

DISARMAMENT AT LAST

At the end of the 1980s, the Reykjavik agreements, the end of the Cold War and the fall of the Berlin wall suggested that nuclear threats and the arms race might progressively give way to a rethinking of war strategies and therefore of the armament necessary to address new types of conflicts. This would likewise leave a broad margin for the “dividends of peace,” which would enable us to inaugurate a new era with a renewed United Nations, endowed with the appropriate human, financial and technical resources.

But that was not the case. To the contrary, “globalization” replaced democratic values with the laws of the marketplace, and the world’s most prosperous countries (G-7, G-8...) ostracized the United Nations to the point of placing the World Trade Organization beyond its scope.

The result has been resounding economic failure and –due to the (in the words of President Obama) “greed and irresponsibility” of the large financial conglomerates– the world as a whole has been thrust into a multidimensional crisis (social, economic, environmental, nutritional, democratic, ethical), with military spending that surpasses 3 billion dollars daily, while at the same time approximately 70,000 people die of hunger and abandonment, half of them under five years of age.

The latter period of the Bush administration –invasion of Iraq, missile shield proposal, etc.– resulted in ever-increasing expenditures in armament, while the number of persons who live in hunger and poverty likewise rose.

For all of the above,

Having observed with surprise and indignation the “rescue” of financial institutions with hundreds of billions of dollars, while funds for the Millennium Objectives have practically dried up,

We want to express our support for President Obama:

- 1) For having taken the lead in nuclear disarmament, as he unexpectedly indicated in Prague during his visit to Europe, and later ratified when presiding at the Security Council session on September 24, 2009. At this meeting, a reduction in nuclear arsenals was unanimously passed, which may represent a genuine turning point with respect to one of the most relevant challenges of our times.
- 2) For having decided to cancel the antimissile shield program, which the US administration had planned to install in Europe. This initiative facilitates the opening of new frameworks for dialogue that should provide the context for analysis and resolution of international conflicts.
- 3) For having initiated, giving precise instructions to Secretary of Defense Gates in that regard, a new defense policy, which at least partially replaces conventional weapons (airplanes,

submarines, tanks, etc.) for those that not only can address threats today, but also avoid them, by detecting them on time.

We therefore underscore the urgent necessity:

- i) To provide international security through the United Nations, with all of the measures they require for the rapid and efficient deployment of Blue Helmets.
- ii) To urgently review the contractual obligations in existing military alliances, to reduce acquisition of weapons for “traditional” conflicts, which have recently reactivated the “arms market” both in Latin America and the Eastern countries.
- iii) With the funds no longer required for these huge investments in military spending, we must reactivate international cooperation, so that it can replace the largely war-based economy with sustainable global development (renewable energies, food production, production and distribution of water, health, transportation, housing...).
- iv) We make this appeal to strengthen existing disarmament initiatives at the global level, and especially in the preparation of the Conference on the Nuclear Non Proliferation Treaty, which is set to take place in the spring of 2010.
- v) Likewise, to establish adequate conflict resolution mechanisms, with the necessary criteria for follow-up, control and accountability, and with the participation of all parties concerned, which would enable the United

Nations to establish international objectives and priorities, and develop programs with which they may be achieved.

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