

**DISARMAMENT AND DEVELOPMENT:
What Is the Relationship?**

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The two major concerns of mankind in general and of the United Nations in particular are development and disarmament, both inseparable from the concern for peace. We are currently living in what is, by UN reckoning, the third decade for the former and the second for the latter, yet not much progress has yet been made in either. So an idea, which has been around for a long time, has recently received new attention: why not channel the funds at present being spent on armaments (reportedly some US\$ 650 billion annually) into development, thus killing two birds with one stone? Lack of funds would curb the military, while availability of greater investment funds would give impetus to development. The idea is very attractive, but there are, I fear, three major difficulties involved.

First, it is not at all obvious that money inevitably leads to development. Iran suffered from no financial shortage under the late Shah, yet can what took place in that country during his reign really be classified as development? It would seem to me that true development is more a question of self-sufficiency, which enables a government to satisfy the basic needs of the population. It is a question of increasing the strength of the people rather than the wealth or the military power of the elites or of the countries at large, or even a high (but undistributed) GNP. Experience would seem to show, however, that the more money there is available, the more it will be used for capital-intensive approaches that do not necessarily favor development. But great effort is needed to create a strong, healthy, well-educated, autonomous people. A little money helps: large quantities may just result in a temporary patching up of the structural problems of an ailing society until it explodes, as happened in the case of Iran, and may well happen in the future in many nouveaux riches countries.

Second, it is not at all obvious that to take funds away from the military will necessarily lead to disarmament. The military machine functions like any other system of production: on the basis of capital, labor, raw materials and research. Reduce the capital, control the funds, and military research will immediately react by going in for even more diabolical weapons for less cost, in order to produce a bigger bang for the (scarcer) buck (more rubble for the ruble). No return to more labor-intensive methods of producing destruction, the mobilization of the entire population in one way or another, is also a likely possibility. But even if a reduction of expenditure on armaments should lead to a real reduction in military destructiveness (and money taken away from military research probably would), it is not at all safe to assume that this would lead to peace. It is not even obvious that disarmament is a road to peace at all. It could well be that transarmament, towards the stressing of defensive protection, with emphasis on smart rockets, on paramilitary forces and non-military resistance (civilian resistance, nonviolence) is what is needed, as there will always be a security problem, which may still cost some money. Security needs to not disappear together with military budgets; the world is not that simple.

Third, the relationship between disarmament and development is supposed in theory to be defined and worked out at the international level. However, the greatest military spending takes place in the rich countries, the USA alone accounting for 25% or so of the total. Is it not more reasonable to assume that, were they to reduce their military budgets, they would put the savings to use inside their own countries, which are not without economic difficulties? In other words, if a conversion is to be carried out, is this not more likely to be a conversion within countries rather than between them?

And could it not be that this might in fact also be the better solution, given that countries do not habitually give away funds without attaching certain strings to the transaction? Are we really to assume that if the superpowers should gratuitously part with some of their military funds in order to aid development in the Third World, they would not be keeping a tight control over the money to ensure its being applied in ways deemed appropriate by them, according to their own ideas of what constitutes development? And is that likely to be compatible with the need for self-sufficiency?

In short, I find the idea that funds saved by disarmament will be transferred to development objectives too simplistic. This does not mean that there is no linkage between disarmament and development. There certainly is, but the link is probably within rather than between countries. A nation that today would engage in disarmament, putting its defense budget into conventional, defensive weapons, at the same time trying to make itself less vulnerable through more self-reliance, nationally and locally, would make a tremendous contribution to peace. And to its own development.