

'Ike' Warned the World But We Wouldn't Listen

by Lloyd Shearer

WASHINGTON, D.C.

Almost 20 Aprils ago, on April 16, 1953, when he had been in office only a few months, at the annual meeting of the American Society of Newspaper Editors held here, President Dwight Eisenhower made one of the most memorable speeches of his Administration.

Frustrated by the rising costs of defense obligations, "Ike" declared:

"Every gun that is made, every warship launched, every rocket fired signifies, in the final sense, a theft from those who hunger and are not fed, those who are cold and are not clothed.

"This world in arms is not spending money alone.

"It is spending the sweat of its laborers, the genius of its scientists, the hopes of its children.

"The cost of one modern heavy bomber is this: a modern brick school in more than 30 cities.

"It is two electric power plants, each serving a town of 60,000 population.

"It is two fine, fully equipped hospitals.

"It is some 50 miles of concrete highway.

"We pay for a single fighter plane with a half million bushels of wheat.

"We pay for a single destroyer with new homes that could have housed more than 8000 people . . .

"This is not a way of life at all, in any true sense. Under the cloud of threatening war, it is humanity hanging from a cross of iron."

The arms expenditures to which Eisenhower objected in 1953 are now a relative drop in the bucket.

Spending climbs

The present international arms race is costing the world two and a half times what all governments spend on health, one and a half times what they spend on education.

In the 1960's, reveals a United Nations report, the world spent nearly \$2 trillion on armaments.

Six countries, the report contends, are chiefly responsible for fueling the fires of war: the United States, the Soviet Union, the People's Republic of China, France, Great Britain, and West Germany.

All wars since 1945, by way of explanation, have been fought in "Third World" territory—Asia, the Middle East, and the Indian subcontinent.

Four great powers, the United States,



A contemplative Dwight Eisenhower told the U.S. in one of his most perceptive statements that defense spending prevented the fulfillment of our necessary goals.

the Soviet Union, Great Britain, and France, have supplied nearly all the weaponry for these wars, thus becoming the world's leading merchants of death.

Ironically enough, in most of these wars, both sides possess pretty much the same weapons provided by the four aforementioned nations.

Take the most recent war between India and Pakistan. The Sherman tanks used by the Indian forces and the M-47 and M-48 tanks used by the Pakistani forces were all manufactured in the United States. The Soviet T-54 and T-55 tanks used by both sides, were manufactured in the Soviet Union. The Indian Air Force flew Soviet Mig-21 jets, while Pakistan flew Soviet Mig-19's.

Arms exporter

In a 910-page study entitled "The Arms Trade with the Third World," the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute points out that the U.S., the U.S.S.R., France, and Great Britain are currently providing more than 90 percent of arms exports to the Third World. The U.S. alone is "the largest supplier of military equipment in the world," claims the Institute, "accounting for nearly half the world's trade in weapons."

Another nation which is trying to outsell us on the world armaments market is France. "Frenchmen can take comfort in the fact," a French magazine recently wrote, "that, along with Mirage jet fighters, France is also exporting anti-aircraft missiles to shoot down the jets. This is somehow maintaining a balance."

The biggest buyers in the weapons market are unfortunately those countries which can least afford them but are most likely to use them. Between 1967 and 1969 the Middle East bought \$1.76 billion worth of weapons and the Indian subcontinent \$700 million worth.

Fuel for war

The U.S. and the U.S.S.R., which have provided the overwhelming bulk of armaments to fuel the Vietnamese war, sell weapons to increase their power and influence, while Britain and France engage in the trade for economic gain.

The total amount of ammunition expended by U.S. forces in the Vietnam war is now more than three times the amount we used in the Korean war, 75 times the amount of bombs we dropped on Japan and about three times the amount we used in Europe in World War II.

We are bringing our ground forces home from Vietnam but we have escalated the air war to a point where we are now dropping more and larger bombs than ever before, and the defense budget of \$84 billion for the year is larger than when we had 540,000 ground troops stationed in Vietnam.

Good old "Ike" Eisenhower. He spoke well, but no one listened.