

Conference addresses sex, violence, military and peace

Mayor Kitty Piercy read a speech by Barbara Lee, and author Gwyn Kirk was among the panelists

BY NICHOLAS WILBUR
NEWS REPORTER

The University hosted prominent authors, professors and community activists from across the country at "Gender, Race and Militarization," an all-day conference Friday. The speakers discussed sexual violence in wartime, what they called deceitful military recruiting tactics and the peaceful efforts from international communities to change in political priorities worldwide.

In the keynote address Master of Ceremonies Sandra Morgen, director of the Center for the Study of Women in Society, said gender, race and militarization are terms combined to help build power against the various kinds of fundamentalism.

"We were asking questions (about) how these dynamics produce ill results," Morgen said. "But you can also put the antitheses together. It is only when we put all of this together that we don't have one group over here and one group over there."

Rep. Barbara Lee, D-Calif., was called back to Washington, D.C., and was unable to personally deliver her speech, but the event sponsors asked Eugene Mayor Kitty Piercy to read the speech to the crowd of nearly 200 people.

Lee is the only U.S. House of Representatives member to vote against President Bush's Sept. 15, 2001 war resolution authorizing the use of

"all necessary and appropriate force" in preventing terrorist attacks against the United States. She introduced House Resolution 82, which would renounce the Bush administration's doctrine of pre-emptive war. She recently joined Dennis Kucinich, D-Ohio, and other Congress members to reintroduce legislation to create a United States Department of Peace.

"From the war in Iraq to the genocide in Sudan, there is a clear need for a government body that will create and implement policies that support peaceful resolution," Lee said in September.

In her speech, Lee wrote that America is the richest country in the world, "yet we spend less on international aid per capita than virtually any other country," an amount equal to two months' expenses for the military operation in Iraq.

"We would get a lot more security out of increasing foreign aid and addressing the root causing of terrorism than by fanning the flames of anti-Americanism in Iraq," her speech said.

She also said the racism that existed during World War II still exists in the war in Iraq. Just as Japanese citizens were portrayed as militarized enemies in posters, racism in Iraq, although more subtle, portrays Iraqis as a more primitive, violent people.

"It serves to justify the detentions

of Guantanamo and the atrocities of Abu Ghraib and reinforces the notion that some lives are more expendable and that some deaths are just inevitable," she added.

Lee's address emphasized the history of sexual violence in wartime. In 1937, more than 20,000 women were raped and killed during Japan's assault on the Chinese city of Nanking. In 1994, as many as 500,000 women and girls were victims of sexual assault in the Rwandan genocide.

A panel followed the reading of Lee's speech.

Panelist Gwyn Kirk, co-author of "Greenham Women Everywhere: Dreams, Ideas, and Actions from the Women's Peace Movement," compared the United States government to a massive vacuum, sucking up justice, creativity, imagination and physical resources.

She encouraged people to get involved in local peace efforts and to think about what it means to be patriotic "when the government is committing such atrocities."

"The community has bought the idea of the military," she said. "We need to put out there what we envision."

Citing the fiscal year 2006 military budget of \$419 billion, Kirk, in closing, asked the crowd: "How would we spend more than a billion dollars a day?"

Contact the campus and federal politics reporter at nwilbur@dailyemerald.com

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Special Budget Committee meeting. Immediately following will be a Full Board meeting.

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EMU Board Room

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University Health Center

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Who: Everyone should get a flu shot, but especially those at high risk for complications with the flu (e.g. those with asthma, diabetes, kidney disease or immuno-suppression, pregnancy, over age 65)

When:
for students: 9:00 a.m. - 4:00 p.m. Monday-Friday
for staff: 8:00 - 9:00 a.m. Wednesday, Thursday, Friday
10:00 a.m. - 2:00 p.m., Saturday Nov. 12

Cost:
for students \$13 (can be charged to UO account)
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Where: Area C in the University Health Center, no appointment necessary

More information: Contact the flu line 346-4444

<http://healthcenter.uoregon.edu>
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