

On Friday, April 14, 2000 the International Forum on Globalization (IFG) held a 12-plus hour non-stop Teach-In at the Foundry United Methodist Church in Washington D.C. on the subject of "Beyond Seattle -- Globalization: Focus On The International Monetary Fund And The World Bank ." The following is a hypertext transcript of Randall Forsberg, fifth speaker in the third, afternoon panel on "The Technological Dimension: Globalization of Corporate Communications & Military Technologies." She was introduced by Acting Director of the IFG, Jerry Mander. Online recordings of this panel are available at <http://www.radio4all.net/proginfo.php?id=1854>.

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## **Monopoly Militarism and the U.S. Monopoly on the Militarization of the World**

IFG Washington - World Bank/IMF Teach-In  
Randall Caroline Forsberg  
4/14/00

Now, we have Randall Forsberg. She cited in many quarters as the Founder of the famous nuclear weapons freeze campaign quite a while ago. A very successful effort to freeze nuclear weapons. She did that by writing "The Call to Halt The Nuclear Arms Race."<sup>[1]</sup> She is the founder of The Institute of Defense and Disarmament Studies (IDDS), a Cambridge-based non-profit research center that she directs. It publishes the *Arms Control Reporter* and the IDDS Database of World Arms Holdings. She has written numerous articles and has given testimony on a lot of government panels. Welcome Randall Forsberg.

It's good to be with such an enthusiastic audience. In the 1980s we had audiences like this for disarmament. I'd like to bring some of that back. The 19th and 20th centuries have been the centuries of monopoly capitalism. As we move into the 21st century, there is a new cultural and economic phenomenon arising: monopoly militarism. That is what I want to talk about today. I want to talk about the U.S. monopoly on the militarization of the world. The U.S. monopoly control.

It starts with technology. The United States has a budget for military research and development, for developing new weapons and new military equipment for intelligence and control. The budget *just for developing* -- not for producing, not for the soldiers and training and putting them out in the field -- just for investigating, testing, engineering and developing new weapons, is as large as the next largest entire military budget of any country in the world. That is why the United States monopolizes the development of new military technology.

This was true during the Cold War, apart from the budget of the former Soviet Union. The United States was *always* developing military technology that was 10 or 20 years in advance of what other countries could do.

The end of the Cold War has allowed the United States even more than it did before to *selectively* release and market pieces of military technology. We keep some of it, only we get it. A few countries, here and there, *really* good allies with really big rewards going to the U.S., can get one piece or another piece. Many other countries get lower level technology. And some can not get any at all.

Because of the economy's of scale, because the U.S. military budget is about 10 times as large as the next military budget, the United States has been able to out-compete all other countries in producing and selling weapons on the global market. Running other countries effectively out of business.

Right now, the European arms industries are in the process of consolidating and becoming over the next few years, a single *integrated* arms business. I've spent a lot of time talking to people in the military -- economists and political scientists in Europe who study these matters -- and I've come away with a confirmation of something I suspected, but now I've heard it from their lips.

When I say, "Why is Europe developing a consolidated arms industry? For what reason are you producing weapons now that the Soviet Union is no more. There is no Warsaw Pact. There is no East Germany. There are no military threats of the large scale in Europe." The answer I get over and over again is, "Well, if we don't produce weapons, the United States will be the only country that does and we'll have to buy them from you. And we're damned if we're going to do that." And people really mean it.

So, it is not a 100% monopoly. It's kind of like monopoly capitalism. It is oligopolistic, *tending* toward monopoly, with a few little retrenchments here and there.

In addition to controlling military technology, the United States gives an *enormous* amount of military aide. Some of it directly in the form of foreign aide; some of it in the form of subsidized purchases of weapons; some of it in the form of guaranteed loans to countries to buy weapons; some of it -- which doesn't cost all that much, a few billion out of our \$300 billion military budget -- goes to train the military in other countries, for example, Indonesia. To train the military around the world in dealing with civil conflict, civil unrest, insurgency, and emergencies.

The United States military builds up relationships with the military around the world. We provide new technology. We undercut other countries -- primarily western European (our allies). We undercut their prices. We offer better offset agreements.

In all of these ways we not only recruit and solicit and consolidate and solidify a monopoly relationship with the military elites in countries around the world, but also with the foreign policy elites; the people who work at institutes for strategic studies and in the Foreign Service. The people who develop concepts of the world and of international relations which then drive and determine the kind of choice points that governments will make along the way on *totally* different issues.

As the United States recruits and solidifies this network, the people in the countries that we are working with -- primarily developing countries -- are recruited into a classical great power view of the world in which Might Makes Right and that's the bottom-line and there is no humaneness. There are no democratic values. It is basically dollars and bullets that determine everything.

How can the U.S. military have such power? It's because of the \$300 billion military budget. You may not realize that the military budget has gone down since the end of the Cold War.

After you allow for inflation, it's gone down quite a lot. It has actually gone down enough to eliminate the 50% increase that Reagan brought in during the 1980s. So today, we are actually back to the "normal level" of Cold War military spending.

In today's dollars, the annual level of spending that prevailed in the United States from 1950 to 1980, except during the Korean and Vietnam Wars, was within 20 billion of \$300 billion. How can you have the Soviet Union disappear, the Warsaw Pact disappear -- there is no threat of major war, no threat of another World War II which justified \$300 billion in today's dollars -- \$300 billion a year for 50 years; how can you have these threats disappear and the money stays the same? How did that happen?

During the Cold War, the argument was made that we needed to spend this \$300 billion to protect democracy. By the way, let's recognize that if it's still the same today, and we have a growing economy, it *is* a smaller share of our economy. That is one of the ways that it happened. They say, 'See, it used to be 6% and now it is 3% -- so it's going down.' It's not going down. But the economy is going up. One of the unfortunate results of this is that people don't pay attention to it. I am going to come back to people paying more attention.

During the Cold War, the argument was made that we needed that higher percentage going to the military to protect democracy; to protect basic human freedoms; to protect against threats of totalitarianism. There was also the question of free markets and free capital, and so on. What about now? Are we protecting democracy? Are we protecting freedom? Are there people we are protecting against totalitarian threats? There are not. Let me say something about the way the military see threats of war around the world.

Another shocking fact is that 95% of U.S. military spending goes to maintain armed forces and their weapons and equipment and the development and production of new weapons -- *all* of which are intended for use overseas. Five percent goes to nuclear forces, which are intended to be a kind of a psychological defense. We are going to deter someone else from sending a nuclear missile over here by threatening that once they've done that we'll do the same to them even though it doesn't help us. That way, we will never be attacked with nuclear weapons. We have no defense against a nuclear attack, but we have this psychological deterrent. We'll scare them into not attacking us.

So five percent of our budget goes to nuclear weapons to deter a nuclear attack on the United States. 95% goes to the Army, the Navy, and the Air Force, all of which are intended to fight overseas. Why? Because no other country in the world can get troops over here. I remember in the 1950s, when I was 12, hearing Eisenhower talk about spending \$50 billion a year and I was thinking to myself, 'Gee, do they think that the Chinese and the Russians are going to paratroop in or what?' The answer is no. I went to graduate school to find out what they think. The answer is, No, they don't. They think that we are going to go over there. Wherever.

How is that we can be maintaining this \$300 billion of *our tax money*. This is not corporate profits. This is not people going to the store and buying products they think they need. This is your and my tax dollars that we're not protesting against.

How is it that this continues when there aren't any totalitarian threats and threats to

democracy? How can this huge amount of money continue being spent? During the Cold War, the military said that we had to help Europe defend against a possible attack by the Soviet Union and also be prepared to intervene in an ideological war against Communism in the Third World -- for example, Korea, Vietnam, or the Russian counterpart, Afghanistan. We had to be able to fight one-and-a-half World War Twos. One in Europe and a half someplace else in the world.

The one in Europe has gone away. What about the half someplace else in the world? Who are the enemies that the military see today? Four or five countries? I'll tell you who they are: North Korea, China, Iraq, and Syria. Those are all of the enemies, all of the potential military opponents of the United States today.

In the future, we might be able to add Iran. That is in 10, 20 or 30 years because they only have a couple hundred tanks. Essentially there isn't any appreciable military in Iran. They don't tell you that. They tell you it's a terrible country, which supports terrorism. They don't mention that there are no military forces there.

What about the other ones? North Korea and Syria and Iraq. These are countries with a population of a few tens of millions of people, *extremely* poor; impoverished; sanctioned in the case of Iraq.

What about China? China *does* have a large army. Some of their internal security forces train with wooden rifles because they don't have enough rifles to go around. They've tried to make up for what they don't have in money, equipment, capital, and advanced technology with numbers. The majority of combat aircraft in the Chinese Air Force is about the same size as that of U.S. combat aircraft, about the same number. The majority of the planes are Chinese-made copies of Russian MIG 19s which were designed in 1953. A Washington military analyst told me that the way they count these when they do their war games is on a 15-to-1 ratio.

Half of the U.S. conventional military forces conducted a route in Iraq, not a war. Their goal today is to win any -- they don't call them "wars" anymore -- to win any military encounter without a single casualty, from the air and from a distance. They *almost* did that in Iraq. They not only want to win without a casualty, they want to win in a few weeks. They virtually did that in Iraq; in a country at that time, that had armed forces which were then twice as powerful as any Third World country is today.

So, threats? Threats? What does it say if you look at their own current justifications? How do they describe what they think they are defending against? The most recent annual report of the Secretary of Defense says, 'Why are we developing a new anti-ballistic missile system?' In case China or Iran or Iraq or India develops *longer* range ballistic missiles down the road? 'Why are we developing this? Because we want to have total' -- these are literally the words in the report -- "freedom of action," defined as, "freedom from attack, freedom to attack."

That is the goal of military technology development in the United States today. In other words, we don't have an enemy. There is no *foreseeable* enemy. China is acquiring new weapons and technology, *slowly*. China has a goal of becoming a military superpower by the year 2050. They do long-term planning there.

In the meantime, the United States has not adopted a policy of doing *all* that we can to prevent the proliferation of missiles, of nuclear weapons and chemical and biological weapons; by leading the way for arms control; by promoting equitable agreements; by holding up our end of the Non-Proliferation Treaty; by being willing to make some *quid pro quos* -- We won't do this if you don't do that. Instead, the U.S. position is, 'We are going to do what we feel like because we can and we don't give a damn what you do. Go ahead. Do it.' That has been the U.S. policy under a liberal democratic administration for the last 8 years.

The point that I want to make here is that it is not so much that this *enormous* military -- that can do anything it wants to, anywhere (or at least has that as a goal) -- has as its main function being able to intervene around the world to support one political economic regime or government or system over another, should the need arise. Although that's true. In my view, the U.S. military is a dinosaur. It is relic of an earlier era. It is overkill.

Like nuclear overkill? Now we have *non-nuclear* overkill. We are paying this *enormous* tax on our system, leaching out of the economy the surplus product, the resources, the energy -- this \$300 billion a year -- that could be put to productive useful human ends,<sup>[2]</sup> in order to maintain a global power system based upon a nineteenth century model. A hierarchical system, in which Might Makes Right, power devolves from the top by a kind of *noblesse oblige* to the people; we decide which governments and which countries and which systems will get *some* freedom of action and which ones won't. Which ones will get a few breaks and which ones won't.

This military system is an invisible and an insidious monopoly precisely because people don't know these facts. It's not in your supermarket. It's not on your living room television. It's not in your daily paper. It is not in your lives at all. And so there is no protest. There is no objection. And yet it's like the skeleton, or maybe a suit of armor, that is the binding structure of the international system that keeps people around the world marching lock-step forward within an archaic set of values instead of being concerned with human needs.

This *is* a system that can be changed. But it can *only* be changed from the bottom up. It can *only* be changed when people refuse to tolerate this any longer.

Let me close, giving you one extraordinary example of the kind of process that has to change. I also want to ask you to look for this on your way out. It is a proposal for Global Action to Prevent War, to dismantle this system.<sup>[3]</sup>

The example I want to give you concerns the way the U.N. works under U.S. monopoly militarism. This example took place at the time when the decision was being made in the Security Council to give the United States permission to intervene in Iraq -- not just to intervene, but to *choose* the *date* and the manner and to run the war.

At the time when the vote was about to be taken in the Security Council the U.S. Ambassador did a little private polling and found out that China would abstain and I think Cuba or Yemen or somebody else was going to abstain. Most of the other countries on the 15-member Council were going to vote in favor. But two were planning to abstain that were just regular countries. Not like China. They were regular U.S. subordinates. One was in the

Pacific and the other was Venezuela. This story was told me me privately by a diplomat at the U.N..

George Bush called the head of the Venezuelan government and said, 'Hello Mike, Your Ambassador up here is sort of a loose cannon. He says he is going to abstain from this vote.' The President of Venezuela said, 'No, no he's not a loose cannon. That is our position. We're going to abstain.' And Bush said, 'Well, I don't think that's such a good idea. I hope you'll change your mind.'

In the next week, U.S. customs officials were unable to clear the airlifted shipments of Venezuelan flowers which represent a major source of income to Venezuela, which sat on the ground and rotted in the planes. This was U.S. policy until President Bush heard that Venezuela was going to vote in favor.

So this is the global economy and global monopoly militarism working upside down. We have the flowers wilting in front of the guns.

Thank you.

1. The following provides some history on this campaign. This is an extremely relevant example of both what is needed today and what can be applied from this past campaign that occurred almost 20 years ago.

**The Evolving Role of The UN And Disarmament,**

Panel discussion at the United Nations, October 23, 1997.

Randall Forsberg was one of three panelists.

**National Nuclear Weapons Freeze Campaign,**

Listing of Records, 1980-1986, Western Historical Manuscript collection, University Of Missouri-St. Louis.

This provides a rich and illuminating overview of the history of the National Nuclear Weapons Freeze Campaign and so it is included below. Its strategy and process illustrates a tried-and-true methodology that can be applied again to the present day Dinosaur Monopoly Militarism Randall Forsberg describes above that must be ended (see <sup>[3]</sup>, below).

Randy Kehler, former director of the National Nuclear Weapons Freeze Campaign, donated the group's records to the Western Historical Manuscript Collection at the University of Missouri-St. Louis on May 15, 1985.

The National Nuclear Weapons Freeze Campaign began in 1979 when Randall Forsberg, Director of the Institute for Defense and Disarmament Studies in Brookline, MA, drafted "The Call to Halt the Nuclear Arms Race," a four page statement outlining a bilateral nuclear weapons freeze strategy. U.S. peace groups and arms control experts held a national conference to approve the strategy in March 1981. More than three hundred and fifty representatives from over 30 states met at Georgetown University to call for broad and visible public pressure on Congress to work toward a comprehensive freeze between the U.S. and Soviet Union.

Major national religious, civic, and political organizations that became early endorsers of the Freeze included the YWCA, the National Conference of Black Mayors, the national board and social issues offices of the National Council of Churches, and the United Presbyterian Church, the Unitarian Universalists Association, and the Bishops and diocesan conventions within the Episcopal and Roman Catholic Churches. These and other organizations provided educational activities on the Freeze and actively promoted it.

The national office of the Nuclear Weapons Freeze Campaign opened in St. Louis December 2, 1981. Randy Kehler became its first national coordinator. A longtime peace activist, Kehler had worked at the Trapcock Peace Center in western Massachusetts where he helped organize local Freeze referendums. The national freeze office in St. Louis acted as an information clearinghouse for thousands of similar Freeze groups around the country.

The Nuclear Weapons Freeze Campaign designated "Disarmament Week" in late October 1981. It called on local organizations to create exhibits, show films, and hold lectures, press conferences, religious services, and teach-ins about the danger of nuclear war. The campaign also held a national "Call-In" on October 26, 1981, encouraging Americans to call the White House and urge President Reagan to propose a mutual freeze to Premier Brezhnev of the U.S.S.R.

The Nuclear Freeze Political Action Committee, FREEZEPAC, formed in April 1982. This bi-partisan committee supported candidates for the U.S. Senate and House of Representatives who advocated a comprehensive, verifiable bilateral nuclear weapons freeze. During the 1982 elections, more than fifty percent of the candidates FREEZEPAC supported won office.

During Fall 1982, in the closest equivalent to a national referendum in the history of American democracy, thirty percent of the American electorate voted on a bilateral freeze proposal put on local ballots through the efforts of the Freeze campaign. The proposal won by a 60 to 40 percent margin.

At its fourth national convention held in St. Louis in December 1983, the National Nuclear Weapons Freeze Campaign established "Freeze Voter '84," a political action committee, to campaign for candidates supporting the Freeze and work towards the defeat of candidates opposing it. Conference participants called on Congress to pass a "quick freeze" to halt funding for testing and development of nuclear weapons. They also expanded their platform to include: getting the U. S. and the Soviet Union to adopt non-intervention policies in Third World countries; adopting a "no first use" policy on nuclear weapons; and banning the use of satellite and space weapons.

At their national conference in December 1984, the National Nuclear Weapons Freeze Campaign endorsed three non-violent civil disobedience actions: the Central America invasion contingency plan, an August witness at the Nevada Nuclear Test Site, and anti-apartheid demonstrations. Legislative priorities included ending the production of the MX missile and cutting off funds for weapons programs.

## **SCOPE AND CONTENT**

The National Nuclear Weapons Freeze Campaign records document the grassroots movement to get the U.S. and the Soviet Union to adopt a mutual freeze on the testing, production, and deployment of nuclear weapons and missiles. The collection is arranged alphabetically according to the files of Randy Kehler.

The decentralized structure of the campaign allowed for the self-determination of local groups, coordinated by the national office. Kehler kept files of peace groups around the country organized solely around the Freeze issue, and already existing peace groups that adopted the Nuclear Freeze issue as part of their agenda.

The collection includes these groups' advertisements, correspondence, posters, petitions, and resolutions using the issues most relevant to their locale while preserving the integrity of the overall Freeze movement. Some groups stressed the effects of nuclear war, others emphasized the danger of a "limited" nuclear war, and others concentrated on the economic effects of the arms race. The groups include: Citizens Against Nuclear War, Common Cause, Council for a Livable World, Federation of American Scientists, Ground Zero, Physicians for Social Responsibility, SANE, Sojourners, Southern Christian Leadership Conference, and the Women's Initiative Project. Kehler also kept the files of international peace groups such as the Dutch Inter-church Peace Council, and European Nuclear Disarmament groups.

The collection also documents materials generated by the national office, including: budgets, correspondence, fundraising reports, executive and strategy committee meeting minutes, media

strategies, newsletters, press statements, outreach program reports, national conference packets, political training kits, and political action committee questionnaires and correspondence concerning the presidential and congressional elections of 1984.

The collection dates primarily from 1981-1985. The movement generated most of the national material in late 1983 when it became active in political campaigning. Correspondents include John Anderson, Daniel Ellsberg, Helen Caldicott, Senator Mark Hatfield, and Senator Edward Kennedy.

2. The annual budget spent by all countries in the world for their militaries is currently at \$800 billion. See *What The World Wants And How To Pay For It Using Military Expenditures* from The World Game Institute.
3. The complete title of this project is, "Global Action To Prevent War, A Coalition-Building Effort To Stop War, Genocide, & Internal Armed Conflict", and it can be found on the web at <[www.globalactionpw.org](http://www.globalactionpw.org)>.