

Workshop No 2

Money and Modern Warfare

Moderator: Otfried Nassauer

Report: Gudrun Rehmann

Otfried Nassauer is a member of the Berlin Information Centre for Transatlantic Security, an organization working with six people: e.g. on campaigns against landmines, the reduction of handheld weapons, research on behalf of the media (e.g. about lost plutonium). The organization does not receive any public funding but applies to charitable foundations for financial support of its projects; most of its funding comes from the USA.

Otfried Nassauer gave his audience an idea of the scale of the military apparatus (e.g. a German soldier in Afghanistan costs 800,000 Euros a year): as an institution that has a monopoly, the military feels it has to spend 5% more each year.

Otfried Nassauer listed possibilities where the state might support peace by taking preventative measures: the ministries responsible for foreign affairs, for development, for defence; diplomacy and deployment of soldiers in countries where war threatens (e.g. in Macedonia from 1992-1998, where in this manner the import and use of weapons were prevented).

Contribution from the participants: peace education in schools.

One participant rejected the sending of German peace specialists abroad, because there's enough peace work in Germany that needs doing, and because Germany used to instigate wars with other countries quite often enough. Another participant suggested people should go abroad not with the intention to teach, but to learn from their exchanges – here and there. ON emphasized that this was exactly what peace workers try doing.

Question: does the introduction of the Euro influence military spending in Germany (and the other European countries)? Answer: not yet; so far the European countries still behave as if one might attack the other. The formation of a European military organization is in the planning stage.

Question: How can Germany underpin its rejection of the planned attack on Iraq by the USA? Answer: legally Germany can close its air space to American planes. But politically?!

At some time after 1998 the republican majority in the USA has passed legislation aimed at deposing Saddam Hussein.

In the last few years there have been several changes of regime in Asia, in favour of the USA.

From several points of view Iraq is the most "western" state in its Arab surroundings. Why not use it as a western shop window? That might conceivably be one of the war goals of the USA.

The area surrounding Iraq is particularly dangerous because there, three empires are crumbling: the Ottoman, the Commonwealth, the Soviet.

The conversation had to end for lack of time.