

About Randall Forsberg and the Origin of this Article – by Alex Carlin

In the mid 90's I had a mission as director of the Leo J. and Celia Carlin Fund: find a defense analyst who could answer the question "what would US defense spending look like if it was limited to the defense of the US territory?" My problem was that all the candidates operated as if the best we can do is cut a program here and whittle down some spending there – they couldn't get outside the box and see the big picture. But then I was referred to Randall Forsberg. Many US citizens have a general sense that our economy is being bled dry by unneeded military expenditures, but it is only an intuitive feeling that something is dangerously wrong. Randy properly dissected and explained the components of this complex system so that ordinary citizens can finally clearly understand this central malfunction of our society. Then, operating from a clean slate, she proposed a defense budget that did the job without the ruinous extra spending. I am not aware of any other person who has accomplished this important task.

That achievement was enough to make Dr. Forsberg a major force in the field of military spending reform. But she also added a second crucial component – how a world security system could operate without large national armed forces. As a principle architect of Global Action to Prevent War, Randy did this and more: she laid out the practical steps of how to go from our current system to the new improved one. There was nothing vague and utopian about it – it was specific and rational. If anyone were to ask the question "if we disarm, then how will we be safe?" now we had an excellent answer.

So, in 1999 we wrote the first version of this paper.

I had a chance to meet her personally only one time – at the Hague Appeal for Peace Conference in 1999 – and her bright inspiring fresh energy that I had always felt from her telephone conversations was in full evidence there.

Not long before her passing we had a last phone conversation where we talked about my concern for how our society should find the resources we will need to manage climate change. She told me that she was just at a conference where this was discussed, and an interesting point was made: we overspend on the military close to the amount that we should be spending to responsibly manage climate change.

At this point I realized that our paper needed to be updated and disseminated widely, and as soon as possible.

Randy's work in this area will be extremely relevant for decades to come, since she reveals a truth that is denied vigorously year after year by advocates of current spending policies. My hope is that this paper will be updated on a regular basis, and will exist for decades as her ongoing voice in this struggle that we wage for establishing a military that delivers bona fide defense rather than foreign wars coupled with economic ruin.

Following picture depicts Elise Boulding, Randy Forsberg and Hazel Henderson

