

~ NATIONAL COUNCIL FOR RESEARCH ON WOMEN ~
ANNUAL CONFERENCE 2002
FACING GLOBAL AND NATIONAL CRISES: WOMEN DEFINE HUMAN SECURITY
Thursday, May 30 - Saturday, June 1, 2002
Roosevelt Hotel, New York City

A Conversation with Dr. Helen Caldicott: Notes by Desiree Perez-McDougall
(Pediatrician, Anti-nuclear Activist, Writer, Speaker)

Friday, May 31, 2002

Dr. Caldicott began her talk by presenting her latest book, "The New Nuclear Danger, George Bush's Military Industrial Complex," and spoke about [another] book that marked a turning point in her life entitled "On the Beach."

Dr Caldicott focused the bulk of her presentation and her commentary's on several areas:

- The discordance between women's power and their numbers
- The threat of the current US administration
- The current global nuclear state
- The effect of a nuclear blast on one city.
- The mindset of nuclear researchers

1) Women

Dr. Caldicott commented on the current state of affairs where men still wield most the power and garner most of the profit, while women hold only 1% of the property, this despite the fact that:

- Women comprise 2/3 of the workforce.
- Women comprise 53% of the population.

2) Threat posed by US administration

Dr. Caldicott prefaced her remarks by stating that the current Bush administration is the most "dangerous" she has seen in 63 years. Her belief stems from her assessment of the personalities in this administration, the mentalities/ modus operandi of those in authority, and her assessment of where the reigns of power lie.

Personalities in power:

- President Bush – unintelligent and unschooled
- Vice President Dick Chaney – Real seat of power. ("George Bush is not the president, Dick Chaney is the president.") Dick Chaney's wife sits on the board of Lockheed martin.
- Donald Rumsfeld characterized as a sociopath.
- Pearl also dangerous.

Administrative Actions:

a) In response to 9/11 terrorist actions

- In response to 9/ 11, rather than cooperate with all agencies (i.e. FBI, CIA, etc.) the administration decided to bomb Afghanistan killing 5000 innocent people (The US used "daisy cluster" bombs.)
- Press banned from Afghanistan. Press "supplied" with video of the conflict by the military.

Men's "minds have not matured in 3 million years to stop the killing instinct."
Being a Christian "means doing what that man preached, 'love thy enemy.'"

- b) Violations of Anti-Ballistic Missile Treaty ["cornerstone of nuclear arms control"]
Administration currently supporting a second Manhattan Project (nuclear defense project?)
More costly than the first Manhattan Project.

The press calls us "America the 'rogue' state."

- c) The Heritage Foundation [a "conservative think tank."] supports many in the administration.

Dr. Caldicott believes that those in the administration have no opposition. She states that the country is in a "democratic vacuum waiting to be used by us." "Thinking is the key to survival in the US," she continues. "We [the people] need to [better] utilize the media." We need to be "proactive" and "reactive." "We are their leaders and we need to take over."

3) The current global nuclear state

Dr. Caldicott spoke of the danger posed by the worldwide proliferation of nuclear weapons.

- The US still has over 5000 nuclear bombs on "highest alert" targeted on other countries. (China is one of the targeted countries as it is our new post cold war enemy.)
Early warning systems are "fragile" and make mistakes.
- Afghanistan has at least 50 nuclear weapons
- There are only 240 major cities in the Northern Hemisphere and over 10, 000 nuclear bombs in existence.
- The US has worked on building 5 layers of "star wars" [national missile defense system.]
We have evolved to this state over the past several (US) administrations beginning with President Reagan's administration. Former President Bush did eliminate some nuclear weapons
however President Clinton had "no backbone" and failed to reduce our nuclear arsenal.
- Worldwide the nuclear state can be described as a "nuclear cross" – lateral and vertical proliferation of nuclear weaponry.

The "push to have power is more pervasive and serious than the push to survive."

4) Effects of a nuclear blast.

Dr. Caldicott painted a picture of how a nuclear blast would impact one city.

- The heat inside a nuclear bomb can be compared to that inside the center of a star.
- All matter will be vaporized within a 5 mile radius from the center of the blast.
- All objects within a 20 mile radius from the center of the blast will be burned.
- Winds created by the blast will travel at the rate of 500 miles/hr turning people into missiles.
- Firestorms will rage for 3000 miles.
- Millions of decaying bodies resulting from the destruction along with depleted immune systems will lead to epidemic spread of diseases.

If we have nuclear war our children will have no future."

5) Nuclear mindset

Dr. Caldicott compared the behavior of nuclear scientists to that of a "cult" giving examples of some of the terminology used by this group:

- People are described as 'soft targets' and bombs are called "hard targets."
- Bombs are described as "beautiful"