



**RESPONDING
TO VIOLENCE,
RETHINKING
SECURITY**

POLICY ALTERNATIVES FOR BUILDING HUMAN SECURITY

A report based on the October 2002 Virginia Gildersleeve Colloquium with Nobel Peace Laureate Jody Williams



In recent years, the Barnard Center for Research on Women has undertaken a concerted effort to link feminist struggles to those for racial, economic, social and global justice. We have built invaluable cooperative relationships with a far-reaching network of scholars, activists and artists who contribute to the long struggle of making our world more just. We are grateful for the generous support of both the Winds of Change Foundation and the Virginia C. Gildersleeve Fund of Barnard College, which has allowed us to bring to campus such visionaries as South African activist Patricia McFadden, legal scholar Lani Guinier, and novelist Edwidge Danticat, BC '90.

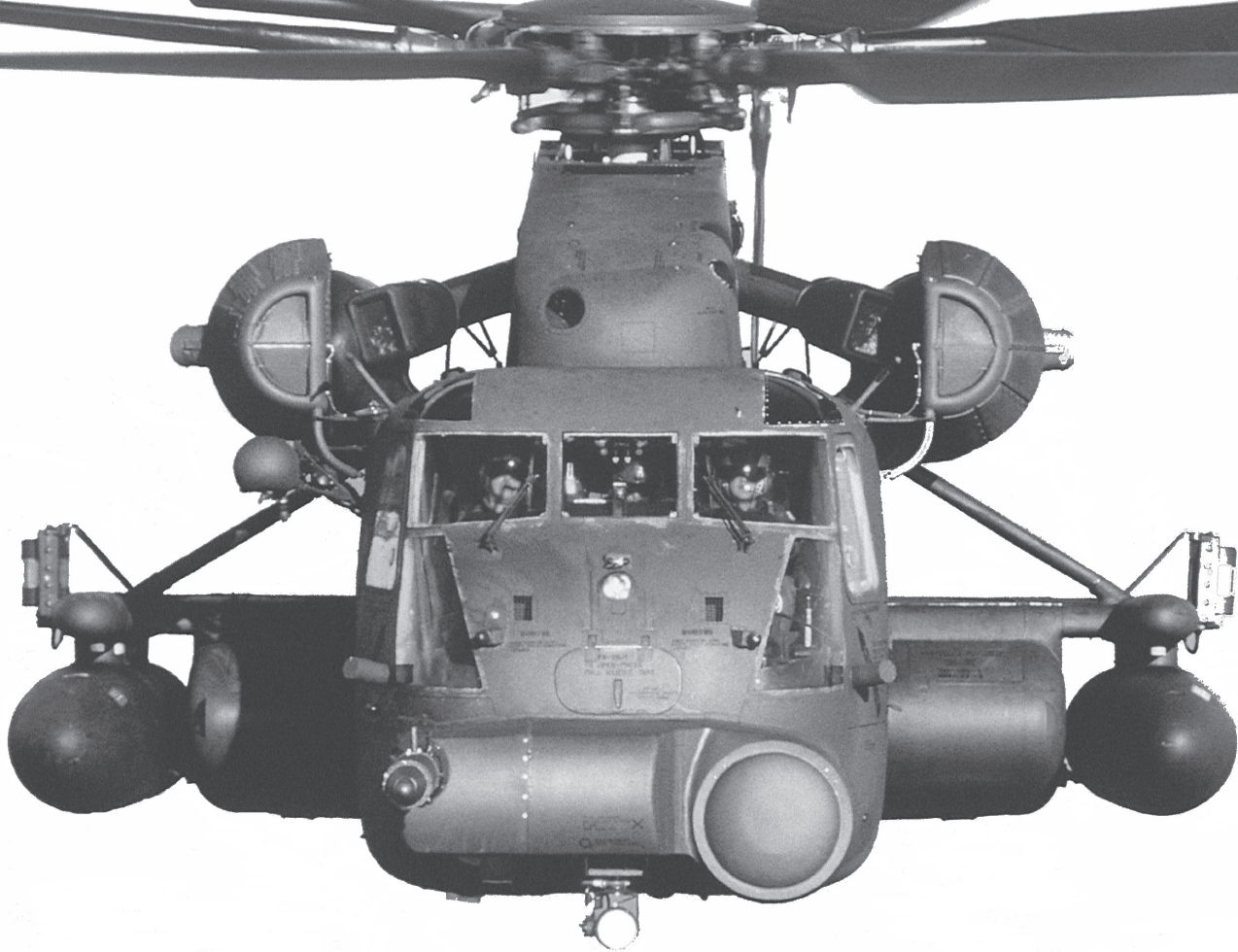
On Friday, 25 October 2002, the Center added to that distinguished roster by welcoming **Jody Williams**, coordinator of the International Campaign to Ban Landmines and recipient of the 1997 Nobel Peace Prize, along with more than thirty activists and scholars for a daylong colloquium dedicated to theorizing feminist responses not only to war, but to more intimate forms of violence such as hate crimes, police brutality, and domestic abuse. Participants included:

Nahla Abdo	Cynthia Enloe	Rosalind Morris
Fawzia Afzal-Khan	Katherine Franke	Afsaneh Najmabadi
Gil Anidjar	Sherry Gorelick	Kathryn Poethig
Sally Bachner	Lynette Jackson	Anu Rao
Karen Beckman	Janet R. Jakobsen	Erin Runions
Elizabeth A. Castelli	Peter Juviler	Andrea Smith
Helena Cobban	Irena Klepfisz	Gwi-Yeop Son
Carol Cohn	Timothy Longman	Radhika Subramanian
Neta Crawford	Lois Ann Lorentzen	Meredeth Turshen
Lisa Crooms	Catherine Lutz	Laura Wexler
Laura E. Donaldson	Lorraine Minnite	Kay Whitlock
	Mino Moallem	

As war and various forms of violence escalate across the world, as our need grows to develop new and more comprehensive strategies for thinking about and acting against violence, we will more and more rely on those who think and act with the wisdom, determination and creativity of our distinguished contributors.

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Janet R. Jakobsen, Ph.D., Director
David Hopson, Associate Director
E. Grace Glenny, Research Assistant

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Over the last few years, the world has changed rapidly and in many ways dramatically. One thing that is clear in the midst of this sometimes chaotic change is that our current world is marked by violence. The attacks of September 11th, which profoundly affected so many in the United States, are but one instance of this ongoing violence. The United States has responded to September 11th by pursuing two wars—in Afghanistan and Iraq—as well as a number of military actions in countries like the Philippines, as part of the continuous “war on terrorism.” In addition, civil wars, wars of ethnic cleansing, and various forms of state-based and extra-governmental violence have been part of daily life in many areas of the world.

Concerned citizens around the world have been asking how best to respond to this violent situation. Is it possible to reduce the level of violence in our world? Are the policies of our governments geared toward reducing the level of violence and making the world a safer place? And, of course, some nations bear more responsibility for producing and sustaining the violence than others. The United States carries specific responsibilities as both the most militarily and economically powerful nation in the world and as the initiator of both militaristic responses to violence and pre-emptive war.

Feminist scholars and activists have been thinking about the question of unjust violence and how best to respond for nearly three decades. Feminists have taken on the question of violence at all scales from the most local violence of intimate relationships to global concerns of militarism, war, and peace. Over the course of these decades feminists have developed analyses of the causes of violence and they have also developed new possibilities for responding to violence. This knowledge could be extremely useful as the U.S. public undertakes its responsibility as part of a democratic society to consider and debate policies and alternatives. This report, “Responding to Violence, Rethinking Security,” contributes to that discussion by laying out an alternative to the type of continuous and pre-emptive warfare to which the U.S. is currently committed, one that does not minimize the dangers of violence, but rather increases human security and one that takes the moral and political responsibilities of the United States seriously.

ALTERNATIVE PERSPECTIVES

What does a feminist analysis contribute to thinking about violence and human security?

No one doubts that violence is an issue of import to women, but feminist analyses of violence are most often taken seriously when they apply only to “domestic” violence. In the mainstream media, thinking about women and violence has focused on violence in intimate relations. The very term “violence against women” is shorthand for intimate and sexual violence. But women are affected by all forms of violence. Women are the vast majority of victims of violence in intimate relationships, but as the casualties of war have shifted from combatants to civilians over the course of the twentieth century, women have increasingly become the victims of international violence. Scholar Mary Kaldor notes in her book, *New and Old Wars* that “[a]t the turn of the [twentieth] century, the ratio of military to civilian casualties in wars was 8:1. Today, this has been almost exactly reversed; in the wars of the 1990s, the ratio of military to civilian casualties is approximately 1:8.” In some recent wars it has been more dangerous to be a civilian than a soldier, and an increasing proportion of women have died in these conflicts.

Because of these realities, feminists have been deeply concerned with exploring the effects of violence and pursuing means of preventing violence. Feminists have developed new understandings of the causes of violence and they have also developed creative alternatives for response and prevention. Feminists can offer these alternative viewpoints not because women are somehow more peaceful, but because feminists don’t share the set of assumptions that make violence appear inevitable and even ennobling.



Violence is a choice.

The feminist anti-violence movement has long recognized that the use of violence is a choice. It is a chosen means of solving problems. Violence is not an inexplicable reaction; it is not a mystery of human nature. It is a method of accomplishing something in the world. Individuals, organizations, and governments sometimes choose violent means to address their problems. Individuals use violence to get money or to batter their partners into submission, to relieve anger, or to bring an end to their own pain through suicide. Governments use violence to control territory, to manage population flows, to force other countries to accept a certain world order, and they also claim to use violence as a path to peace. Because violence is a method and a choice, it is possible to choose other methods to address the problems at hand. If, however, violence is chosen as the method of action, it means that energy and resources that might have gone into other courses of action have gone toward violence. One of our responsibilities as citizens is to take seriously the type of violence that our nation-states commit, and to take it seriously as violence (Beckman RTV).[†] We cannot treat this violence as simply defensive or necessary, but must consider the role it plays in the continuing cycle of violence.

[†] All references to RTV are to the “Responding to Violence” website: www.barnard.edu/respondingtoviolence. To read any of the papers on which the report is based go to the website and click on an author’s name.

If violence is a means chosen to solve problems, then how we conceptualize the problems themselves will, in large part, determine whether violence seems an appropriate or inevitable solution to them. Thus, this report considers questions about how we conceptualize the problems that our world is currently facing. How do we think about the key terms that have become central in debate since September 11, 2001: “terrorism” and “security”? Is “terrorism” the best way of understanding the violence of the 9/11 attacks? And is “security” the best name for our goal in responding to that violence? The attacks of September 11th do not require any single response. There is no one path that is absolutely required over all others. Rather, the question of policy faced by the United States is: How do we respond to violence? How do we seek safety and peace? This report advocates a policy of disarmament and demilitarization; disarmament implies that we should seek to reduce the widespread dependence upon and availability of weapons throughout the world; demilitarization implies that non-military and non-violent means should be the first choice for addressing problems. Military means are always a method of last resort.

Persons in the United States, like all peoples in the world, have a right to live in peace and to defend themselves from violence. Choosing non-militarized means of responding to violence is not a matter of abdicating self-defense. But, we do have a responsibility to consider the implications of the particular means by which we seek to defend ourselves. One of the reasons that our society chooses violence, both at the individual level and at the level of government policy is because our society tends to naturalize violence, making it seem the inevitable reaction to a given problem. For example, it has been so difficult to end domestic violence because this form of violence has long been accepted. For centuries, it was legal for husbands to use violence against their wives, and even after this legal right ended, violence by husbands against wives was long protected as a private matter. It took the anti-violence movement to end the



idea that violence was a legitimate means of managing roles in intimate relations. Similarly, at a larger scale, the violence of slavery was long regarded as a legitimate human relation and treated as natural and normal. It took the abolition movement to de-legitimize this type of violence, so that the world could move toward less violent labor relations (Crawford RTV). As with these other forms of violence, the idea that military violence is the best means of creating human security, of defending a given society, is now treated as a natural or inevitable response, but it is a chosen one.

When such naturalization occurs, when violence is not only the accepted, but the expected choice, then other choices often become invisible. Yet, military violence may not be the best means of creating human security. It may, in fact, be largely self-defeating, contributing to a cycle in which each military action only increases the likelihood of further violence. Part of the goal of this report is to make alternatives visible and bring them back into public discussion and debate.

Thinking about violence as a choice rather than an inevitability opens the door to many possible responses to the violence of our current world. Throughout this report we will be suggesting alternative ways of conceptualizing problems so that they can be solved through non-military means. We hope to de-naturalize and de-legitimize military violence as a means of creating human security. Our goal is to make not just the United States, but the world a safer place. Since safety is evidently elusive in today’s world, this report argues that our actions and policies need to change.

How we name violence and how we conceive of security will affect our chosen policy.

The terms and concepts that we use to think about violence and responses to it affect our chosen path of action. When we think about responding to violence, it is difficult to keep our attention focused on multiple forms of violence simultaneously. We tend to use concepts that bring to the fore one kind of violence while diminishing our perceptions of other kinds of violence. For example, we have thought of the September 11th attacks through the category of “terrorism,” and the U.S. government has chosen to “fight terrorism” by going to war in Afghanistan and in Iraq. One of the distinctions between “war” and “terrorism” is supposed to be that war involves combatants rather than civilians, while “terrorism” is directed indiscriminately at civilians. And yet wars have over the course of history proven to be increasingly destructive, and increasingly destructive to civilians in particular. Since at least World War II, when specific policies of bombing civilians were adopted by both sides (both London and Dresden were both bombed extensively and the United States dropped atomic bombs on the cities of Hiroshima and Nagasaki), “war” has also and increasingly been directed toward “terrorizing” populations.

The term “terrorism” also focuses our perceptions on the experience of fear, rather than on the experience of violence itself. “Our focus on terrorism—and on the terror that defines it—helps us to invert the realities of power and suffering...” (Bachner RTV). When we think in these terms the vulnerability of the U.S. is evident,

and we focus on the fear that many Americans feel, while giving less attention to the violence, including the violence to civilians, that is involved in the U.S. attempts to alleviate this fear through warfare. Moreover, we lose sight of the question of whether this warfare will actually increase security. We seek an invulnerability that may not be achievable, while often ignoring non-violent and workable means of reducing, if not eliminating, the risk of future violence.

Thus, how we think of “safety” and “security” affects how we respond to violence. If we think of safety as an absolutely risk-free environment, we will be led to more extreme actions than if we seek to reduce risks. And this search for absolute safety, because it is unrealistic, may paradoxically increase rather than decrease the likelihood of future violence. Feminists have long sought to debunk myths around violence and safety as an important step in creating a better world. For example, most people think of “home” as a place of safety, but the anti-violence movement “has always contested this notion of safety at home as the majority of violence women suffer actually happens at home” (Smith RTV). Yet, this idea of safety can lead women to ignore the dangers they face at home while taking extreme precautions against the less likely possibility of being attacked outside of one’s home. Even when we correctly identify sources of danger, we may respond to these dangers in ways that intensify, rather than alleviate the threat. This type of thinking may seem counter-intuitive, but anti-violence advocates have developed important analyses that are obscured by dominant ways of thinking. When addressing questions of “domestic violence” the activist group Incite! Women of Color





Against Violence has argued that we must also attend to the violence done to communities of color by the criminal justice system itself. When advocates against domestic violence turn to the criminal justice system to address one form of violence they reinforce another form of violence—the state’s policing. Most importantly, if domestic violence is connected to violence at larger scales, including violence against entire communities like racism and colonialism, then the violence of the state against communities of color is related in a complex fashion to the domestic violence it is supposed to resolve. Thus, Incite! suggests alternative strategies for addressing sexual/domestic violence that do not rely on the U.S. criminal justice system (Smith RTV).

We must ask similar questions about our notions of “safety” and “security” at a global scale. When violence is justified in the name of “security,” how are we thinking of security? Do we think of security in terms of military force and power? This is the conceptualization of the term that the United States has traditionally used, and yet, it has proven to produce an unstable form of security. The United States is currently the world’s only super-power, with military capabilities unrivaled in the current moment (or at any other point in history), and yet it seems as though the United States has never been more vulnerable and Americans have never lived in such fear. Military force is not the only way to think about security, however. The reduction of violence in the world as a whole is another means of creating human security. This alternative conception of security gives us a reason to choose responses to violence that do not depend on armaments or militarism.

To develop policies that reduce violence we must conceptualize the various sources of violence. When we focus on a single source of violence we do not take into account other, equally important, sources.

One of the questions that has come to the fore in these past few years is whether religion is the primary source of violence in today’s world. Is fundamentalism the real problem that must be eliminated for the world to be a safer place? Feminists have been particularly interested in this question because religiously legitimated violence is often directed against women. An end to the violence directed at women by the Taliban government in Afghanistan was advocated by feminists long before September 11, 2001. When the U.S. government decided to go to war against Afghanistan this violence was suddenly taken up as an issue by the President (and the First Lady) and was widely discussed in the media. Feminists observed, however, that the Administration seemed concerned with this violence only when it could be used to legitimate the U.S. war. Since the end of the official conflict, the policies of the Administration with regard to the women of Afghanistan have returned to neglect once again.

This sequence of events points to one of the problems with viewing religion as a special source of violence in the world. We must be extremely careful how we think about religion and violence. There is a long history in which Western nations have attributed religious violence, including religious violence against women, to other societies as a means of justifying Western violence against those societies, much as the U.S. government became interested in the Taliban’s violence against women as a means to legitimate the U.S. war. Many scholars, both feminists and religious studies scholars, have documented how narratives of religious violence justified colonial

† For examples of this extensive scholarship see the feminist history collection *Western Women and Imperialism: Complicity and Resistance*, edited by Nupur Chaudhuri and Margaret Strobel, and the religious studies historian David Chidester’s *Savage Systems: Colonialism and Comparative Religion in southern Africa*.

violence all over the world.[‡] This focus on the religious violence of “others” masked the violence of colonialism itself. Colonial violence was deemed to be more legitimate or less violent or was simply invisible when compared to non-Western religious violence against women. And while Western nations were also patriarchal, providing legal sanction for domestic violence for example, they were unable to criticize this violence in the way that they criticized the violent practices of others.

Religious commitment is, indeed, invoked to justify violence in many areas around the world. We find this in the United States when the President invokes a belief in God and uses Biblical images when promoting the fight against terrorism. But the fact of this violence does not mean that secular violence—the violence of secular nation-states when they go to war, for example—is less violent than religiously-legitimated violence. In fact, these two types of violence—secular and religious violence—are complexly inter-related. Ridding the world of religion will not rid the world of violence. Secular nationalism is often built on both claims to religiosity (as is evident in the frequent references to Christianity in the U.S. government), as well as on a defense against religiosity (Rao RTV). Moreover, one of the roots of the West’s narrative of saving women from violence is the Christian biblical tradition of masculine salvation (Runions RTV). In the end, secular violence is not the answer to religious violence; rather we must find ways to address both forms of violence, including both forms of violence against women.





When we think about violence, we must include the violence of the secular state.

When we think of violence in today's world, we should not think only about September 11, 2001. We must also think about the broad context of violence that makes terrorism seem like a viable option, and we must think about distinct forms of violence. The world continues to be troubled by civil wars, occupation and political oppression, and genocide. In many, if not most, of these forms of violence the secular state plays a major role in initiating, maintaining, and intensifying violence. For example, "violence against women" is not restricted to intimate violence. The state plays an often forgotten role in shaping, reshaping, and molding women's place in society (Abdo RTV). When women's position in society is defined by the state as economically dependent and socially vulnerable, they are that much more at risk for experiencing violence from those upon whom they are dependent. Moreover, the state is sometimes the direct agent of violence against women. In situations of political repression and war the state is often as willing to inflict violence upon women as are non-state actors.

Narratives about "hatred" and "ancient enmity" tend to hide the role of contemporary interests and modern states in sustaining particular violent struggles (Anidjar RTV). For example, as scholar and activist Timothy Longman has pointed out: "violence in Africa and other parts of the 'Third World' is commonly portrayed in the media and within diplomatic and academic circles as arising from deeply rooted social conflicts. Ethnic, regional, and religious conflicts are depicted as expressions of primordial sentiments that are unleashed when states become weak....According to traditional political



theories, societies are naturally anarchic, while states bring order and security.” (Longman RTV). Longman has studied the specific case of Rwanda, where the 1994 genocide has often been attributed to a combination of intractable ethnic rivalry and a weak state. The genocide was supposedly based on the profundity of ethnic differences in civil society, a mania engaged in on the basis of fear of and loathing for the other, while the world’s governments stood by and failed to intervene with rationalized violence to stop the bloodshed. Yet, the Rwandan state at least was far from an innocent or impotent bystander, but was in fact a major source of the violence and the problems that induced the genocide were political in nature. In Rwanda intermarriage and social connections meant that ethnic differences were clearly the constructed product of class and political systems rooted in colonialism. On the basis of this history, the reification of ethnic differences—and then the eradication of those marked as “different”—was the solution articulated by the state to the cycle of violence that had developed in the period of colonialism and the wars of national liberation. If Tutsis were eradicated completely, the sponsors of genocide claimed, violence would stop once and for all. This shift in analysis means that making the state stronger will not necessarily bring an end

to violence. Rather, installing the victims of genocide in control of a state with a monopoly on violence can just be another step in the cycle of violence. Thus, Longman argues, in the post-genocide situation, we must look to civil society, the supposed source of the problem for solutions that will prevent history from repeating itself: “The two reconciliation programs that seem most promising in Rwanda involve democratic participation—and that is exactly why they hold such potential...These sorts of solutions, that link society and state and allow societies to increase their control over the state, could provide promise in many other situations. Empowered societies will be better able to resist political machinations and avert violence. If countries are to rebuild after violence, then we must look not to states but to societies for the greatest hope and inspiration” (Longman RTV).

This type of history is important because it shows us that we cannot depend on state-sponsored violence as a means to end other forms of violence. More importantly, such analyses open up new sites for the work of peace-building. How do we strengthen democracy as a means of giving various parties to a conflict a stake in the political process of ending the conflict? “Much research has been carried out in attempting to identify the missing ingredients to sustainable peace and development. Economic growth with equity, democracy, and political rights have been recognized as the principal building blocks for peace...” (Son RTV). This research argues that to prevent violence we must develop organizations in civil



society that have the capacity to act as mediators between the public and the government. We need to ensure that these organizations are not isolated, but operate in networks that can effectively voice the concerns, aspirations and expectations of the public as is being done to some extent in Rwanda. We can develop processes of political reconciliation that are organized around people's participation, as with the process of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission in South Africa. Similarly, it is possible to build post-conflict processes that reintegrate demobilized combatants back into society in a way that allows for social catharsis of grievances. In March of 2001, after the genocide in Rwanda in 1994, the national government enacted an alternative system of justice, the "gacaca courts," a reworking of a traditional system of participatory justice where all protagonists of the crime reconvene in the location of that crime and debate over the events in the presence of an elected, non-professional 'judge.' Through "gacaca," the creation of a new national identity, not just punishment and rehabilitation, are part of a criminal justice system.[❖]

This research also shows that we need to pay specific attention to the socially and economically marginalized. When governments are unable to address the expectations of the poor and marginalized new violence can erupt. Unemployed youth are particularly prone to violent expression of their frustrations. We can, however, work to promote economic development that supports peace and security. Economic development alone is not enough. Whether development increases stability depends on how this development occurs, and particularly on whether systems for economic development and foreign investment are transparent and non-discretionary so as not to be subject to corruption by those in political power. Political struggles to make the World Bank and International Monetary Fund more transparent are part of this effort to make

economic development that increases stability and security.

We face choices as a society. These methods of peace-building require long-term commitments and extensive funds. But, what is often lost in debates over these issues is the fact that a permanent commitment to militarization is similarly long-term and certainly cost-intensive. We can take up what seems to be the quick-fix approach of immediate military action that has the appearance of doing something dramatic to address the problems, or we can take up a long-term approach to building human security.



[❖]From Penal Reform International. See www.penalreform.org/english/theme_gacaca.htm.



**War and militarism are ineffective means of responding to violence.
Militarism has ongoing negative effects on society even when we are not officially “at war.”**

War, including pre-emptive war, is not necessarily an effective response to violence. Even if a war is “won,” the effects of war continue long after the conflict has been officially declared over. These effects are rarely taken into account in considering the costs of war. There are on-going direct effects to the violence of war, including continuing dangers from the weapons of war. For example, landmines from World War I continue to kill people nearly a century later. There are also continuing effects in terms of social and political destabilization, effects that are likely to lead to future violence.

Militarization itself has significant costs, both in terms of resources spent on weapons and military institutions that might be spent on other goods and social services and in terms of what it does to a society. Organizing a society around militarization makes the virtues of violence, rather than other ethical goods, the moral center of the society.

Military institutions contribute to the gendered, sexual, and racial inequality in the U.S. (Lutz RTV). There is a generally much higher rate of domestic violence committed by soldiers than by civilians. A 1998 study funded by the Army found that reports of “severe aggression” against spouses were more than three times higher in Army families than civilian ones. The military contributes to violence against women in our society. The widely-publicized murders of four women married to soldiers who had just returned from duty in Afghanistan in the fall of 2001 were just the tip of an extremely broad and deep problem of domestic violence within the military.

In addition, the military is often taken to embody the ideal of masculinity in the United States. What does it mean for all women in the United States that this ideal is one that correlates with violence against women? The form of masculinity promoted by the military does not just produce “gendered” violence. It

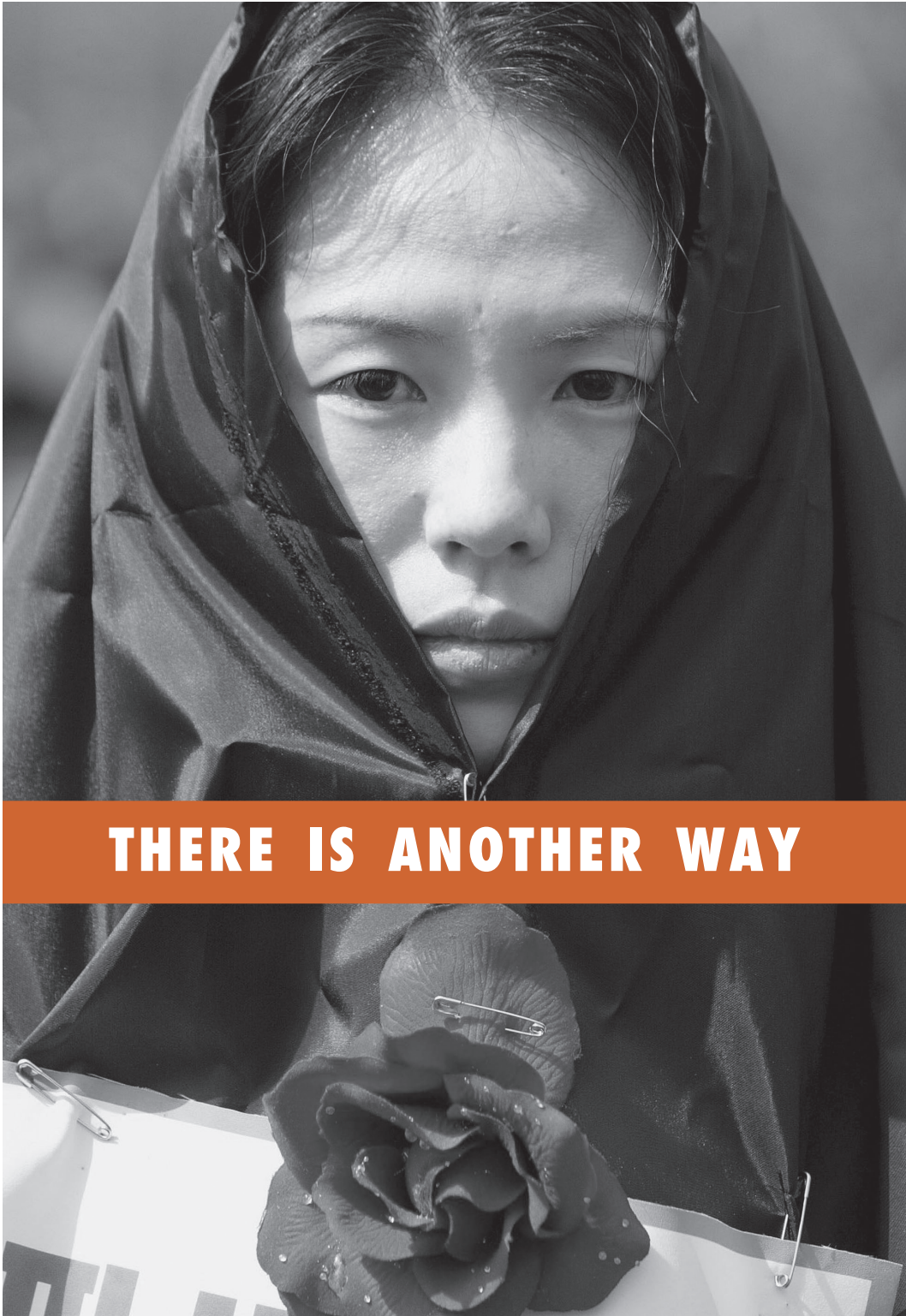
also contributes to the (violent) enforcement of heterosexuality—as violence against “gays” in the military shows all too dramatically. And military masculinity can also contribute to what scholar and activist Lisa Crooms has called “intra-gender hierarchies of masculinity.” Men of different races and classes are put into competition with one another—in the military and in our society more broadly—to determine which form of masculinity shall rule supreme (Crooms RTV). When the military provides the model for these contests, violence is bound to be a central means through which they are conducted. We see this violence brought home against women and children. We also see this violence at work in international conflicts. The (mostly male) policy leaders of the United States depend on a militarized masculinity to assert their place at the top of international hierarchies—hierarchies that are mainly understood as contests among men.

Military institutions have also been shown to deepen the institutionalization of racism and class inequality in our society. Initially, people of color were excluded from or segregated within the military, but now people of color are disproportionately represented in the military. Our society has left the work of killing and dying largely to people of color and white working-class people. And, as with the question of masculinity, what does it mean that one of the few integrated institutions in the United States is organized around strict hierarchy and violence?

Militarism also contributes to society-wide economic inequality. When national budget priorities are decided the military takes an enormous share of resources that could be put to other purposes. The US military occupation in Iraq costs at least \$3.9 billion per month, not

including interest (<http://www.costofwar.com>). In the 1990s, a period of incredible economic expansion and wealth creation, poverty in the U.S. did not diminish (Minnite RTV), but military spending increased significantly. A focus on militarism means that we do not see the violence of economic deprivation (Minnite and Turshen RTV). When we choose to seek security through militarism, it means that we cannot seek security through greater and more widespread health care, education, or economic empowerment. These social goods provide other means of seeking security and they improve other areas of life in addition to the contribution they make to security. In other words, these alternative methods of creating security represent not only a more just, but also a more efficient use of our nation’s and the world’s resources.

Finally, ongoing dependence on militarism as the basis of security will continue to increase the destructiveness of violent conflict when it does occur. The exponentially increasing deadliness of war over the twentieth century was due to the increasing destructive capability of modern weapons. Only by creating forms of security in which violence is not the major or only means of resolving conflict can we avoid the cycle in which each act of violence can only be countered by further violence, where each turn in the cycle will produce increasingly destructive weapons (Donaldson RTV). This is why disarmament is crucial to building human security. Dependence on militarism and weapons of war can constitute a worldview in which it appears that violence is the only possible way to defend oneself, but there are other possibilities. We can develop human security through “sustainable and life-affirming ethics” (Donaldson RTV) and a focus on inter-relations that creates safety for all, rather than militarized security for some.



THERE IS ANOTHER WAY

We can devise responses to violence that actually increase human security.

Violence is neither an inexplicable tragedy, nor a tragic necessity. Rather, it is a political choice to address the problem of human security, in a particular way—through the means of violence. As feminists we advocate other means of solving the problems that lead to violence. The militarized response that the U.S. government has pursued since September 11, 2001 is not the only possible means of responding to extreme and unjust violence. We suggest that the U.S. should pursue a policy of *disarmament* and *demilitarization* rather than worldwide, preemptive, and continuous war.

What is disarmament?^o

Disarmament is the elimination of weapons of mass destruction, illicit arms trafficking, and burgeoning arms stockpiles, with the idea that in this legacy of war, the eradication of tools of destruction can enable international peace. It can accomplish this through reducing the actual effects of war, liberating resources and improving environments in which many people live, and diminishing some key incentives in the beginnings of new conflicts. Disarmament acknowledges that its success depends on the forceful role of governments, and the involvement of civil society and that real change can only be achieved through the work of NGOs, like-minded governments, and a public conscience. A disarmament agenda is founded on the fact that civil society has the right and responsibility to determine the state of our world and it must play an active role in the partnership necessary in realizing its goals.

What is demilitarization?

Demilitarization is a policy alternative based on the moral principle that violence should be a method of last resort. Demilitarization encourages the reduction of military capabilities by all parties to any given conflict and, most importantly, it requires the search for non-military means to address social problems and build security. Demilitarization is not a pacifist position. It acknowledges that military force is sometimes necessary in our contemporary world, but it encourages the use of force as a last resort, the discovery of non-military solutions to conflicts and problems that may otherwise be solved militarily, and the reduction of the level of potential violence around the world. Both smaller military conflicts and world military crises are intensified if the level of militarization is raised. The introduction of 21st century weapons can greatly increase relatively contained civil wars, while the development of nuclear capabilities and other “weapons of mass destruction” can unsettle relatively stable global relations.

Why is it important to pursue disarmament and demilitarization together?

A program devoted to the progressive demilitarization of the world’s various societies would focus on limiting the power of those agencies of the state—chiefly, though not exclusively, the various “defense” departments and departments of war—that rely on force and coercion to achieve their goals. But demilitarization is not enough. Both in theory and in practice weakening the power of formal military establishments when not accompanied by disarmament can produce societies that are characterized by huge amounts of violence. Arms in the hands of non-governmental organizations such as liberation movements, militias, or groups of bandits and vigilantes are no less lethal than arms in the hands of formal military establishments.

^o For more on disarmament as a principle and its specific policy implications visit Nobel Laureate Jody Williams’ website at www.icbl.org/amb/williams/.

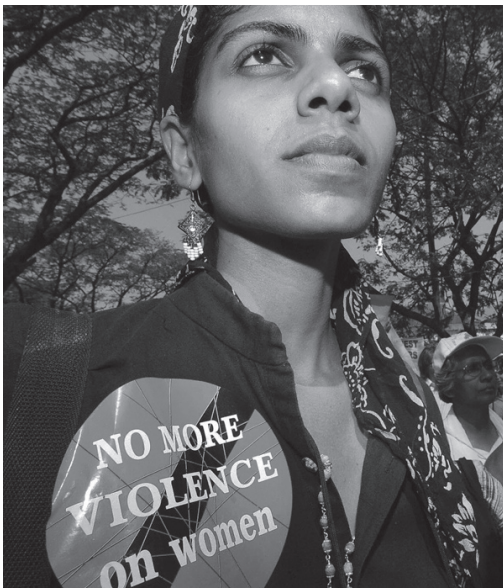
Just as demilitarization without disarmament poses a problem, so also disarmament is insufficient without demilitarization. While it may seem intuitive to go to war to “disarm” an enemy, disarmament through military means does not necessarily reduce the level of violence in the world. It may simply be another step in the cycle of violence. Demilitarization means that all parties to a conflict must lower their dependence on military means of resolving the conflict. War becomes an actual method of last resort.



What do disarmament and demilitarization offer as policy alternatives?

The first implication of these policies is that whenever and wherever possible armaments and military forces should be reduced. All societies must be encouraged to move toward a level of armament that is in line with the real needs of its people. For most societies, that will mean a dramatic downward adjustment in arms. For some societies—such as the United States—the adjustment would be so dramatic as to be almost revolutionary.

The second implication of demilitarization is that non-military means of problem-solving must be pursued. For example, over the past several decades the U.S. has used the “war on” approach to address many persistent social problems. The “war on drugs” was intended to reduce the traffic of drugs into the United States mainly through militarized means, including the introduction of U.S. military forces into Colombia, militarization of the U.S.-Mexico border, and intensified policing and incarceration within the United States. Demilitarization would require the development of other solutions to this problem, including diminishing the demand for drugs through effective drug treatment programs. Certain drug treatment programs, like JusticeWorks, have proven



to be more cost effective than imprisonment and better at reducing recidivism. Most of the arguments for the “war on drugs” used moral claims about the ways in which drug use contributes to violence in our society. But, the morality of militarization was rarely taken into account in these arguments. When the morality of both means and ends is taken into account, the moral weight of particular policies shifts toward non-militarized forms of intervention. In other words, following the principle of demilitarization, we might find solutions to the problems of drug abuse and drug trafficking that are both more ethical and more effective. In the case of the “war on terrorism” this implies that non-military means of addressing terrorism must be pursued vigorously even if some military force is deemed necessary as a partial response.

DISARMAMENT AND DEMILITARIZATION: SPECIFIC POLICIES

Actually accomplishing disarmament and demilitarization may seem like an impossible task, but there are many concrete policies that could be changed to reduce the use of violence as a means to solve problems. Work on any one or any combination of these areas will contribute to a reduction in violence overall. You can work for non-militarized responses to conflict in virtually any area of the world and at any scale: local, regional, national or transnational. Below are just a few examples of policy alternatives that will make a contribution to human security:

1 Work to create peace as a viable alternative.

- a) Support peace as a human right. The ability to live in a peaceful environment should be the most basic of human rights, in that no other rights—the right to life, freedom, or health—can be reliably assured to persons unless they are living in peaceable communities (Cobban RTV). Surprisingly, however, none of the major international human rights documents includes a right to peace. It is time for this to change. Support organizations like Amnesty International, which argues that “war is bad for human rights,” and encourage other human rights organizations to promote peace as a fundamental human right.
- b) Teach peace. Support organizations like PeaceJam, which teaches young people about the multiple roads to creating a more just and peaceful world.
- c) Support efforts to create a cabinet level Department of Peace in the U.S. government. According to Congressional sponsors: “The Department of Peace would serve to promote non-violence as an organizing principle in our society and help to create the conditions for a more peaceful world.”

2 Support disarmament at all levels. Much of world policy is driven by the race for arms and increasing armaments, but this is a trend that can be reduced through concerted citizen action:

- a) Support nuclear disarmament by all nations including those with established nuclear weapons programs and those seeking to develop nuclear weapons.
- b) Urge the U.S. government to stop its support of the global arms trade.
- c) Petition the U.S. government to become a signatory to the International Treaty to Ban Landmines. Currently, the U.S. and Cuba are the only nations in the Western Hemisphere that have not signed the Treaty.

3 Reduce U.S. militarism in various areas of the world.

- a) Maintain a commitment to rebuilding both Afghanistan and Iraq. Now that it is too late to avert military intervention, it is crucial that the U.S. accept responsibility for its actions and rebuild the societies in which it has undertaken military action. This is an extensive, but necessary commitment to avoid further violence.
- b) End the U.S. military intervention in the Philippines and support democratic culture there.
- c) Resist any move toward U.S. military intervention in other parts of the world. The pursuit of continuous and pre-emptive war has not made the world more secure; rather it has contributed to increasing destabilization. Urge the government not to expand its war efforts through ever-widening intervention.
- d) Support a serious effort on the part of the U.S. to find a just peace between Israel and Palestine.
- e) Encourage a commitment on the part of the U.S. to support international efforts at weapons control.

4 End the militarization of the U.S.-Mexico border. Our border policy represents the choice to use violence as a means of dealing with labor flows into the United States. The socio-economic and political causes of contemporary displacement and migration are themselves forms of structural violence that push people from their homes. To respond to this structural violence with an “invisible war” against migrants is fundamentally unjust (Lorentzen RTV). Since the inception of current policy of heightened militarization, known as “Operation Gatekeeper,” more than 3,500 people have died attempting to cross the border -- nearly one person every day and an increase of 600%. U.S. spending annually on militarized operations at the U.S.-Mexico border is estimated at \$952 million. Much of this expenditure is now justified in terms of the “war on terrorism,” but there is no indication that the U.S.-Mexico border represents a site of threat to the United States in terms of terrorism. Security at the border and militarization are not the same thing. Moreover, the United States is economically dependent on migrant labor from Mexico. This labor relation should be recognized and demilitarized.

5 Support drug treatment and prevention programs as the best means of responding to drug addiction. Work to end the “war on drugs” and military intervention in Colombia. The war on drugs is a militarized response to the problem of drug addiction. It is another case of our society choosing violence as a means of dealing with its problems, rather than non-violent means of addressing problems. It also contributes to the militarization of Colombian society and to growing war and unrest there. These are precisely the types of conditions that have led to disaster in the past. Drug treatment programs, however, when undertaken with appropriate forms of support have proven to be more effective than incarceration as a means of ending drug addiction and its attendant problems.

6 End the militarization of U.S. public life. End the Pentagon’s mandate to gather intelligence on U.S. citizens. End the appropriation of the U.S. Justice Department for military purposes. Keep restraints on intelligence gathering at the Pentagon, CIA, and FBI. U.S. intelligence has become highly invasive, is fundamentally racist and ideological in tone, and has rarely succeeded in providing the information needed to address actual threats. The disaster of September 11th represents a major failure in U.S. intelligence that could have been prevented based on the information already available to the FBI. No additional information was needed. The correct analysis of this information—available, but ignored by the Bureau—was needed. Rewarding this failure with extended capabilities that violate civil liberties is not an answer to the problems in intelligence that led to September 11th. In addition, both the Pentagon and the Justice Department continue to rely on racial profiling as a primary means of addressing intelligence questions. This framework has not proven to be the most effective means of gathering intelligence, but it has proven to have a great cost in terms of the basic rights and freedoms that make the United States a democracy.

7 Support efforts to end violence against women, including efforts by Incite! to end violence against women of color at all levels and through means that do not rely on state violence. Go to www.incite-national.org. Work to develop anti-violence programs that recognize the connections between and among intimate relationship violence, state and national violence, and global militarization.

How can you participate in the developing alternatives to violence and bringing about a more just and peaceful world?

Participate in transnational peace and justice movements. One of the most hopeful aspects of today's world is the growth of social movements for peace and justice that work beyond the boundaries of any single nation. Often in the past, nationalism has limited social movements and made it more difficult for them to achieve their goals, but now some movements are stretching beyond these limits. If you are interested, you can join movements and organizations like:

Women's International League for Peace and Freedom	http://www.wilpf.org
Abolition 2000	http://www.abolition2000.org
Code Pink Women for Peace	http://www.codepink4peace.org
Madre	http://www.madre.org
Waging Peace	http://www.wagingpeace.org
Oregon Peace Institute	http://www.orpeace.org
Peace Action	http://www.peace-action.org
PeaceJam	http://www.peacejam.org
Voices in the Wilderness	http://www.vitw.org
United for Peace and Justice	http://www.unitedforpeace.org
Equality Now	http://www.equalitynow.org
WAND: Women, Power, Peace	http://www.wand.org
Not In Our Name	http://www.notinourname.org
International Women's Tribune Center	http://www.iwtc.org

Selected Online Resource Guide: Suggestions for Further Reading

Cost of War	http://www.costofwar.com
ArmsControl.Org	http://www.armscontrol.org
The Earthways Foundation	http://www.earthways.org/atomicmirror
Center for Nonviolence and Peace Studies	http://www.uri.edu/nonviolence
The Carr Center for Human Rights Policy	http://www.ksg.harvard.edu/cchpr
Center for Peace and Security Studies	http://www.georgetown.edu/centers/cpass
Center for the Study and Prevention of Violence	http://www.colorado.edu/cspv
Center for International Security and Cooperation	http://cisac.stanford.edu
Fourth Freedom Forum	http://www.fourthfreedom.org
Control Arms	http://www.controlarms.org
Global Security Institute	http://www.ginstitute.org
Hoover Institution at Stanford University	http://www-hoover.stanford.edu
Middle Powers Initiative	http://www.middlepowers.org
The Joan B. Kroc Institute for International Peace Studies	http://www.nd.edu/~krocinst
The Albert Einstein Institution	http://www.aeinstein.org
The National Organization for Women	http://www.now.org/issues/peace/index.html
Nonviolence.Org	http://www.nonviolence.org
Committee on Disarmament, Peace and Security	http://disarm.igc.org
United Nations Development Fund for Women	http://www.unifem.org
Resource Center for Nonviolence	http://www.rcnv.org
Wisconsin Project on Nuclear Arms Control	http://www.wisconsinproject.org
Nautilus Institute	http://www.nautilus.org
Center for Women's Global Leadership	http://www.cwgl.rutgers.edu
Women Waging Peace	http://www.womenwagingpeace.net
Center for Global Peace and Conflict Studies	http://hypatia.ss.uci.edu/gpacs



Barnard Center for Research on Women

3009 Broadway
101 Barnard Hall
New York, New York 10027

phone • 212.854.2067
fax • 212.854.8294
web • www.barnard.edu/bcrw