To do so, we have to dispense with all sentimentality. We should cease thinking about human rights, the raising of living standards, and democratization." Up until the new millennia, illicit trade has not been a priority for international law and it has been done "legally and in the open" for the most part. It has only been recently that the public is starting to have its eyes opened and has made the trade of arms more scrutinized.

The arms trade has evolved from just guns and ammo to bombs, mines, grenades, missiles, assault rifles, tanks, helicopters, jet fighters, chemical, biological and nuclear weapons. Weapons now are enormously more destructive than they were a century ago and are being produced, sold and traded with little regard to international laws, embargoes, borders, politics or ethics. The variety of players at the table has also become as big as the arms list available for purchase. US, Britain, Japan, China, Russia, Saudi Arabia, Pakistan, Iran, Iraq, Korea, the list is almost so long I should probably try and find out who is not on it, if any. The countries and corporations that profit from arms manufacturing and trade, want to perpetuate an environment of continual war or the fear factor in societies of the possibility of weapons of massive destruction or the immanence of a nuclear attack. That way the general public stays uneducated and unconcerned about seeing the bigger global economic picture and the reality about who is acquiring these weapons and who is selling them and there is no pressure for more legislation or control domestically or internationally.

One of the modern day icons of arms trade is Victor Bout. Nicknamed the 'merchant of death,' he has moved arms, diamonds, even soldiers around the world in extensive air transporting networks. He has ferried weapons around the world to all kinds of groups and one example is a shipment of weapons to Afghanistan that was destined for the Taliban at an estimated profit, to himself, of 50 million dollars. This suggests how much companies must be making if their dealers take home that large amount for deals. Officially in 2004, 1,249 formal corporations based in ninety countries manufactured small arms.

Switzerland, who may hold the global perception of being a neutral country, when it comes to war, is far from keeping their hands clean of all elements of it. They are part of the vast business of economics of war and conflict by being involved in the production and sales of arms and using their banking systems to attract world wide currency to be stowed away by corrupt companies, individuals

and governments using their services to move and store money. With the assets of national monetary authorities growing to \$19.9 trillion and \$1.88 trillion in global daily currency exchange happening, the global economic engine has become very complex and difficult to track or regulate, to say the least. There is also an estimated 2 trillion dollars in money laundering that happens each year in today's global economy. (Naim pg. 135-137)

A vibrant second hand market exists as well, with arms and ammo being resold as new is acquired, or as it is obtained through war and conflict. When the former Soviet Union collapsed, entrepreneurial former leaders became arms dealers and sold stock around the world as the chaos of rebuilding the region opened them up to the world. For example, Liberia carried 210 tons of Yugoslav army stock away and sold it under cover to Nigeria. After the fall of Saddam Hussein's regime, an estimated 7 to 8 million small arms were scattered throughout Iraq and the Middle East. The Iraq arsenal of missiles also went missing in the chaos that followed the American invasion and some people have even linked the resources used to train and arm the attackers of 9/11 back to those weapons from Iraq; which were sold to them in the first place by the US to help them defend themselves against Iran.

It is so crazy that even breakaway regions of countries have been created, such as Transdniester Moldovan Republic, to be able to establish its own government, army and rules for what it can do on international markets. It is tiny but holds significant industrial infrastructure to produce and acquire arms for trade. The global security business total wealth is constantly rising, from 100 billion in 2001 to 400 billion in 2010. Sadly, the abundance of arms also fuels other closely related businesses of drug trade, slavery and sex trade that are also rampant around the world and cheating global economies of much needed money for social care and development. (Naim p.38-64)

Arms manufacturing, trade and trafficking hold many concerns for nations as pointed out by J. Paul Dunne. Countries must examine the role of stockpiles of armaments as they collect and hold them in anticipation of war or defense. This has led to "arms races" in the past and present that have escalated conflict and atmospheres of conflict such as during the times of the cold war. Arms and arms technology also mean the need for future upgrades and constant purchasing of next generation technology. Countries have intentionally sold technologies to foreign countries in order to be able to "sell" the need for its own domestic development of bigger and better ones to fight the models they have just sold. That fuels the R&D departments of domestic budgets and economies, which most often goes to only a selective few military contractors. This includes weapons, weapons systems, radar and defense systems. It seems that outsourcing beyond the military has spilled over to groups like militias, rebel groups, terrorists, criminal networks and gorilla groups. This creates regional arms races, wasteful government expenditures and in most cases, bribe money or weapons contract bonuses.

World military spending in 2004 was 975 Billion and the USA accounted for almost half of that. Economies could use savings from reducing military budgets in areas of civic and social sectors. In fact, Lomborg points out that military budgets did go through a reduction after the cold war for a time and it did not cause any economic problems worldwide. (Lomborg, p200-205) Military spending in low-

income countries has recently been the subject of some substantial published quantitative studies (Dunne and Freeman, 2003; Collier and Hoeffler, 2006a, 2006b). They find that military spending does not in general reduce the risk of civil war: on the contrary, in post-conflict conditions it sharply increases the risk. Increased spending by one country produces a response from its neighbors and this ricochets around the region. Around 11% of aid inadvertently leaks into military budgets, so that in low-income Africa around 40% of military budgets are aid-financed which makes aid interventions problematic. Hence, there is a grim interconnection between aid, coups, military spending, and civil war. There is a strong need for increased economic and development aid for poorer nations but it must be made conditional on excluding its use for military spending.

Conflicts are generally over oil and other resources (ex. Blood diamonds of Sierra Leone), fighting tribes or people groups, territory, drug trade, poverty and government coups. There have been over 200 coups in Africa alone over the past four decades and it is small arms that kill most people. While larger weapons can be important for power projection, small ones create the most social disintegration and casualties. The Graduate Institute of International Studies estimates that 500,000 people are killed each year by small arms and light weapons. This is equivalent to a number of major wars being fought each year. Small arms are relatively easy to manufacture and difficult to control. Governments need to fight the corruption of their officials, contractors and elite corporate companies from making so much money on arms deals at the expense of poor countries, war and conflict. Cooperative development of peacekeeping forces and their mandated roles is needed. (Lomborg p.225)

Some conflict prevention measures proposed by Cranna (1994) are economic sanctions, increased UN troops and a UN rapid reaction force. This would call for a worldwide increase in resources and money to support the UN and more countries would have to agree to such philosophical measures of countering war and conflict. It is difficult to estimate how much this would cost, given the complexity of global challenges and the range has been proposed to be anywhere from 2 – 50 billion dollars, depending on the size and region of the conflict.

Other solutions include diplomacy, UN arms trade treaties and registries and threats of military action. These also come with challenges because not every nation agrees to be a part of these voluntary groups and so problems of compliance, surveillance and policing all exist. The threat of military action is tenuous as well as we have seen with the USA's war against Iraq. From its start in 2003, in only two years, the US had spent 268 billion dollars for its efforts and were deeply entrenched in a situation that became more and more complex to pull out of. An arms trade tax idea was also raised by a Brazilian president but was ignored by the G8 countries. (Lomborg, p209-212)

Glen Stassen points to a principal called just peacemaking that he outlines in a book that he has edited by the same name. The authors in that book talk about how some of the practices include sustainable economic development, advancing human rights, democracy and religious liberty. Enfolded into some of those practices are nonviolent actions such as boycotts, strikes, marches, civil disobedience, public disclosure of facts, accompaniment and creating places of

sanctuary. This not only helps in fostering peace, it helps to decrease the recruitment of terrorist and minimizing groups looking to acquire stockpiles of arms. Hoping for peace has not been a very effective strategy in and of itself but things like internationally mutual reduction of arms, withdrawing troops, moving arms away from borders and taking other tangible steps to creating peace has made more of a difference. This is what just peacemaking aims to do and calls for people to be active in making their voice heard to help sway decision makers and governments. Peace, like war, must be waged. It must be waged courageously, persistently, creative with imagination, heart, and wisdom. Stassen points out that as far back as the times of Pharaoh, as seen in Exodus 1:13, people took action of work slow-downs and even a complete walkout on the part of the Hebrews. (Stassen)

As corporate profit and growing personal fortunes for a select few continues to push the economics of arms, Stassen urges us to speak out against these companies who are continuing the cycle by being awarded huge sums of money for defense and military contracts and in turn, making huge contributions to political campaigns. We should call for limits to political contributions and campaign spending. The US government is wrapped up in many internal policies that give subsidies to the arms industry, employ thousands of people just to promote and service the arms industry and include millions of dollars in federal expenditures in order to host trade shows each year. (Stassen)

When looking at sales numbers, up to seventy percent of arms sold are bound to the developing world. Such arms transfers can facilitate brutal resource exploitation, and environmental degradation. They can contribute to an increase in violence against civilians. The presence of guns in society has a particular impact on women's lives. Large numbers of women and girls are at risk of armed violence, whether they are directly involved in the fighting or dealing with the emotional, social and economic consequences of the loss of male relatives who have been killed or injured by gun violence. Given the effects of weapons misuse, it is shocking how few governments give serious thought to the impact on development and human rights of their arms exports. Disaster and warfare are seen as profit maximizing ventures and the sale of arms to the poorest regions is seen as a business opportunity with little regulation. It is strange that the nations that are funding and supplying UN peacekeeping missions are the biggest suppliers of the weapons that fuel the conflicts and keep the cycle of need for peacekeeping missions and rebuilding corporations in the aftermath. (Stassen)

Two movies of interest are the 2005, Lord of War starring Nicolas Cage and a 2016 documentary called The Shadow World. The first movie is a fictional story of an arms dealer that was one of the first major motion pictures to draw public attention to some of the corrupt elements of arms dealings. Andrew Feinstein, one of the world's leading experts on corruption and the global arms trade, authors a book that the second movie is based on. He is a frequent commentator on BBC, CNN and Al Jazeera, and The Guardian. The New York Times, Der Spiegel, the Huffington Post, and many others have published his writings. He is founding director of Corruption Watch UK, and is a former ANC Member of Parliament from South Africa where he served under Nelson Mandela. Lord of War is a portrayal of a world that

was largely hidden to the general public for decades and Shadow World will bring elements to light that will make your head spin. Both are worth watching to gain more perspective about the depth of the factors contributing to this important issue.

On the heels of the Shadow World documentary, concrete action is being encouraged as seen on their website. They reference arms deals such as a 1.15 billion dollar sale of arms to Saudi Arabia from the US, even as the Saudi-led coalition rains bombs down on civilians in Yemen. The US is the single largest purveyor of weapons of war to the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, having sold them \$22.2bn since the launch of the assault on Yemen. Their plea is to not let arms makers profit from the death of innocent civilians, including hundreds of children. <https://shadowworldfilm.com/take-action/>

Arms deals are currently happening on massive scales. The Al Yamamah deal, for example, between the UK and Saudi Arabia was Britain's biggest ever and resulted in massive contracts to BAE Systems (British Aerospace) and exorbitant commission payments to the Saudi royal family and Thatcher family. The US is the biggest player in the world but Canada does not come out as squeaky clean as its former perception of being a peacekeeping country has it made out to be. Canada has dropped from being the #1 supporting country to the UN peacekeepers at its inception, way down to #68. From 1990 to 2001 the Saudi monarchy became Canada's top buyer of military goods and with its own military assistance program, has poured hundreds of millions of dollars into Afghanistan, Iraq and Ukraine. The current Liberal government has deals with Kurdish forces in Iraq but some of the reported details of those deals have the weapons being shipped through the central government in Bagdad and have been found to be siphoned off to Shia militia groups using them to murder Sunni civilians. This is a political mess the government finds them in and does not want to be made too widely known. (Khan, 2017)

The 2017 Nobel Peace Prize was awarded in Oslo, Norway on Oct. 6 to the International Committee to Abolish Nuclear Weapons (ICAN), a non-governmental organization with members in more than 100 countries. Comprised of a wide-ranging group of churches, individuals, educators, organizations, and others, ICAN played a key role in July this year to get the United Nations to pass the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons. Though Canada does not have nuclear weapons of mass destruction, it also has not signed the treaty. "On what is widely considered the most significant nuclear disarmament development in decades, Canada finds itself on the wrong side of history and humanity," said Cesar Jaramillo, executive director of Project Ploughshares. (Chris Meehan, CRC Communications)

As I dug into researching the problems and realities of the arms situation, I became overwhelmed and somewhat dismayed by the current situation. I wondered if we are being held back by aspirational poverty? Do we think we are powerless and as individuals do not possess the impact we need to see change? Is there a lack of creative imagination, dreaming and community struggle to overcome fear, passivity, hopelessness and despair?

In the year 2000, many countries of the world had come together to look at, what some called, the scandal of poverty. The UN member states adopted *The Millennium Declaration*, which identified eight areas of life that had global impacts on poverty and made commitments to try and drastically move to reducing the

negative effects they were having on billions of people around the world with the aim to cut poverty in half. In the year 2007, Prime Minister Tony Blair said, "Christianity and other world faiths have a vital part to play in reaching out to help the poor and marginalized..." (Micah's Challenge, xv) The initial goal was to achieve this in 15 years but sadly as time progressed, not enough momentum was being gained and the United Nations realized these goals would not be realized. They then took another look at the context, expanded the list of areas that needed addressed to 17 and renamed them the Sustainability Development Goals. Some examples of work done by faith communities came in the involvement of groups like GCAP, Micah Challenge, Micahmorphosis, Micah Network, Tearfund, Faithworks, Peace Action, Every Church a Peace Church and Shaftesbury, etc.

From July 9 to 20, 2001, the states participating in the United Nations Conference on the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons came up with a *Programme of Action* (PoA) that can be found here: <http://www.poa-iss.org/poa/pohtml.aspx>, but did not directly speak to any of the Millennium Development Goals. There were also serious flaws in the members who were present and the accountabilities of action that the UN could undertake. The later developed SDG's recognized the need to encompass this problem into their goals and thus included it into one of their new categories. The UN PoA became an important element of the work of Project Ploughshares to assist in the implementation of action. The PoA requires member nations to:

- Make illicit gun production/possession a criminal offence
- Establish a national co-ordination agency on small arms
- Identify and destroy stocks of surplus weapons
- Manage stockpiles more effectively
- Issue end-user certificates for exports/transit
- Notify the original supplier nation of re-export
- Support Disarmament, Demobilization & Re-integration (DDR) of ex-combatants, including collection and destruction of their weapons
- Support regional agreements and encourage import moratoria
- Mark guns at point of manufacture for identification and tracing
- Maintain records of gun manufacture
- Engage in more information exchange
- Ensure better enforcement of arms embargoes
- Include civil society organizations in efforts to prevent small arms proliferation

The PoA remains a watershed document that provides a framework and a follow-up process for national, regional and global action to control small arms. Small arms have remained on the international agenda in no small part because of the PoA process. (<http://ploughshares.ca/conventional-weapons/un-poa/>)

Some unfortunate events came on the heels of this conference and one of them was the Trade Tower attacks in New York that only fueled the U.S. position for security and anti-terrorism spending. In the three years following, the government

increased its military spending by 44% from 306 billion to 441 billion dollars. (Jim Wallis p.145) MC. This not only goes in the complete opposite direction of SDG #16.4, but hampers other SDG's because governments can not put more money towards things like woman and children's welfare, environmental protection, poverty and pollution reduction and the many forms of development that are so desperately needed like education, health and food security.

Melba Maggay suggests some ideas of how to turn things around. (MicahChallenge) p.121-132. We need a twin biblical mandate of justice and righteousness where public justice and private morals can work more closely at being unified as one. Government can help promote the environment where its people can work towards what is right to hold each other as equals. The word and Spirit must be the primary means for change and it should be Christians and groups of faith that engage in deep cultural structures to help shift societies towards Christ.

When wealthy countries are perpetuating cultures of militarism, poor countries suffer the most in times of conflict and they need a voice for the voiceless. Malcolm Duncan says that Nations of the North can have as many security plans and military interventions as they like in the name of 'freedom' and the so-called 'war on terror' but until they also recognize that poverty and deprivation are the swamp beds in which the mosquitoes of terror thrive, they appear to be tilting at windmills. Governments chase after the idols of money, power and military might but our societies need people to stand up and profess them as false Gods and call ourselves and our leaders to a different moral standard of saying what is good for a nations people, what is needed to love God and our neighbor.

Maggay talks about a number of approaches to educate and expose hidden or false narratives and create powers of government or people to shift the consciousness and to help form new norms for the values that are important to society. She gives three strategies to do this. One, constructively engage the powers. Two, think contextual and act local and three, nurture a strategic minority. In her mind this is the influence of artists, writers, journalists and social scientists (people living out their faith in their vocations). Are there any others that you would suggest?

We must join in the mission of the Messiah to work on behalf of the most vulnerable in our societies. People being displaced, harmed, murdered because of war and conflict are certainly people who would fit into that category and it is largely due to the arms trade that many of these conflicts and wars are so destructive. We need to live lives of love, self-sacrifice and creative imagination for the coming of the new creation. The world is suffering, groaning and we need to stand and take part in that groaning (Job31: 38-40). (Hoek p.49-55) MC

Answers to these large problems require a global collective response. Police, lawyers, accountants, economists, computer scientists, social scientists, politicians and more need to be involved and working together. Task forces from multiple agencies and even drawn across multiple borders will be needed to make policy and international law that can be effective and enforced. The political will must be generated in order to push our politicians to follow the directives of its people who want peace and de-escalation of arms. Faith groups, activists, journalists, reporters,

academics, educators, novelists and artists all play a role in educating the public and bringing the injustices of human rights and imbalance to light.

We must gain from understanding who benefits from our activities and who pays the cost; what are the laws and incentives that make it that way; and how we can change it. We have the power with education, mobilization and persuasion through election campaigns. A current example of that are with some US senators, who are refusing campaign money from the NRA on the pressure from their constituents demanding action on gun control. (Naim p. 247-260) In Europe, even as it lays off workers, raises taxes and cuts pensions in an attempt to get its economy back on track; Greece is spending billions on weapons. In 2005, the US Pentagon notified Congress about an agreement with Greece for a whopping \$3.1 billion in weapons, including F-16 fighter planes. The economics of war just does not make sense. (Berrigan, 2011)

From a faith perspective, one of the challenges is getting road blocked by our own interpretations and discussions of theology. A Christian's own perspective of war can influence what their action will be and there are elements about it that can make significant differences. Some Christians come at the theology with a peace and pacifism lens and would be less inclined to support any military action or build up. Others may believe in a 'Just War' theology that gives allowances for building up an army for defense and even offensive action in the most extreme cases. Liberation theology can be closely related to many thoughts on just war ethics. Being on the fence is not a rare position to be in as many people do not want to be at war but also do not want to see tyranny grow. Authors like J. G. Davies, Paul Ramsey and David Hollenbach suggest fundamental common ground for all people holding to just war thought. These include the need for Christians to take responsibility for the public realm, seeking to act effectively in influencing the social order; the assertion that the conduct of war, to be just, must be controlled by just-action criteria; and the belief that "justice" (whatever exactly that means—for all it is in some sense a "secular" notion) is the prerequisite for peace meaning that the violence of war can serve the end of peace.

As nations turn toward democracy and respect for human rights, their governments have less need for an oversized military to keep up the threat of force. As neighbors turn toward democracy, they feel less threatened and have less need for weapons. As they struggle with their deep indebtedness, they have less ability to buy weapons. Furthermore, the International Monetary Fund began requiring big reductions in expenditures for weapons if nations are to receive loans or aid.

As said, education and collective action is very important and it is through the work of many great organizations that people can plug in and get involved. I have listed organizations such as the UN, Ploughshares, Amnesty International and more who are putting pressure on governments and corporations, involved in direct actions of civil disobedience, fundraising to support people displaced by war (refugees) and lobbying governments to stop arms deals and make better international policies for enforcement. Another creative act is the War tax resistance movements undertaken by some to try and bring light to what their tax dollars are paying for in the defense budgets. Some have withheld taxes, added letters of protest, fought for broader conscientious objector laws or even propose a national

peace tax fund. One way to act has been a vow of poverty to be sure that ones income is so low that they do not pay taxes to support the 'US war machine.' Organizations like Citizens for Public Justice and many WCC denominations have developed teaching tools and resources to help individuals and churches learn to be better, more active advocates. See the CPJ website for more or check out one such resource from the CRC called Biblical Advocacy 101.

Ernie Regehr's central theme of *Disarming Conflict* lays out practical prescriptions for preventing and de-escalating war. This includes political diplomacy, human security, small arms control, nuclear disarmament, and the protection of vulnerable populations through peace support operations. Having taken office with a call for peace to be the watchword of 2017, United Nations Secretary-General António Guterres said the world instead had 'gone in reverse,' and that there are critical areas that need action. Mr. Guterres stressed the need for promoting a true new deal for fair globalization. "It is not by chance that eight people have as much wealth as the poorest half of humankind," he said. The workings of the global economy and international trade are the product of human choices. The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development is a bold vision to build prosperous, peaceful societies for all, leaving no one behind. "This work depends crucially on financing," he said. (UN News Centre, www.un.org)

Just Peacemaking processes are needed to support international groups working towards arms reductions that are mutually agreed upon by all nations. This will decrease the threat of war and conflict as well as decrease the cost of defending against such a threat. Nations can reduce the monetary cost and see positive benefits of reallocating that money to other humanitarian needs. This takes the will of the people to put pressure on our leaders to follow through.

Jeremiah 29:7 (NIV)

7"Also, seek the peace and prosperity of the city to which I have carried you into exile. Pray to the Lord for it, because if it prospers, you too will prosper."

Matthew 5:38-48 (NIV)

38 "You have heard that it was said, 'Eye for eye, and tooth for tooth.' [a] 39 But I tell you, do not resist an evil person. If anyone slaps you on the right cheek, turn to them the other cheek also. 40 And if anyone wants to sue you and take your shirt, hand over your coat as well. 41 If anyone forces you to go one mile, go with them two miles. 42 Give to the one who asks you, and do not turn away from the one who wants to borrow from you. 43 "You have heard that it was said, 'Love your neighbor and hate your enemy.' 44 But I tell you, love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you, 45 that you may be children of your Father in heaven. He causes his sun to rise on the evil and the good, and sends rain on the righteous and the unrighteous. 46 If you love those who love you, what reward will you get? Are not even the tax collectors doing that? 47 And if you greet only your own people, what are you doing more than others? Do not even pagans do that? 48 Be perfect, therefore, as your heavenly Father is perfect.

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