

## Divest from Arms; Invest in People

By Lydia Tahraoui

WASHINGTON, D.C., AUGUST 6TH, 1945 — The President of the United States has just delivered a statement. The public is informed that an atomic bomb has been detonated in Hiroshima, Japan. President Truman ends with the following line: "I shall give further consideration and make further recommendations to the Congress as to how atomic power can become a powerful and forceful influence towards the maintenance of world peace."

This final sentence represents a striking irony, for weaponry — and most especially atomic weaponry — is perhaps one of the greatest foes of peace. From the dawn of humanity, weapons have helped plant seeds of hate and resentment in the hearts of men; have burned countries to the ground; and have severed bonds between families, between friends, and between humankind.

Yet despite the destruction weapons have wrought, the military industrial complex continues to be one of the richest industries on Earth. The daily global military expenditure alone is greater than the nominal GDP of 38 nations, and annual expenditures dwarf worldwide spending on education, health care, and poverty alleviation. This only takes into consideration the monetary costs of excessive armament; we must also remember that each year, hundreds of thousands of civilians lose their lives to war. Each year, hundreds of thousands of hopes and dreams and futures and possibilities are futilely extinguished.

It has been claimed that such high military expenditures are necessary to ensure security. However, current worldwide weapon supplies are frankly gratuitous. Weapons are no longer being used as a means of establishing protection, but rather to demonstrate superiority. Countries tout their colossal arsenal, and obscenely high military spending, as a means of intimidation. This brazen display of power is both immoral and hazardous; the mere existence of advanced military technologies, such as nuclear bombs, is a danger to each and every person on this planet.

This is why disarmament is not only advisable, but absolutely, unequivocally necessary. We must immediately halt the global arms race and cut back on weapon production, to the point where unnecessary weaponry and military expenditures are completely eliminated. Global leaders must reaffirm their commitment to maintaining defense forces and equipment solely for security purposes.

It is high time we stop investing in weaponry and start investing in humans. Peace begins with the people, and thus divested funds from military proliferation should be allocated towards building a more harmonious human race. Rather than

financing destruction, we need to fund education, healthcare, infrastructure, and anti-poverty programs.

World peace cannot be achieved until each individual has the potential to achieve his or her own inner peace, and in order to ensure such an opportunity is made available, we must fund our future. A harmonious future is founded upon the base of a content, healthy, and fulfilled population — not on the destruction, blood, and horror waged by weapons and war. President Truman once promised to consider the part atomic power could play in securing peace; the answer is that it has no part at all.