

PeaceEconomyNews

Fall 2007



PEP researches, educates and advocates for conversion of our society from a military to a peace-based economy

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The Peace Community

by Andy Heaslet, PEP coordinator

Mary Beth Sullivan and Frida Berrigan stood together at the podium in Tegeler Hall on October 13 and were smiling at one another and the crowd of roughly 100 who had gathered to hear them speak on “Defining Security: Peace, Justice, and the Economy.” If you are reading this, there is a good chance that you’ve been to a presentation like this one, one where very intelligent and lettered individuals explain in clear detail that our government is squandering our tax money on weapons programs that do little to nothing to defend our nation and provide significantly less jobs and benefits to local communities than would a plethora of other spending programs. But why were these women smiling? Because they had been made aware of the peace COMMUNITY that exists here in St. Louis. They told the audience that the first step anyone can take to make a difference regarding this governmental waste is to join together in community; to talk with friends and neighbors about these difficult and sometimes divisive topics; and to simply share themselves with others. Within a month of their presentation, PEP would be organizing, endorsing, and actively participating in 5 separate community events – more than one a week. And that is why Mary Beth and Frida were smiling.

Community comes in a variety of forms; When I lived in Paraguay, community was often found around a traditional tea called Mate—a drink shared in one cup, with one special straw among

all members of all groups of all sizes. In the U.S., perhaps a potluck is more common. Schools and churches are bastions of community

building. And, of course, there’s the great American neighborhood – perhaps the most famous example of a physical community and, perhaps, one of the least communal examples of community around.

We spend much of our time in the Peace movement discussing all the negatives that surround us – and there are certainly a lot of them. But there is much we can do to live out our vision of Peace and share it. By living simply, supporting local producers and businesses, and by creating and participating in various forms of community, we can all bring Peace a little closer to home.

So I challenge you to, within the next week, participate in your local community: talk to a neighbor, organize a potluck, cook brownies for the newest resident on the block, sit and share a cup of coffee or tea. And, within the next month, join in an action or activity within the local peace community.

To adapt Arlo Guthrie’s “Alice’s Restaurant”: If one person, just one person does it they may think he’s really sick and not pay attention. And if two people, two people do it, in harmony, they may think they’re just a couple of crazy old birds and not pay attention either. And if three people do it, three, can you imagine, three people getting’ out and participating in and creating Community. They may think it’s an organization. And can you, can you imagine fifty people a day, I said fifty people a day getting’ out there and participating in and creating Community. And friends, they may think it’s a movement.

A Peace Economy must be nestled in a peaceful community. Let’s create that community. And, hopefully, the economy will follow.

Peace Economy News
is the newsletter of the non-profit
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PEACE ECONOMY NEWS

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your email or street address. We will be

glad to make sure

The Peace Economy News reaches you.

The Iraq War has cost Missouri taxpayers alone over \$6.95 billion. Taxpayers in Missouri's 1st Congressional District (Rep. Lacy Clay) have paid \$720 million for the Iraq War.

For that money, we could have gotten health care coverage for an additional 268,157 people or 257,650 kids; or we could have provided Head Start to 105,942 additional kids; or 20,517 public safety officers.

continued in margin of page 4

Homeland Security?

by *Mary Beth Sullivan*

Who feels secure in our homeland today?

I'm a social worker. I've organized with homeless people; listened with an open heart to the stories of women trying to survive on welfare. I've met those who are forced to make the choice between food and medicine to stay alive. I've been a bureaucrat charged with serving babies and preschoolers showing developmental delays when state budgets were being cut. I've seen with my own eyes the wonders and documented successes of Head Start and remain bitter to this day that it has never been fully funded. I've held the hands of a colleague who explains her son-in-law's Iraq deployment is a consequence of his finding no other way to provide for the critical health benefits her chronically ill daughter needed.

Our government has created a "homeland security" bureaucracy that demands anyone riding in airplanes take her or his shoes off for inspection. Airports build "security" machines that can see inside our clothing. They keep fear alive so that people tolerate such intrusions as necessities for community protection. Meanwhile, some of us have been bearing witness to the *real* insecurity in this homeland. So we organize. We faithfully make the lists to educate our neighbors about warped budget priorities – about what we *could* have done with that \$120 billion consumed by Star Wars over the years, or that \$9 billion Paul Bremer "lost" in the early days of the occupation of Iraq; or the \$10 billion a month spent on the occupation of Iraq.

While levees fail, bridges fall, and subways flood in our own country, the U.S. Space Command carries on to implement military policy of "full spectrum dominance" – building a U.S. war fighting infrastructure to "control space" as a battlefield.

I take very personally the destructive, calloused budget cuts and bipartisan policy changes that weaken our social infrastructure so that our military can dominate any country at any time and kill without conscience, enriching investors and those at the top of the weapons corporations while the rest of us are to be satisfied with the crumbs that fall from the table.

The corruption and depletion of our economic resources and human talent is based on a permanent war economy. Weapons are the number one industrial export of the U.S. The military production industry needs endless war to keep its economic engines alive. Its tentacles spread throughout Congressional districts in this country as it provides jobs that pay well and provide health benefits. Congress, Republicans and Democrats alike, continues to provide funding for weapons systems built locally – whether or not they are needed; whether or not they work – to keep these jobs in their districts.

In my home state of Maine, the war in Iraq lives in the labor of its citizens. The first U.S. Navy ship to fire Tomahawk missiles into Iraq's "shock and awe" was built in Bath. A company in Saco has been the exclusive supplier of an Army machine gun that shoots up to 350 tennis ball-sized grenades a minute. Previously mothballed production lines for MK-19 grenade machine guns and M-2 50-caliber machine guns have geared up to produce ten a day of each weapon. A General Dynamics representative boasts that "All the aircraft you see out there overseas and domestically, whether it be an F-18 or F-15 or F-16 is carrying one of the Gating guns that is also manufactured and produced right here in Saco... Thousands of guns made in Saco are over in theater right now." This one company has worked 24/7 for three years to provide weapons for the occupation of Iraq.

Meanwhile, the Political Economy Research Institute at the University of Massachusetts in Amherst, in conjunction with the Institute for Policy Studies and Women's Action for New Directions have just completed an economic analysis comparing the relative effects on job creation from federal investment in military, private consumption (through tax cuts) and several alternative public programs. The very clear bottom line is this: *public dollars invested in health care, education, mass transit, or construction for home weatherization and infrastructure create more jobs than investing an equivalent amount in either the military or personal consumption. Twice as many jobs are created by equivalent spending on education and mass transit as on the military.*

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Time is long overdue to engage the conversation about how to move from a permanent war economy to a permanent peace economy. It is possible to create industries, here on our own soil, that build something other than weapons. Other countries have figured out how to make consumer goods that serve the greater community, keep their workforce productive, and work to prevent global warming. The U.S. can surely do the same.

It is time for us in the peace and justice communities, in our religious and spiritual communities, in our workplaces, on the streets of our neighborhoods, and walking through the halls of Congress to demand to put an end to the permanent war corporate welfare state. It is time that we build an industrial base in our country that rebuilds our physical infrastructure (sustainable energy, roads, bridges, public transportation, schools), pays a living wage, and provides for the health and welfare of our citizens.



Mary Beth Sullivan is a peace activist and social rights advocate with particular expertise in the militarization of space. She is Outreach Coordinator for the Global Network Against Weapons and Nuclear Power in Space. She comes to us during the worldwide “Keep Weapons Out of Space Week”. Sullivan is also a co-founder of an intentional community in Bath, Maine where members seek to live simply, serve their neighbors, and deepen their political activism, with a focus on conversion from a permanent war economy to a peace economy.

www.space4peace.org

Cold War Systems Don't Keep Us Safe From Our Crumbling Infrastructure

Once upon a time, people researched and wrote reports with titles like: *Converting the Cold War Economy: Investing in Industries, Workers and Communities*; *After the Cold War: Living with Lower Defense Spending*; and *Life After Defense: Conversion and Economic Adjustment on Long Island*.

These reports came from university research institutions, private think tanks, and the federal government. They are memorials to the hope kindled in the brief post-Cold War, pre-War on Terrorism moment when anything seemed possible. Even cutting the military budget was not unthinkable because we had pulled the planet back from the brink and survived five decades on the edge of nuclear midnight. Scholarship turned itself to the work of dismantling the war machine, but in such a way that no one—no machinist turning bolts on bombs or aircraft engineer with his polished plans—was crushed in the process.

But these reports do not just read like they are 15 years old; they read like dispatches from a remote and almost unimaginable planet. *Converting the Cold War Economy*, published in 1993 by the Economic Policy Institute, began with the premise that President George H. W. Bush's \$281 billion budgets could be halved over the next decade. Representative Les Aspin proposed a \$81 billion cut to the military budget using “threat based planning:” the concept of assessing present and emerging threats and amassing the tools to deter or defend against those threats. The report responds to Aspin's proposal by saying: “deeper cuts resulting in budgets as low as \$67 billion a year are conceivable if the U.S. were to defer preparations for unilateral action in favor of a cooperative approach to security based at the United Nations and if arms sales by the major industrialized countries to the Third World were stopped.”

What a difference 15 years makes! The Pentagon lost \$67 billion in the sofa cracks last year. Okay, okay, it's not quite that bad ... but the Government Accountability Office put the price of Pentagon accounting problems at \$13 billion in 2005.

For fiscal year 2008, we are looking at a “base military budget” of \$520 billion and another \$127.5 billion in war spending, which means that total military spending will hit \$647.5 billion.

The Bush administration has presided over one of the largest military buildups in the history of the United States. \$647 billion is a lot of money. After adjusting for inflation, it represents the highest level of military spending since World War II.

Why are we spending so much? In large part because of many of the Cold War systems that have managed to stay in the budget and in

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The information in the margins of pages 2 and 4 on the costs of the Iraq War to Missourians and the trade-offs we didn't use that money for was compiled by MoveOn.org based on data from the National Priorities Project.

pol.moveon.org/Iraq/priorities_reports.html

www.nationalpriorities.org

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Taxpayers in Missouri's 3rd Congressional District (Rep. Russ Carnahan) have aid \$816 million for the Iraq War. For that money, we could have paid for 17,424 new elementary school teachers or we could have awarded 117,253 scholarships to make college more affordable.

References on bottom of page 3

Taxpayers in Missouri's 2nd Congressional District (Rep. Todd Akin) have paid \$1.22 billion for the Iraq War. For that money, we could have gotten renewable electricity for 1,063,635 homes; or we could have put 30,630 additional public safety officers on patrol.

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the Pentagon's "toolbox" despite having no relevance, no rival, or no hope of ever delivering what they promise. One of the best examples of all three of these categories is ballistic missile defense—a problematic, unjustifiable and immensely expensive military programs. Since concept development in 1983, the United States has spent close to \$100 billion dollars on various version of the program. In tests, the system has failed in five out of 11 tests since 2004. This rate was so abysmal that the Missile Defense Agency stopped releasing the results of system and component tests.

The U.S. military budget has never been bigger and our propensity toward militarized solutions from immigration and totalitarianism to terrorism and nuclear proliferation has never been stronger. To speak of cutting the military budget, reallocating resources to support a broader range of security tools, converting away from military-dependent production is a tough task right now.... But it is necessary, because the military-fits-all solution is failing to deliver on a single promise: We are not safer. "They" are not freer. And we are more hated abroad than ever before!

Oxfam recently published "Africa's Missing Billion: International Arms Flows and the Costs of Conflict," which estimates the economic cost of armed conflict to Africa's development at about \$300 billion since 1990. This sum, says Oxfam, is the equivalent of all the international aid from major donors during the same period. Retaining the resources money lost to war and weapons, asserts Oxfam could have gone to developing new approaches to the HIV/AIDS pandemic, cured malaria and tuberculosis, and addressed Africa's need for education, clean water and adequate sanitation.

The report demonstrates that it is possible to quantify the economic potential lost to wars. Can we do that in the United States? What do we lose with a half trillion military "base budget" and many hundred billions more spent waging war in Iraq, Afghanistan and elsewhere? The answer is obvious (if elusive)—it is visible in every panhandler and soup-line, in overcrowded classrooms and dwindling healthcare budgets, in each hard choice that is made in U.S. cities, towns and rural areas.

It is also visible in our crumbling infrastructure. The America Society of Civil Engineers' Report

Card for America's Infrastructure assessed the physical state of aviation, bridges, dams, drinking water, the national power grid, hazardous waste, navigable waterways, public parks and recreation sites, the rail lines, the roads, schools, security, solid waste, transit, and wastewater throughout the United States and gave the "American Infrastructure" a grade point average of D (or poor). The ASCE estimated that it would take \$1.6 trillion in investment over five years to repair and restore American infrastructure.

How can we be a secure nation when bridges collapse, water-mains explode and the power grid fails? In each of these recent three instances, the first thought was terrorism. But gravity, neglect and overuse were the only three active members of the cell that brought down the bridge in Minneapolis, Minnesota in August 2007.

Where will the money come from to rebuild American infrastructure? Who will do the work? These are hopeful questions that can be answered with visionary and practical economic and social policy decisions in Washington. Not asking the questions means continuing to lose out in our economic, human and national security.

[Adapted from a piece published by "Foreign Policy In Focus," www.fpif.org]



Daughter of famous World War II veteran, priest, and peace activist, Philip Berrigan, Ms. Berrigan is a Senior Program Associate for the Arms and Security Initiative (see page 5 for details), a division of the New America Foundation, a D.C.-based non-partisan think tank dedicated to developing policy solutions for a changing world. Ms. Berrigan is an expert on human rights, the arms trade, U.S. nuclear weapons, missile defense, and space weapons policy. She has authored "Weapon of Mass Deception - What the Pentagon Doesn't Want You to Know About Depleted Uranium;" "Halliburton Hearts Congress;" and "Seeking True Security."

Acknowledgements

We thank the Doerr Center for Social Justice from St. Louis University for Sponsoring our October 13th public forum entitled "Defining Security: Peace, Justice, and the Economy"

We also thank the following individuals, organizations, and businesses for their support of the Defining Security Conference held Oct. 12-14. This event brought together more than 20 experts in the fields of economic conversion, defense spending and policy, disarmament, and peace activism from all across the country discussing strategies to get the messages of Economic Conversion and Disarmament into the 2008 electoral debates and into the conversations of the general public.

WILPF, AFSC, Mokabes Coffeehouse, Pepperidge Farm stores, Wild Oats Market, Riddle's Penultimate Café and Wine Bar, Einstein Bros. Bagels, Marilyn Lorenz, The Karen House, Chuck Smith, Amanda Jokerst, Yvonne Logan, and event coordinator Julia Mariani.

Arms and Security Initiative

The Arms and Security Initiative offers a regular E-Newsletter covering the arms trade, military budget developments and foreign policy issues. It is punchy-informative and stimulating without being too wonky or too gloomy. It will also include our new feature: "What's Good," which will highlight successes, victories and great ideas.

If you're interested, sign up at www.groups.google.com/group/arms-and-security-updates or email berrigan@newamerica.net and you'll be added directly.

The Arms and Security Initiative is part of the New America Foundation and the successor to the World Policy Institute's Arms Trade Resource Center. www.newamerica.net/programs/american_strategy/arms_security

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To our readers: If you are not currently a member but like what you have read here, please consider joining PEP. Membership supports PEP's research and work to build a peace-based economy. Clip and mail the form below. Don't forget your email address - it is the quickest way for us to reach you.

Yes, I want to join PEP.

Contributions are tax-deductible.

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Return to: Peace Economy Project

**438 N. Skinker Blvd.,
St. Louis, MO 63130**

Coming Events

Friday Nov. 16, 4:30-7:00 pm

PEP BBQ (third Friday every month) & SOA Sendoff

World Community Center

438 N. Skinker Blvd.

St. Louis MO 63130

Feed your belly and your brain while supporting PEP!

This month is special because we will be sending off the St. Louis Contingent of buses going to Georgia to protest the School of Americas. Following their departure, we will offer a showing of a film related to the SOA.

!!!!!!PLEASE RSVP!!!!!!

Meal options will be primarily hamburgers and hotdogs (for omnivores and herbivores) available for \$5-7 (prices and menu to be finalized soon) including sides and beverages. Bob and Greg from PEACE INSTITUTE PRINTING will be masters of the grill and RIDDLE'S PENULTIMATE will be providing the sides.

!!!!!!RSVP NOW!!!!!!

March 8:

Charlie King Concert Benefit

Save the date to join us for political satire and song with folk singer/songwriter Charlie King, in a benefit concert for PEP. Time & place TBA.

This year Charlie & Karen (www.charlieking.org) will be joined by Jim Scott (www.jimscottmusic.com).

Silent auction 7 p.m.

Tickets \$15 advance, \$18 door

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October Conference Summary

As a result of the roundtable conference PEP hosted in October, we will be joining forces with other organizations from across the country over the coming election year, engaging in a diverse campaign directed at getting the issues of War Profiteering, Military Spending, Economic Conversion, and the idea of a Peace Economy into the discussions surrounding the elections.

Here's a sample of some of the things we're planning on doing:

- Conducting Video "Listening Projects" and posting the results online and on public video sharing sites like YouTube and MySpace
- Sending participants to debates, town-hall meetings, and electoral forums armed with tough questions for the candidates
- Doing a better job of sharing resources between these various organizations
- Endorsing the national War Tax Resistance efforts www.wartaxboycott.org
- Having an online "Penny Poll" to see how Joe/Jane-Public would prioritize the federal budget if they had a say in the matter
- And continuing to seek out creative ways of getting information about the cost of war out to the general public

Do any of these things sound appealing to you? Have thoughts of your own? Have talents to share? Let us know how we can keep you involved in the PEP mission. If you can host a house party, ask a question at a debate, sponsor an ad in your favorite publication, attend an event, write/call/visit your congressional representatives, do graphic design (or

simply art), write, do research, go door to door, post a sign in public view, participate in direct actions, or share ideas, we'd love to hear from you. Write, email, or call!

Justice and Peace Shares

PEP is a proud member of Justice and Peace Shares, a collaboration of seven local groups, all committed to nonviolent social change and justice for the poor.

JPS Shares (\$25/month) save these 7 organizations valuable time and energy otherwise spent fundraising so that they can focus on their important work for peace and justice.

JPS Shareholders are eligible for membership in any or all of the JPS groups but do not receive direct appeals for further contributions from these organizations.

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