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A new approach to Peace and Security

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Introductory remarks

Privilege-theme well chosen: *“Forward looking remembering”* includes past, present and the future.

Past

Memories- immense suffering of countless people on both sides - hell - atrocities –solidarity - courage joy – liberation. Above all: deep respect and gratitude for those who risked and gave their lives for our freedom and future. They faced up to the major challenge in those days: liberating us from the cruel oppression of a ruthless regime.

They gave their lives for our freedom thus creating the conditions for a truly human life. And, we today...? Are we committed to confront the actual threats to humanity?

While I express these feelings of deep respect I would like to assure our German friends that I am not only thinking of our liberators but also truly including all those Germans, who were sacrificed by a tyrannical ruler.



Present

Positive: Thankful for reconciliation - impressive integration former enemies in EU – (region of peace) – freedom - prosperity.

Negative: The extent and nature of several major threats to the human race. In today’s conference I cannot deal with the large-scale destruction of our natural environment and the appalling economic/social situation in our world (hunger/ poverty and the widening gap between rich and poor). I will focus on one of the most important issues of our time: how to prevent the annihilation of the greater part of humanity?

On this subject there are reasons for particular concern.

Until recently our first thoughts would go out to terrorism and the numerous ‘small scale conflicts’, claiming millions of victims since the end of the Cold War. These concerns are now overshadowed by the repercussions of the dramatic events in Georgia. But before going into the present crisis in East- West relations, I would like to draw your attention to some disturbing developments related to our subject:

1. Worsening of the nuclear threat. We are still living in the presence of nearly 27.000 nuclear weapons (several hundreds at hair-trigger alert). Nuclear Weapon States continue to regard nuclear arms as essential for national security. Hence, planning for a new generation of nuclear arms; refusal to sign/ ratify the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty and the recent revision of the nuclear strategy widening the possibility for an active use of nuclear arms (pre-emptive strike). The Non

Proliferation Treaty is undermined, chiefly as result of the refusal of the major nuclear powers to live up to their obligation to negotiate seriously about the ultimate goal of a world without nuclear weapons. Israel, India and Pakistan - three countries in volatile regions – joined the nuclear club, others are eager to follow. The tremendous dangers of nuclear arms recently prompted Kissinger, Schulz, and other prominent personalities, to launch a dramatic appeal to free the world of nuclear weapons.

2. Weaponization of Space. Few people seem to realize that the preparation for a Fourth Theatre of warfare is going full speed ahead. Billions are spent on this venture under the misleading pretext of defense against ballistic missiles. In the foreseeable future all parts on our planet will be exposed to the risk of obliteration. The passivity of public opinion for this ominous development is simply shocking in view of what is being prepared. The next major war will be fought in, into and from Space. A frightening prospect, not to speak of the utter chaos in modern society after communication satellites have been 'knocked out'. The US strategy, aiming at absolute dominance in Space, is provoking a new arms race (Japan, Basic Space Law)

3. The strong drive to turn NATO into a worldwide security organisation. This is a dangerous development as security in a multi-polar world should not be in the hands of one superpower, which will be by nature, primarily pursuing its own national interests.

4. Excessive military expenditures. Worldwide military spending in 2007, exceeded \$1000.000.000.000. Thus surpassing the peak reached during the Cold War! Here lies one of the reasons for the inadequate attention to major problems, which are affecting the human security of more than one billion people.

5. Research and Development on more 'effective' killing instruments. At this moment many thousands of highly qualified scientists and managers are engaged in forging new instruments of hell. The shocking effects of the cluster and thermo-baric bombs are well known; those of the 'directed energy weapons' will not stay behind for long.

The strong emphasis on military power is based on an obsolete concept of security. Governments are still in the ban of the classic maxim: "*if you want peace you have to prepare for war*". Few politicians seem to realize that holding on to this outdated security concept does not bring greater security but *a greater insecurity*.

Why? Because it ignores the close linkage between four basic factors:

- * The extreme vulnerability of modern society (invulnerability no longer exists).
- * The apocalyptic potential of nuclear arms (the danger of deliberate or inadvertent use).
- * Modern terrorism with its wide-ranging potential to cause chaos.
- * The greatly increased interdependence between nations.

It should be clear from the foregoing that a military conflict between major powers would be an act of mega-suicide. Even the use of a fraction of the nuclear arsenal would already imperil the human venture. In our interdependent, extremely vulnerable world, there is no longer the possibility to ensure security on a unilateral basis. Even for the most powerful nation in our world.

In an age in which mass destruction has become a real possibility, war can no longer be regarded as "the continuation of policy by other means"(Clausewitz). It represents the bankruptcy of policy.

Actually we are living with a costly and dangerous paradox: rising military expenditures and diminishing human security. The vast military machinery is endangering the survival of humanity instead of producing greater security!

Hence, the futility yes, irresponsibility, of cold war language and preparations for a major war in this age of WMD!

Now, let me come back to the crisis around Georgia. The organizers of this Conference have asked me to give a brief but frank assessment. So, here we go!

1. Excessive use of Russian military force in Georgia has sent shivers through all the adjoining states. Having been Ambassador in Poland I fully understand these preoccupations. Four decades of Soviet rule have left many people with traumatic experiences.

2. I seriously doubt, however, that greater security will be obtained by building up military structures supported by the Atlantic Alliance. The opposite will be the case! A new divide between two antagonizing powers would endanger the security of the bordering states as well as of other European states. I hope to have made clear why it is imperative to avoid any risk of a military confrontation between NATO and Russia.

3. More promising seems to me the opening of negotiations about a political deal based on the mutual recognition of each other's legitimate security interests. Two elements are here of vital importance. First: robust security guarantees for adjoining states by all parties concerned (Russia, US and EU) and secondly: no further NATO expansion.

I have my doubts about the present way of handling the crisis. The initial move by NATO to close the door for consultations looks rather impulsive and not appropriate at a moment that diplomats have to sit together. Cold War language and policies, bound to intensify the confrontation, are not very helpful.

The present situation is full of danger. Both sides have reasons for feelings of insecurity. Putting sticks in the underbelly of an insecure bear is not the best way to improve your safety. A robust security agreement for adjoining states seems to me a better option than NATO membership.

Future

The future looks grim, if we do not succeed in time to adopt a new comprehensive concept of security. Security can no longer be built on the *insecurity* of others; it has to be *shared*. That means that nations have to avoid actions that would lead to a sense of insecurity in other states. Not mutual distrust, but a determined effort to create conditions for trust is needed. We have to replace the classic concept: *if you want peace prepare for war* by its exact opposite: "*if you want peace, prepare seriously for peace*". Clearly, this is a tall order, as it does not only imply a drastic scaling down of armaments but also creating the conditions for peace in a spirit of justice and solidarity. In short: the focus has to shift from national security to shared security and the *taking care* of the legitimate interests of other nations. But, this requires apart from adequate international institutions, also a fundamental change in thinking about security and peace.

There will be no peace and security in our highly interdependent and vulnerable world unless nations learn to address major world problems in a spirit of justice and global responsibility (hunger, poverty, underdevelopment and the environmental crisis) Most of these require non-military means.

But, let there be no misunderstanding, the employment of limited military force - within an international context - will be unavoidable when all other means are exhausted and a greater human tragedy has to be avoided. The role of the military factor should, however, be subordinate to diplomatic, political, economic, social and other instruments of power.

The road towards a more just and peaceful world is long and arduous. The implementation of the new comprehensive security concept would demand far-reaching changes in the field of actual security policy. Let me mention just a few of these:

- * Radical revision of priorities in spending; drastic reduction of military expenditures and a substantial increase of efforts to meet major world problems(Millennium Development Goals).
- * Revising strategic concepts so as to safeguard the legitimate security interests of other nations(Shared security in a globalizing world)
- * Creating a security structure reflecting the reality of a multipolar world.
- * Renouncement of the doctrine that nuclear arms are a vital component of national security. Strong support for a worldwide effort to eliminate nuclear arms (and other WMD).
- * Putting an end to the weaponization of Space. Conclusion of a Treaty reserving Space exclusively for peaceful purposes.
- * Reducing funds for Research and Developments on new arms. Preventing the development of exceedingly cruel arms.

Now, anyone who has followed recent events will realize that the climate for these wide-ranging proposals does not look very promising. Distrust between major powers is mounting, a new arms race going on, preparations for a fourth Theatre of warfare in Space are in full swing and military expenditures are rapidly increasing. Indeed, the gap, separating us from a more peaceful and secure world, is awesome.

Are we doomed on this road to Armageddon?

Definitely not! I firmly believe that humanity will wake up and find ways for a more responsible way of dealing with conflicts than at present.

We are standing under the imperative to cross the bridge! We are not powerless spectators but called to be acting persons.

How?

The proposals just mentioned may seem to be far-fetched, but is there another way of surviving in our interdependent, vulnerable world, overloaded with an apocalyptic potential of destruction?

In the critical situation we find ourselves common sense is important but more will be needed. Government policies still tend to reflect an outmoded security concept. Needless to say that this attitude is strongly encouraged by the powerful military-industrial and scientific complex! Notions as: 'Shared security', 'global responsibility' and 'a sense of commonality' are still on the horizon. Of crucial importance for a more responsible policy on peace and security is therefore the pressure of global public opinion. And this will not come about without a strong motivation of people based on a deep conviction of life. In essence this means giving an answer to the question so well put in the Bible book of Genesis: "*Adam where are you?*". What are we doing with our talents, knowledge and possibilities? During World War II many gave this answer with their lives! And now...? Where do we stand at this critical moment in history? What is our answer whenever we look at the major problems in our world?

In my opinion this is today the crucial question for young and old, for everyone who cares about the continuity of life on our planet. This includes the many thousands of scientists, managers and functionaries engaged in the war industry as well as the politicians, diplomats, journalists. A spe-

cial appeal is, however, addressed to the younger generation, students, teachers and all those involved in education. They are holding the key to the future!

(Personal experience with a conflict of conscience as Ambassador of a NATO country on taking a public stand - in 1985 - on the madness of the arms race and the Star Wars project)

Frankly, I see the need for a critical reassessment of the actual prevailing attitude in life. Needed is now the development of a global consciousness, a sense of commonality. This implies that governments should harmonize their national interests with the legitimate vital interests of other nations.

We share a common destiny based on shared security.

In preparing to cross the bridge to a sustainable future we should be well aware of the pervasive power of the spirit. There is in fact a much closer relation between “inner peace” and world peace than many may think. Inner peace, rooted in a deep conviction of life, in faith, brings people into action. And this is exactly what we need when we want to mobilise the great potential of global public opinion for a new approach to peace and security.

Signs of hope!

Amidst all the depressing events it is important to keep an open eye for the promising activities of non-governmental organizations and the commitment of countless individuals in government or elsewhere in society.

I have the impression that more and more people are waking up to the seriousness of the situation and prepared to stick out their necks for a more responsible way of dealing with the major problems in our world. Even in the so delicate fold of peace and security are leading personalities getting convinced that we have to change course and respect each others legitimate interests in a globalising world. Indicative in this respect is the paradigm shift on nuclear arms among former hardliners.

Conclusion:

There can be no doubt: humanity is confronted with mortal dangers. Living conditions on our planet are rapidly deteriorating mainly as a result of human activities. Great concern is justified about the apocalyptic potential of modern arms and the weaponization of Space, which will soon make every spot on earth vulnerable.

The spectacular achievements in weapons technology have created the absurd paradox that rising military expenditures are leading to greater insecurity. The old concept: “if you want peace prepare for war “ no longer holds. It will be leading to disaster!

Humanity is henceforth standing under the imperative of adopting a new concept of peace and security: if you want peace, prepare seriously for peace. We have to cross this bridge! This will not be: “*one bridge too far*”, if we wake up to our calling and accept our responsibility just as those whom we have been remembering today!

Dear friends, let me conclude this contribution to our conference on “Forward looking remembering” with a prayer of the great cultural philosopher, Johan Huizinga, which he wrote in Oktober 1944, just before his death:

Oh God, keep our beautiful earth and its poor people, capable to do so much good, and this poor motherland of ours, so dear to us, ready to be a source of peace, order and justice.