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The main economic and political aims of an International Disarmament Fund for Development,

Jacques Fontanel

in

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Summary : The search for a balance of forces is a stimulus for the arms races and it is a factor of insecurity that endangers "détente". Arms race is a game with a zero outcome for security, but it is also seen as a means of undermining the economies of rival powers. They are the resultant of conflicts of interest. There is a common interest to delete deadly competition by a philosophy of co-operation. Disarmament can serve the cause of development and development can be also a factor of disarmament. However, States's security needs a minimum defence potential. The creation of IDFD is interesting because the reduction of military expenditure must be used for the development of developing countries. UNO must organize this Fund, following some rules of equity.

La recherche d'un équilibre des forces est un stimulant pour la course aux armements et c'est un facteur d'insécurité qui met en danger la "détente". La course aux armements est un jeu dont l'issue est nulle pour la sécurité, mais elle est aussi considérée comme un moyen de sauter les économies des puissances rivales. Elles sont la conséquence de conflits d'intérêts. Il y a un intérêt commun à supprimer la concurrence mortelle par une philosophie de coopération. Le désarmement peut servir la cause du développement et le développement peut également être un facteur de désarmement. Cependant, la sécurité des États a besoin d'un potentiel de défense minimum. La création de l'IDFD est intéressante car la réduction des dépenses militaires doit servir principalement au développement des pays en développement. L'ONU doit organiser ce Fonds, en suivant certaines règles d'équité.

Arms race, disarmament, FIDD, international aid, international security

Course aux armements, désarmement, FIDD, aide internationale, sécurité internationale

I. INTRODUCTION

1. Even if its best known manifestation is the rivalry between the major nuclear Powers, the arms race is quasi universal. Recent years have seen the development of new, accurate and highly destructive weapons representing an unprecedented threat to the whole of humanity. The search for a balance of forces is a stimulus of the arms race and the latter is a factor of insecurity that endangers détente. When there is no clear information on the forces involved and no real political will to control destructive forces, the arms race is inevitable. It is illusory for States to believe that they protect themselves when they arm more, for the measurement of a country's military might is highly subjective; it depends on an assessment, which cannot be verified in the absence of open conflict, of strategies, the relative quality of weapons, the education of the population, the solidity of alliances, the morale of armies, etc. And yet at best the forces of the potential adversaries cancel each other out, at ever higher levels of military expenditure.

2. The arms race is also seen as a means of sapping the economies of rival powers. The threats to international security are not limited to weapons alone; they include the economic crisis in developed countries, under-development, the degradation of the environment, the injustice in the distribution of wealth. The economy is often viewed as a tool of military power. While economic warfare is not capable of supplanting completely the threat of arms, it makes it hard to conceive of a disarmament agreement taking no account of the use of economic weapons to weaken potential opponents or exert pressure upon them (the weapons of hunger, energy, technology, international currency, the division of labour, etc).

3. At best, the arms race is like a game with a zero outcome for security. Disarmament in security would seem more rational, at least from the economic point of view. However, there remain several problems to solve:

(a) If it is true that disarmament can serve the cause of development, development can also be a factor of disarmament. The effects of economic domination must not be obscured. Political disarmament that brought with it no economic solution to economic inequalities and injustice would have no future;

(b) The perception of national security deserves thorough analysis. Disarmament entailing a proportional reduction of military expenditure can be seen to be deceptive if it is borne in mind that States' security is only assured above a certain minimum defence potential;

(c) While the arms race is, at the world level, absurd and deserving of condemnation, it is only the resultant of conflicts of interest. Disarmament is hardly conceivable without taking into account those differences of opinion and arranging for their co-existence in a context of reasoned movement towards greater justice. Military disarmament must extend over into economic disarmament whereby furious and often deadly competition is replaced by a philosophy of co-operation.

CHAPTER I

II. ECONOMIC ASPECTS

A. The military impact of military spending

4. As a general rule, armament efforts are measured in terms of military expenditure. While the United Nations has devised a uniform statistical reporting form for military spending, only some 20 countries fill it in each year. Secrecy, the difficulties of making international comparisons of economic aggregates and the fundamental differences between price formation in market economies and planned economies have a profound effect on the quality of international statistics of military expenditure. The Secretary-General of the United Nations has estimated that world-wide military spending totalled 850 billion dollars at the end of 1983. There have in the past four years, been signs, mainly in the form of action by the major Powers, of a change in the decline of some 30 year's standing in the relative importance States accord to the problem of national defence. The arms race has accelerated and military spending as a percentage of gross national product has risen from 5.5 per cent in 1980 to 6 per cent in 1984. It is, however, very difficult to say whether there has been over armament, since it is open to question whether a single criterion suffices for that purpose. For example, the use as over armament indicators of per capita military spending, total military expenditure or the percentage of national resources devoted to national defence yields widely differing pictures of national and world-wide over armament. But, as indications of the size of the military effort, mention may be made of the 70 million people whose work is directly or indirectly linked with the military sector, the 180 billion dollar output of the arms industry and the 35 billion dollars spent on military research and development (25 per cent of total world expenditure). The sum devoted to military assistance is 20 times that devoted to social development assistance. In this respect, it should not be forgotten that, when resources are scarce,

choice is necessary and that what is spent on weapons cannot be used to improve the situation of the world's poorest peoples.

B. The effects of military spending on development

5. Economists are generally agreed that military spending is unproductive, that is, incapable of creating value in excess of its own replacement cost. It does not increase the level of wealth produced each year. A search for the points of convergence of the various economic analyses will reveal constant reference to the economic properties or rules of the unproductivity of military spending and its profoundly recessive long-term nature. The report on the relationship between disarmament and development emphasized the economic advantages of disarmament for all regions of the world, other things being equal. If the idea of transfer to developing countries of part of the funds thus saved was accepted, development in the least developed regions would be faster and the rich countries would suffer no adverse effects on their own growth from the increase in their assistance.

6. The quantitative economic studies that have been made of the effect of military spending on national economies have shown:

(a) The very diverse nature of the short-term impact of military spending on economic growth. Several studies have drawn attention to the sometimes negative effect of a reduction in military spending on the economic situation of certain developed or developing countries. In the long term, however, high military spending has a negative effect on development - directly, by diverting productive investment, and indirectly by restricting the general productivity (which is largely dependant on the military research and development effort) of industry. Furthermore, the developing countries, which are traditionally considered to be the victims of the arms race, seem severely affected by their military effort, even though they often receive

assistance (civil or military) from the major Powers in the event of conflicts;

(b) Military spending often appears to be a direct competitor of investment. There is constant substitutability between investment and the choice of weapons, that is between a country's economic future and the level of national security required by its Government. Moreover, military spending has a not inconsiderable inflationary effect. In the present situation of world-wide economic crisis, spending on weapons at the expense of public welfare is still more severely felt. It is a direct obstacle to spending on education, health and productive investment. On the international plane, economic warfare is intensifying and military tensions are reappearing. There is a vicious circle: the recession exacerbates the struggle against scarcity and in so doing, it promotes the rise of international tensions and the growth of military spending. The latter aggravates the economic recession;

(c) As a general rule, military spending has no more and no fewer unfavourable effects on economic growth in planned-economy countries than in market economies. In each case, the intensification of the arms race has cumulative long-term negative effects;

(d) A number of southern hemisphere countries have, for reasons of national security, established their own arms industries. The idea that producing arms in this way would stimulate industrialization has not, however, been borne out in practice. The developing countries find themselves caught in the following vicious circle: the more they arm themselves, the more they compromise their development and, in parallel with this, the more instability grows in their region. They therefore find themselves over-armed by comparison with their resources, but under-armed by comparison with the threats around them. That places them in a situation of greater economic and strategic insecurity. As for the developed countries, military power may give them the means to achieve a better position in economic negotiations, but in the long term they suffer from the arms race as a factor of restriction of the wellbeing of their populations.

C. The idea of disarmament for development

7. The idea of disarmament for development is not new. It derives, in the first instance, from a moral judgement: it is very unfair to produce destructive weapons when so many individuals are unable to satisfy their basic needs. Economic choices are made in a situation of scarcity; it is often necessary to choose between butter and guns; at all events, it is impossible to manufacture weapons and maintain the financial resources necessary for such manufacture available for the active welfare of the population. None the less, the link between disarmament and development is not always precisely established. The United Nations General Assembly is, however, of the opinion that disarmament and development are closely linked: "Progress in the former would help greatly in the realization of the latter. Therefore resources released as a result of the implementation of disarmament measures should be devoted to the economic and social development of all nations and contribute to the bridging of the economic gap between developed and developing countries".

8. The United Nations has defined the principles of the New International Economic Order. That order should be founded on the political independence of States, the right of peoples freely to dispose of their natural resources, the institution of a new international division of labour, and the quantitative and qualitative improvement of technical, economic and financial assistance. The development of the third world countries is a precondition for peaceful relations among nations. Disarmament without negotiated reduction of the existing relationships of domination or exploitation would lead to a perpetuation of intolerable inequalities that would soon jeopardize its future. Disarmament necessarily entails the restructuring of international markets, better distribution of the world's wealth and political resolve to bring about the generalized improvement of public welfare. While there has been clear recognition of that link between disarmament and

the causes of the arms race on the part of the United Nations, the same cannot be said of all negotiating organs. For example, the most significant disarmament discussions have been conducted bilaterally between the two super-Powers (SALT and START) with the participation of their allies (the M(B)FR discussion) or of the developed industrial nations (the CSCE process). No account is taken in those negotiations of the dangers of underdevelopment. This is despite the fact that, while those directly affected by the main conflicts of recent decades have been the southern hemisphere countries, those conflicts have also rapidly involved the major Powers, so furthering the arms race. Disarmament is not simply a matter of technical and strategic discussion, even if the absurdity of over-armament can provisionally lead, and with benefit, to negotiation of that kind. Disarmament and development must certainly be instigated separately, but they are phenomena which seem indissociably linked in the long term.

9. Several institutional proposals have been made to the United Nations in the context of disarmament for development; an international fund for mutual assistance and development (France, 1955); an ad hoc fund for assistance to developing countries (USSR, 1956 and 1968); a fund for industrial conversion and economic development (Brazil, 1964); an ad hoc committee for the reallocation of funds saved by a 10 per cent reduction of military budgets (USSR, 1973); a United Nations tax (Senegal, 1978); an international disarmament fund for development (France, 1978); an ad hoc account in the United Nations Development Programme (Mexico, 1978); a United Nations development fund (Romania, 1978). At its special session in 1978, the United Nations General Assembly commissioned a study on the relationship between disarmament and development. The resulting report, submitted in 1981, revealed the contemporary use of resources for military purposes, emphasized the economic and social effects of the arms race and of disarmament and analysed the conversion and reallocation of resources from armaments to economic development. UNIDIR was then entrusted by the General Assembly with investigating, in consultation with

other international institutions and bearing in mind the agencies and institutions responsible for the international transfer of resources, the modalities of an international disarmament fund for development.

CHAPTER II

III. THE TASK OF UNIDIR

10. UNIDIR must find operational solutions to an idea conceived by the United Nations nearly 40 years ago. The advantages of creating a fund at the present time are great:

(a) The establishment of a fund would underscore the disarmament imperative. It would be a symbol of the need to reduce the arms race so as to limit international tensions to a tolerable level. The creation of a fund would not be a panacea in that respect, but it could carry not inconsiderable political weight;

(b) The problems of development concern the market-economy and planned-economy industrialized countries as well as the third world nations. The world economy has been in a state of chronic crisis for the past decade. Naturally, a disarmament fund for development would not be a solution to that crisis. It could, however, promote the idea of co-operation, of the need for States to improve the situation of peoples and to lay the foundations for economic growth by transferring resources. It could also further the indigenous development of the Southern hemisphere countries by stressing the effort each State must make to combat famine and the endemic condition of poverty. Development is not simply a matter of financial transfers; it also entails an autonomous process in each nation. The resources provided by the fund could have a catalytic effect, as could the allocation to other social objectives as the result of a reduction of military spending by the southern hemisphere States themselves, of the sums now devoted to armament;

(c) Disarmament and development are the two fundamental problems of the human race and of international relations. It is true that temporary remedies can be found by looking in other directions. But there is a growing incompatibility between the arms race, which engenders enormous waste of human and material resources, and development, which entails the production of an economic surplus that is too often wiped out by States' military effort. At the same time as the choice between military spending and economic growth is becoming more and more critical, it is also becoming necessary to link those processes, to make them more concrete and more stable in the long term. A disarmament fund for development would establish the first bonds between those two phenomena, of which, despite the distance that currently lies between them, each ultimately conditions the other. Their union would, therefore, be more than just symbolic. It would emphasize in the eyes of governments and of public opinion the importance of strategy of disarmament for development for the future of the human race;

(d) The institutionalization of a functional relationship between disarmament and development would not merely be of economic and financial relevance. It would transform the very concept of security. It would highlight the need for associative action, for political understanding and economic co-operation. Gradual arms reduction and a simultaneous effort in favour of the most disadvantaged inhabitants of the planet would limit the opportunities for conflict. The security of nations would be less assured by weapons and more determined by economic efforts to satisfy the fundamental human needs. The key problem is to find ways whereby States can ensure their security without entering the arms race, which is a factor of fear and, ultimately, of insecurity. Such a situation cannot be brought about simply by creating a fund, but a fund could contribute to the redefinition of national and international security in the context of co-operation. The more the fund gave evidence of its

positive impact, the more States would choose butter instead of guns. The fund's role in educating people for peace could be decisive;

(e) The fund would make the imperatives of disarmament and development operational and would open up new avenues for security; in addition, it might lead to perceptible changes in political attitudes. Thanks to its novelty, the fund might affect the over-all climate of international relations and promote the essential values of peace, common security, humanity, mutual respect and the community of the family of nations. It would help to instill in Governments and the public awareness of the need for reasoned disarmament and vigorous human development.

11. The creation of an international disarmament fund for development would require:

- The establishment of a politico-financial structure;
- Machinery for the receipt of the money derived from disarmament;
- Rules for the distribution, in ways to be specified, of the financial resources.

CHAPTER III

IV. POLITICAL AND INSTITUTIONAL ASPECTS

12. The creation of an international disarmament fund for development presupposes both a willingness to disarm and a firm resolve to augment development assistance. As the arms race and the paucity of the official assistance to developing countries show, those political conditions have not yet been met. The fund cannot be the resultant of the present military-economic situation. It represents the expression of a determination to combat the two scourges of our age: the arms race and underdevelopment. It is therefore necessary to emphasize the political principles on which its actions would be based, to weigh up its concrete implications and to indicate what institutional form it might take.

A. The fundamental political principles

(a) Genuine disarmament

13. Any disarmament fund for development must rest first and foremost on a political commitment to disarmament. It must not serve either to legitimize the arms race or to make it tolerable. The States currently engaged in arming themselves must feel directly concerned so that they will both diminish their military potential and become the main contributors to the fund. Military force cannot, however, be reduced solely to the monetary denominator. It is probably possible to reduce military spending for a time without instituting any real procedure of disarmament. That being so, it would be very desirable to link the procedures of "physical" disarmament (such as SALT or START) to a reduction of actual military spending. Two-fold disarmament (physical and financial) would constitute significant progress.

14. The establishment of a fund must be accepted by the military Powers. That indeed, becomes a precondition if the fund is taken as a means of limiting the arms race in a security situation that remains at least on a par with that prevailing at the outset. It is vital to obtain the co-operation of the major Powers, on the basis of mutual and compulsory disarmament, as soon as possible. While the initiative in establishing a fund need not necessarily be taken by the two super-Powers, it is essential that they accept the proposal and that they give it their immediate and concrete support. The establishment of a fund should be an expression of a political commitment to disarm and should not be used to legitimize the arms race.

(b) The increasing of security by means of disarmament and development

15. The next requirement is to define the modalities for the creation and operation of an international disarmament fund for development that would promote security by means

of disarmament and development. The role of the military super-Powers in this respect is considerable, for it is they which control the main military arsenals and determine the minimum level of armament at which, given the strength of their opponent their security is assured. When two opposing super-Powers increase their military strength, they do not thereby improve their security, since each of them is at one and the same time the threat and the target. Any process of disarmament must be well prepared and well controlled, and the problem of comparative military strength and balanced reductions will be a constant feature. The demand for verification of any information supplied is the fundamental stumbling block in all negotiations. The major powers must assume their responsibilities and accept arms limitation with no loss of security. The fund's first concern will be the reduction of military spending, but it cannot turn a blind eye to the other component of disarmament, namely the stocks and the diversity of weapons. The fund could promote initially modest co-operation capable, in time, of increasing the confidence of the potential belligerents and transforming them into discerning negotiators.

16. The tasks of an international disarmament fund for development could include action, according to as yet undefined procedures, in the context of regional disarmament - for example, action to distribute new savings made available as a result of a negotiated reduction in military spending. If the region in question included developed countries, part of the funds could be allocated to the poorest nations. If the region comprised developing countries, the savings would be re-invested within its boundaries. Agreements of this type could help to reduce regional tensions and the risks of conflict. The existence of the fund would, in itself, be exemplary: it would stimulate in sovereign countries awareness of their mutual interests and so facilitate constructive dialogue.

(c) The improvement of political and institutional links between disarmament and development

17. The fund must serve to improve both the institutional and the political links between disarmament and development. It cannot be designed solely as a management tool. It must also function as a political agent charged with promoting development efforts at the expense of world military spending. It could, by its very existence, remind the wealthy countries of the painful existence of the poor nations and the danger they represent for humanity. It would give a clearer idea of the relative importance of the two fundamental problems that the modern world must resolve: the arms race and underdevelopment. However fundamental they may be for the international community in the long term, the objectives of disarmament and development are none the less distinct in the short term. But, while the principal motives for disarmament relate to the desire for peace, actual disarmament makes possible the gradual reduction of the lopsided relationships which the super-Powers maintain with the poor countries. The reduction of military spending occasions a transfer of financial resources to peaceful goals pertaining to the full development of the human personality. Disarmament reduces the race for power and for inequalities. It substitutes a philosophy of fraternity for a philosophy of prestige and strength.

18. Disarmament and development are currently the responsibility of different bodies. The staff of international organizations generally handle only one topic, mainly that of development. It is very difficult to deal with disarmament for development in such a context. The participants in the principal disarmament negotiations do not represent the nations worst afflicted by underdevelopment. While the short-term role of a fund would inevitably be limited, it would have the merit of serving as a reminder that beyond the power of violence of weapons there still exists for almost two thirds of humanity the terrifying spectre of poverty.

(d) A common interest in disarmament for development

19. While participation by the major Powers is a priority and decisive requirement, the creation of an international disarmament fund for development entails consensual action by States. To that end, every State must be convinced of the usefulness of a fund linking disarmament and development. The rich countries and the poor countries have a common interest in disarmament and in development. Rich countries would be able to reduce their unproductive spending and, after the necessary transformations, improve the welfare of their peoples without any diminution of their security. The poor countries would receive appreciable amounts of assistance that would catalyze their development while reducing the military tensions of all kinds that inevitably degenerate into conflicts in such impoverished regions.

20. The fund must not be a pretext for washing one's hands of the arms race and maintaining the existing economic and political order. Its establishment, the inspiration for which was the idea of co-operation between North and South, is, in fact, conditional upon agreement between East and West. Neither a pretext, nor a panacea, the fund must be allowed its own separate existence and make a substantial contribution to economic development and international security.

B. Institutional aspects

21. The Soviet proposal of 1973 called for the establishment of an ad hoc committee for the allocation of liberated funds that would comprise 18 persons representing the permanent members of the Security Council and the regional groups of Africa, Asia, Latin America and Eastern and Western Europe. The 13 representatives of the regional groups were to be appointed after consultation of the groups by the President of the General Assembly. The committee was intended to distribute savings, set the levels of assistance and fix time limits for projects; it was to do so taking account of the most urgent requirements and

in a completely non-discriminatory manner. Control of the distribution of resources was to rest, in the last resort, with the General Assembly. In that instance, the payers would no longer have had the majority. The developing countries would have been able to decide for themselves how funds should be allocated; they would have done so within the framework of agreements with the over-armed countries and under the indirect control of the payers, who would always have had the option of refusing to transfer resources. Such a procedure is of interest, for it would be both flexible and speedy.

22. The French proposal of 1978 was for the creation of a specialized agency whose decision-making organs and rules would have been governed by the principle of balance between contributors and beneficiaries. The fund, as a specialized agency of the United Nations, was to have given grants and loans through the medium of appropriate international organizations. That would have given the payers direct blocking power.

23. If the specificity of action of an international disarmament fund for development is to be maintained, the fund must be established as a separate organization so as to evade the anonymity of management by a superior body. The establishment of a specialized agency is, however, a very onerous and costly task which can only be justified by the magnitude of the resources available to the institution. Initially, therefore, it would seem preferable, in order to avoid additional expense, to use the existing structures to set up the international disarmament fund for development.

24. It is not the intention that such a fund should compete with the other international organizations in their present functions. The fund would have as its objective the linking of disarmament and development. In the initial stages at least, it would have to be managed by an existing international economic organization

and to be provided by that organization with premises, competent staff and the benefits of sound experience in disarmament matters. The choice of that organization should be made according to three fundamental criteria:

(1) The organization should be a department or a specialized agency of the United Nations. The Development Aid Committee of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) or the European Development Fund of the European Economic Community would, therefore, be ineligible to manage the international disarmament fund for development;

(2) Its objectives should concern the entire world and its membership should be universal. Neither the World Bank nor the International Monetary Fund or the continental banks could be chosen as management organs for the fund, since they do not meet this criterion, which is of particular importance with regard to the objective of disarmament for development;

(3) Its activities should cover the entire sphere of development. Consequently, neither the United Nations Industrial Development Organization, the World Health Organization, the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization or the United Nations Environment Programme could take on responsibility for the financing of development in the broad sense which the fund would require;

(4) It should already have staff competent in the financing of development projects. The United Nations Conference on Trade and Development seeks to define new guiding principles for international trade. It is therefore unqualified to manage the fund.

25. Given these criteria, there is only one international economic organization capable of managing the fund and that is the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP). In that case, the development programmes would be drawn up and managed by a staff of competent administrators that does not always have the material resources to fulfil its tasks. UNDP undoubtedly has reserve capacity that could be utilized to manage the fund.

26. The fund must maintain its specificity and its action must be distinguishable from the other development efforts. Management of the fund by UNDP might, however, obscure the fund's efficiency. UNDP could not, therefore, be given full responsibility for the fund, as the latter's action must be visible and measurable so as to make clear the doubly exemplary nature of disarmament and development. There would be several ways of meeting that requirement, the first that comes to mind being the establishment of an ad hoc account, as called for by Mexico in 1978. In addition, the executive authority of the fund should be differentiated from that of UNDP.

27. The fund might be directed by a governing council. There are two possible general solutions:

(a) The fund might be directed, at least initially, by the UNDP Governing Council, together with the Secretary-General of the United Nations, the President of the General Assembly, the President of the Conference on Disarmament and the President of the Disarmament Commission. This efficient and inexpensive solution would make it possible to link disarmament and development even in the composition of the fund's governing body;

(b) In the longer term, and provided that the resources available were substantial, it might be of use to establish a United Nations specialized agency that would draw, for the manner of its operation, on the existing structures within the United Nations system.

28. The governing council would define the fund's general policy, lay down the rules for selecting the projects to be financed, promote studies on conversion and emphasize the links between disarmament and development. In fact, its mission would be to apply the treaty. It would also be responsible for collecting funds and for ensuring compliance with the standards set in the treaty. It would decide on the allocation of resources and, through appropriate machinery, monitor the execution of the projects selected for assistance. Its actions would depend largely on the resources placed at its disposal. It would have to avoid being at the centre of conflict and limit its activity strictly to the application of the agreement on the establishment of an international disarmament fund for development.

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