The Global Day of Action on Military Spending is:

- a world-wide movement to reduce the world's military expenditures to fund essential human needs;
- an appeal to governments to reallocate their military budget to battle deadly diseases, address climate change, and achieving the Millennium Development Goals;
- the day *SIPRI* releases its 2012 research report on military spending;
- Tax Day in the U.S. where people are calling on lawmakers to divert their tax money to jobs creation and subsidise education and social services instead of wars.

To check out the 100+ actions for 15 April in the world map and to know more about GDAMS, please visit the website.

*SIPRI – Stockholm International Peace Research Institute*
Change needed in global environmental and climate protection:

Call for Action Against Military Spending

by Paul Lansu

Pax Christi International recognises the links between peace and sustainability. Pax Christi International is increasingly aware of the links between environment and peace building work, and therefore seeks to encourage more dialogue and cooperation between these two fields at the international level.

There is an urgent need for global action to address our current ecological crisis. Our societies and globalised world are confronted with different interlinked challenges: a great imbalance in wealth and poverty, hunger and malnutrition, climate change, biodiversity losses, resource use and other ecological crises, financial crises, excessive military expenditure, public debt in many countries, and high (youth) unemployment.

While resource scarcity does not inevitably lead to violent conflict, it can act as a conflict multiplier by exacerbating existing social tensions. Meanwhile poor resource management can worsen marginalisation, particularly among the poorest social groups. Top-down policies can fail to take local needs into account, large-scale agricultural investment can displace and disrupt small farmers, and hydropower dams, while positive in terms of cleaner energy production, can have a negative impact on both downstream and upstream communities. Read more...

Fr. Paul Lansu is Pax Christi International’s Senior Policy Advisor for Advocacy on Security and Human Rights and is an IPB Board Member.

Beyond the Mountain of Trash: The People Of Smokey Mountain Continue Their Struggle

by Merci L. Angeles

Type “Smokey Mountain Philippines” in your computer search engine, and you will see the images of the mountain of trash, the squalid shanties built on top of the dumpsite, naked children playing and scavenging. It has even become a tourist attraction; for those who want the pleasure of seeing how the poorest of the poor in the world live, you can go on a Smokey Mountain tour.

The original Smokey Mountain in Tondo, Manila, Philippines was a 2,000,000 ton garbage heap, which served as the waste disposal facility for Metro Manila for over 40 years. The dumpsite got its name from the continuous oxidation of decomposing waste and refuse fires. The garbage dumpsite was home to a huge squatter community of around 30,000, who scavenged through the garbage for survival. Read more...

Merci Llarinas–Angeles is the founder and lead convener of Peace Women Partners (PWP), a network of women working for peace and security. PWP is based in the Philippines with members in 20 countries.
As the third Global Day of Action on Military Spending, 15 April 2013 approaches, it is time for Malaysians to ask: Who are Malaysia’s enemies and what appropriate weaponry do we need? One would think this is the first question the Ministry of Defence should ask in the multi–billion decisions to procure armaments now that the arms merchants are here again for LIMA 2013 (Langkawi International Maritime & Aerospace Exhibition). Yet our National Defence Policy has never even been properly debated in parliament.

Just a few months ago, the defence ministry would not have said that Malaysia’s enemies were among the Suluks who have been coming back and forth between southern Philippines and Sabah all these years. After all, hadn’t we helped to train MNLF fighters there against Marcos in the seventies? Wasn’t this the reason why the Home Minister Hishamuddin said that the invaders at Lahad Datu were “neither militants nor terrorists” during the two or three weeks that they were already there? Read more

Dr Kua Kia Soong is director of SUARAM, Malaysia’s leading human rights organisation. He has been a lecturer at Singapore National University, a research director, Member of Parliament and former political prisoner.

La crisis y la inevitable reducción del gasto militar
por Pere Ortega

La aritmética es una ciencia exacta, pero los números cada cual los hace cuadrar según sus criterios e intereses. Esto es lo que pasa con las cuentas del gasto militar, hay quién hace las cuentas de una manera y otros las hacen de otra. Así, por ejemplo, un Centro de prestigio reconocido como el SIPRI, introduce unos criterios con todos los supuestos que envuelven el gasto militar, donde se tienen presentes las clases pasivas militares, las contribuciones a organismos militares internacionales, los cuerpos paramilitares, la R+D militar, el personal civil a cargo del Ministerio de Defensa. Pero a la hora de mostrar las cifras, para hacer comparable el gasto militar entre todos los países del mundo, el SIPRI acaba aceptando lo que los gobiernos de los países declaran, a pesar de que los criterios que indican inducen a pensar que el gasto militar real es muy superior. ...

Summary:
The economic crisis has set, at least in terms of military spending in western countries, a clear trend towards reduction. In this sense, the role of the USA is particularly important, because the reduction of its military spending encourages the rest of the world to do the same. Read more

However, the emerging powers are increasing their military spending. But they don’t seem to do so in order to compete militarily with the great powers/United States, which is impossible. It is not a military escalation to dominate the world from a military standpoint; they do so because they seek to modernize their armed forces, which are not well prepared to achieve their current main objective --to ensure control of supply sources and transport routes for energy resources deemed necessary for their
development.

Pere Ortega is a Contemporary History graduate and postgraduate from the University of Barcelona. Professor at the Universitat Oberta de Catalunya (Open University of Catalonia) and President of the Centre of Studies for Peace JM Delàs. He is an investigator and analyst on issues of peace, non-violence, disarmament and conflicts and a contributor to various magazines and newspapers.

Trends in U.S. National Spending Priorities
Blogpost by Bruce K. Gagnon

Facing soaring deficits and disagreements over the mix of taxes and spending in the budget, it is valuable to consider what the American people think governmental spending priorities should be and how their preferences have changed over the last four decades.

Since 1973 the General Social Surveys conducted by the University of Chicago have asked people whether government spending in various areas from health to foreign aid is too much, too little, or about right.

The General Social Survey is a project of the independent research organization NORC at the University of Chicago with principal funding from the National Science Foundation.

Here are the latest top funding priorities of the American people:
- Improving the nation's education system
- Halting the rising crime rate
- Improving and Protecting the Nation's Health
- Improving and Protecting the Environment
- Dealing with Drug Addiction
- Solving the Problems of the Big Cities
- Improving the Condition of Blacks
- The Military, Armaments, and Defense/National Defense
- Space Exploration Program/NASA
- Welfare
- Foreign Aid/Assistance to Other Countries

Looking at how military spending and NASA are near the bottom while programs of social uplift generally dominate the higher priorities, one can see that the politicians in Washington are obviously not listening to the American people.

With 57% of every federal discretionary dollar now going to the Pentagon it is more obvious than ever that the corporate–criminal–military–industrial–complex has completely circumvented the will of the public.

These finding should once again give the people confidence that their concerns for real social progress and peace are indeed shared by the vast majority of the nation. Our task now is to effectively organize and fight for our collective vision of the nation.

Bruce Gagnon is coordinator of the Global Network Against Weapons & Nuclear Power in Space. He offers his own reflections on organizing and the state of America's declining empire. Read his blog.
USA -- The Back To Work Budget

U.S. Congress is divided over budget proposals. One vision, that of House Budget Committee chairman Paul Ryan (Republican) consists in brief of tax cuts for the rich, increases in military spending, and cuts in Medicare, Medicaid, and Social Security. Democrats overwhelmingly oppose the Ryan budget but failed to unite under a single alternative, resulting in separate proposals from the Congressional Black Caucus and the Congressional Progressive Caucus (CPC). The CPC proposed the “Back to Work Budget” which focuses on creating jobs to grow the economy, and whose key points are: creating 7 million jobs in one year, enacting fair individual and corporate tax policies, cutting weapons spending, improving health care, protecting the environment and preventing cuts to Medicare, Medicaid and Social Security.

Though the House of Representatives voted 221–207 for the Ryan budget on Thursday March 21, the fiscal and economic priorities of the United States will be shaped through the upcoming struggle between the House and Senate.

You may learn more about the Back To Work Budget and read the proposal summary.

Tools for Reclaiming Communities From Militarism: A Curriculum

To mark the now decade-long US–led “Global War on Terror,” the War Resisters League and the South Asia Solidarity Initiative have created a popular education-style workshop that explores how organizing against federal military spending relates to and can forward local campaigns for economic justice, as well as how the past decade of war has effected Afghans and what they are doing in response.

Learn more about it here.
Marching Orders for the Military Ethos: A Culture of Peace Versus a Culture of War
How and why the British government is increasing military influence in schools, and society as a whole
by Tony Kempster

The 159th Oxford and Cambridge University Boat Race on the Thames was held this Easter Day [2013] and Oxford won. Royal Marines in dinghies lent their support to the security which was stepped up after a protestor jumped into the river last year. There was no reason for the military involvement because the risk of a similar incident was small and 200 police officers patrolled around nine miles of the river and had launches to hand. This is symptomatic of an increasing tendency to promote the civil use of the British armed forces, a response to the weakening of support for them because of the bad publicity surrounding their use in recent adventures overseas and worries that further cuts in spending will be demanded by the public. Recruitment to the armed forces has also become more difficult. At the same time, the UK’s old cultural militarism that we have all become accustomed to is now being developed with new features following 9/11 and the recent wars in Afghanistan and Iraq wars.

Military personnel were involved in all of the medal ceremonies at the 2012 London Olympic. Large numbers were also called in to assist with security at the event when the G4S private security company failed to meet its commitments. Read more...

Tony Kempster is a Vice-President of the International Peace Bureau.

Good luck to all GDAMS partners on 15 April!

Kindly send your GDAMS action-events photos, videos and stories to: gdams@ipb.org Thank you.

The GDAMS Team