

## NEW SECURITY CHALLENGES: TEN THEMES

By David Krieger

The International Network of Engineers and Scientists for Global Responsibility, in cooperation with Scientists for Global Responsibility and the University of Bradford Department of Peace Studies, held a seminar on “New Security Challenges: Global and Regional Priorities” at Bradford University on May 23-24, 2002. The following ten themes emerged from the seminar.

**1. The new security challenges after September 11<sup>th</sup> are also the old security challenges.** One major exception is the greater awareness of the increased vulnerability of the rich nations to determined terrorists. The vulnerability itself has not changed in a major way, but the determination of terrorists to exploit the vulnerability has notched up.

**2. It remains critical for the rich nations to redefine security so that it takes into account the interests of not only the rich, but also of those at the periphery.** Disparity, poverty, inequity and injustice are fertile breeding grounds for terrorism. The rich countries should be spending more of their resources to alleviate these conditions of insecurity rather than pouring their resources into military solutions.

**3. Building the Castle Walls higher is a security strategy that is bound to fail.** The rich cannot build these walls high enough to protect themselves from suicidal terrorists. Missile defenses, for example, are no more than a Maginot Line in the sky that cannot protect against terrorists and will not provide security against the threats of 21<sup>st</sup> century terrorism. Terrorists will simply go under or around the Castle Walls as the Germans went around the French Maginot Line in World War II.

**4. There is a greater probability that weapons of mass destruction (nuclear, chemical, biological and radiological) will be used against the most powerful countries.** The availability of these weapons, due to the continued reliance on them by the most powerful nations, creates a new “balance of power” that turns the strength of the powerful against themselves.

**5. There is an increasing sense that international law is failing due to the strong opposition to international law solutions being demonstrated by the United States.** At a time when international law and international cooperation are more needed than ever to achieve greater security, the United States is failing in its leadership.

**6. From a regional perspective, both Europe and Russia are failing to demonstrate a meaningful restraint on US actions subverting international law.** In this sense, they are failing in their own leadership and are making themselves potential accomplices in crime under international law.

**7. The international system is not doing very well in implementing nonviolent methods of conflict resolution.** One reason for this is continued reliance by the most powerful countries on military solutions to conflict. The United States alone has raised its military budget by nearly \$100 billion since Bush became president.

**8. There is a need to strengthen and empower the United Nations and other international institutions to act even in the light of uncertainty.** Their actions, however must be authorized and in accord with established rules of international law.

**9. There is a critical need to separate reality from illusion regarding security.** The major forms of media continue to serve the powerful interests of the status quo and fail to provide adequate perspective on key issues related to peace and security.

**10. There is a continuing need to activate public opinion for global and humanitarian interests.** This means that the independent voices for peace, justice, development and sustainability of civil society organizations are of critical importance in providing alternative perspectives to those of governments and the mass media on issues of peace and security.

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