



Global Day of Action on Military Spending

The promotion of peace in the world is an integral part of the Church's mission of continuing Christ's work of redemption on earth.

Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Church [No. 516]

Global Military expenditure in 2009 (the most recent year with available statistics) reached an estimated \$1531 billion, an increase of 5.9 per cent in real terms compared with 2008, and 49 per cent higher than in 2000 (SIPRI Yearbook 2010, p177).

Pope Benedict XVI has drawn the direct comparison between this spending and the cause of peace, development and justice saying:

Peace cannot be built when military expenses divert enormous human and material resources from projects for development, especially the development of the poorest peoples.

Address to Diplomatic Corps, 8 Jan 2009

Tuesday 12th April 2011 is a Global Day of Action on Military Spending. The Day of Action is endorsed by Brisbane's Catholic Justice and Peace Commission. We hope this factsheet can assist you in developing an informed, Christ-centred and active response to this situation.



What is happening?



- Global military spending has risen 49% in the last decade to \$US 1531 billion.
- Even in the middle of the Global Financial Crisis in 2009, 65% of the 120 countries for which statistics are available increased military spending.
- Military expenditure in Australia increased by 8.5 per cent in real terms in 2009, to reach 25.7 billion Australian dollars.
- Australia plans to increase its military spending by 3 per cent annually up to 2018, and then by 2.2 per cent each year until 2030.
- The above statistics are provided by leading global think-tank the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI) in the SIPRI Yearbook 2010. Figures for 2010 will be released on 12th April. See www.sipri.org for further details.
- To meet the Millennium Development Goals \$US 329billion is needed annually above existing national budgets. This is 20% of the military spending bill.

For example, achieving Universal Primary Education (Goal 2) and Eliminating Gender Disparity in all Levels of Education (Goal 3) would cost an extra \$US 7.2billion. This is less than the \$US 7.4billion for just 6 of the Astute Class Submarines being purchased by the UK's Royal Navy. (International Peace Bureau,2010)



What Does Our Faith Say?



A few passages and quotes to assist with reflection.

- In the Old Testament, the prophet Micah declares that God wants our military weapons to be turned into tools of food production so that there can be peace:

They shall beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruning hooks; nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more (Micah 4:2-4)

- His Holiness Pope Benedict XVI has attacked this same problem in our modern world saying: "The means and resources that the world has today are able to provide enough food to satisfy the growing needs of everybody." Food shortages, he declares are caused by "corruption in public life or growing investments in weapons and sophisticated military technologies to the detriment of people's primary needs." (World Food Day 2008)

- In the Sermon on the Mount Jesus says:

Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called children of God. (Matthew 4:9)

And later:

You have heard that it was said, "You shall love your neighbor and hate your enemy. But I say to you, Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you. (Matthew 4:43-33)

- In applying this to today's global situation the Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Church puts it this way:

The Church's social teaching proposes the goal of "general, balanced and controlled disarmament". The enormous increase in arms represents a grave threat to stability and peace. The principle of sufficiency, by virtue of which each State may possess only the means necessary for its legitimate defence, must be applied both by States that buy arms and by those that produce and furnish them. Any excessive stockpiling or indiscriminate trading in arms cannot be morally justified. [Nos. 508]





How You Can Act



As far as the Church is concerned, the social message of the Gospel must not be considered a theory, but above all else a basis and a motivation for action.

Pope John Paul II, *Centesimus Annus*, No 57

- **Join the Global Day of Action on Military Spending at the Brisbane event:**
 - 11am, Tuesday 12th April 2011.
 - Peaceful assembly in King George Square, Brisbane City. Letters to the Defence Minister will be written at the gathering and you will also hear from guest speakers.
- Join with Pope Benedict XVI in **praying** that all those belonging to armed groups and selling arms will “Abandon the path of violence and open their hearts to the joy of peace.”
- **Write to** Foreign Minister Kevin Rudd or Defence Minister Stephen Smith yourself to urge a cut in military spending. You can find their details at
<http://www.aph.gov.au/library/parl/43/ministry/ministry.htm>
- Find out more about the Global Day at <http://www.demilitarize.org/>

