

Dr. Gunnar Stålsett, Bishop emeritus of Oslo, Church of Norway

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Shared security - a holistic approach to peace. Peace as a fundamental human right.

It is a great privilege for me to address this important symposium and share with you some reflections on the topic of shared security as a holistic approach to peace.

This topic has been well chosen by the Niwano Peace Foundation which has graciously honored me with this year's Peace Prize. The volatile situation not only on the Korean peninsula, but in the region as a whole, and indeed with world wide repercussions, reminds us of the urgent need for a holistic and viable platform and posture for peace. Right to life is critical among the universally shared human rights. Can this be expressed in an equally binding human right to peace? Could that make a difference for the promotion of world peace in this generation?

A personal perspective

Allow me to begin by indicating my personal perspective on the topic which is both political and theological. As a citizen of Norway I have participated in political processes on national and international levels related to peace and disarmament, serving, among other roles, as a member of the Government's Advisory Group on Disarmament and Arms Control, and on the working group looking to a Nordic Nuclear Free Zone. I have attended a number of Special Sessions of the United Nations General Assembly on disarmament, including the important nuclear issue of the Non Proliferation Treaty.

During my 15 years as Member of the Norwegian Nobel Peace Prize Committee I have seen the importance of a broad approach to peace, and I have come to appreciate the value of a holistic, inclusive interpretation of peace, in both its negative and positive aspects. Among all topics, The Nobel committee has rewarded most frequently, work to address the threat of nuclear arms. The broad and inclusive concept of peace which includes human rights, humanitarian work and development, have underpinned the peace prizes. This is deeply grounded in an inclusive and holistic understanding of what works for peace. Similarly, the Niwano Peace Prize has demonstrated an understanding of peace as a holistic concept, by honoring a variety of peace activities. Its unique emphasis on a spiritual and moral motivation is also broadly interpreted.

Parallel to my secular engagement has been my involvement with ecumenical and inter religious movements such as the Lutheran World Federation, the World Council of Churches and the World Conference of Religions for Peace. In my own Church I have been engaged in a number of issues such as the anti-apartheid struggle, the fight for freedom of the Palestinian people, and the opposition to the war on Iraq.

These two areas or dimensions of peace work – the political and the religious - converged in my leadership of the Norwegian Section of Christian Approaches to Disarmament and Defense that brought together clergy and lay people, diplomats, military, peace researchers and theologians. A highlight that fits squarely within the ecumenical context was a conversation with the late Pope John Paul the II about a Global Peace Council that would operate at a senior leadership level. We agreed, on the concept, but were not able to bring the idea to fruition. I have heard the voice of the new pope Francis, and seen his acts of humility as a sign of hope. Will he be able to follow in the footsteps of St Francis of Assisi who taught us to pray: “Lord, make me an instrument of your peace” Will his, be a peace pontificate that embraces and give hope to the poor and marginalized and those terrorized by sectarian conflict, and civil war.

My approach to peace and security has thus all along, almost intuitively, been holistic, combining the political and the moral, the worldly and the spiritual, reflecting social responsibility and personal commitment. I have seen the importance of synergies between state and citizen, government and civil society, the secular and religious, in a global quest for peace. I have come to see peace as a fundamental human right, as a universal right for persons and peoples. The ongoing process towards expressing the human rights to peace in globally relevant and binding UN declaration is in my view worth supporting.

The historic significance of Kyoto and Japan and its relevance today

The nation of Japan and the city of Kyoto give us ample cause to reflect on the geo-political and historic context in which we seek a deeper understanding of what peace is about. Thus the venue of this Symposium carries great meaning. It was here in Kyoto that the WCRP was founded in 1970. This organization is today the worlds greatest inter religious peace movement.

The foundation of WCRP was very much inspired by the founder of the Buddhist lay organization Rissho Kosei-kai, Nikkyo Niwano. Today we remember him with great respect for his vision and his legacy demonstrated also in the work of the Niwano Peace Foundation. His religious leadership was underpinned by the firm belief that the path to true world peace is a path where differences of race, nationality, and religion must be transcended. His goal was to inspire people around the world to agree on the importance of achieving peace even as they retain and celebrate their diversity. It was also here in Kyoto that the most recent General Assembly of WCRP was held in 2006. Its central theme was that of *shared security*, a topic which still remains on the agenda of politics and religion.

Convening today in this ancient cultural capital of Japan for a symposium on security, we are reminded of the tragedy of world wars and the ambiguous roles that both states and religious institutions have played. The innocent victims of the nuclear bombs that annihilated Hiroshima and Nagasaki will forever bear witness to the unfathomable cruelty and destructive capacity of modern arsenals of war. But it was also here that the curse of warfare and mass destruction was turned into a beacon of hope for humanity, when post-war Japan adopted its peace constitution, an inspiring document that was unrivaled in the world.

The preamble of the Japanese constitution states that peace can only be achieved in the world through the “*justice and faith of the peace-loving people of the world*” and by “*banishment of tyranny and slavery, oppression and intolerance for all time from the earth.*” The constitution

also states that no nation is responsible to itself alone, but that laws of political morality are universal; and that obedience to such laws is incumbent on all nations.

This fundamental understanding of the moral responsibilities of individuals and the collective political responsibility of the entire nation, expresses a peace ethos that is reflected in the historic postwar canons of peace and human rights, the UN Charter and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. Their pivotal message may be summarized in words from the preamble of the constitution of UNESCO, which states that “*peace if it is not to fail, must be founded on the intellectual and moral solidarity of mankind*”

I firmly hold that the legacy expressed in these foundational documents is ours to protect and to implement in a search for shared security for all humanity.

Common security – a historic starting point

At this point let me briefly recall the epic work of the Independent Commission on Disarmament and Security issues led by late Swedish Prime Minister Olof Palme. One of its prominent members was Haruki Mori of Japan, former Ambassador to the United Kingdom and to the OECD, and former vice minister of Foreign Affairs. Among the testimonies presented to the commission was a “Statement from surviving victims of the nuclear attacks on Hiroshima and Nagasaki.”

The report of the commission, issued in 1982, was entitled “*Common Security. A blueprint for Survival*. Its core message rings true still today: *A doctrine of common security must replace the present expedient of mutual deterrence. International peace must rest on a commitment to joint survival rather than a threat of mutual destruction*. The focus of the Commission understandably at the time of the Cold War, under the overshadowing cloud of nuclear war, was on arms control, disarmament and security. The report recognized with simple clarity: There are no victors in a nuclear war. There is no such thing as limited nuclear war. And the principles guiding the report were equally poignant: All nations have a legitimate right to security. Military force is not a legitimate instrument for resolving disputes between nations. Restraint is a necessary part of any expression of national policy. This is a message with critical relevance in the present geo-political context of North and South Korea, China and Japan.

A few lines from the report convey a stern warning to the bellicose rhetoric we hear too often at this moment in history: “*We conclude that it is impossible to win a nuclear war and dangerous for states to pursue policies or strategies based on the fallacious assumption that a nuclear war might be won ... The idea of fighting a limited nuclear war is dangerous.*” Therefore it highlights the obvious conclusion: Nuclear weapons must be eliminated, before they eliminate all of us.

The notion of common security as developed in this report more than 30 years ago is still relevant today, especially in the context of the threat where rogue states and even terrorist gangs can threaten to unleash a war of mass destruction. But our understanding of what serves for peace has during the last generation been enlarged from the perspective of the Palme report to include also the positive component of a life in peace, a dimension that was only alluded to in the 1982 report.

The holistic concept of shared security

As today we emphasize the terminology of *shared security*, we see a broader agenda for peacemaking that extends well beyond just eliminating the threat of nuclear arms and other means of mass destruction.

Rather than focusing mainly on military and political perspectives, today we understand security in a more comprehensive or holistic way. Gradually the world has come to a more comprehensive understanding: what serves peace for humanity and for our habitat is far more than the absence of war. This essential understanding is sometimes misleadingly termed the negative understanding of peace. Beyond a peace agenda defined by disarmament, arms control, and lifting the threat of war, shared security expands the understanding of security to include such dimensions of peace as respect of fundamental human rights, health, development, rule of law, equal rights of men and women and inclusive citizenship, as opposed to marginalization and discrimination. This inclusive and positive notion of peace challenges and brings together on a global peace platform, the individual and the collective, the state and non-state actors, civil society and democracy, nations and the United Nations.

The WCRP General Assembly here in Kyoto in 2006 issued a Declaration on shared security that reads well even today. It argues for a robust commitment to shared security in the context of a comprehensive understanding of what today poses a threat to this fundamental aspiration of humanity:

“Today, genocide, state-sponsored repression, terrorism, and other forms of human rights abuse violate international law, target innocent civilians and threaten the safety of many communities. State laws restricting human rights and civil liberties are also forms of violence. Conflict related disease, famine, displacement and environmental catastrophes constitute serious threats to life. Violence against women and children, including rape, forced pregnancy, enslavement, forced labor, prostitution, the use of child soldiers, and trafficking, has become a tactic of warfare in many conflicts.”

Importantly it lifts up as a peace issue the environmental degradation and dwindling resources and sees these as threats to our planet’s ability to sustain life. And it recognizes that the poor, the powerless, and the most vulnerable populations suffer disproportionately the consequences of violence in all its forms. Peace issues are thus ranging from armed conflict to extreme poverty to environmental degradation.

Importantly for a religious perspective, the WCRP Kyoto declaration observes that *“religion plays a significant role in some of the most intractable and violent conflicts around the world. Religion is being hijacked by extremists, and too often by politicians, and by the media. Extremists use religion to incite violence and hatred.”*

Let there be no doubt, the disarmament track has achieved significant results in the international arena of the United Nations, with binding conventions against land mines, cluster bombs, and use of chemical weapons. A landmark decision by the General Assembly as recently as in March this year may significantly reduce the arms trade, an issue that has been on the agenda of religious organizations for decades.

A universally binding convention that would outlaw the possession and use of nuclear weapons is on the table. This may seem unattainable as long as the UN Security Council is populated on a permanent basis with the original nuclear states. But civil society and states must be in it for the long haul. We simply can not betray the trust of coming generations by neglecting the greatest human-made threat to peace.

In the quest for nuclear abolition, new imaginative approaches are encouraging. They include the recently held conference in Oslo Norway which explored the humanitarian impact of nuclear weapons, that weapons that is its devastating impact on human health, the biosphere and the structures of civilization. In a historic demonstration of growing public concern, 500 representatives of civil society and representatives of 132 governments discussed the way forward. Among the civil society organizations present were the International Campaign to Abolish Nuclear Weapons (ICAN), the International Committee of the Red Cross, The World Council of Churches, and the World Conference of Religions for Peace. Both the humanitarian approach to the issue and the broad scope of the participants were testimony to the wisdom of a holistic approach. A bishop from Japan, born of Hiroshima survivors, Laurence Yutaka Minabe, and a video message presenting the witness of another *hibakusha* (explosion affected person) Ms Setsuko Thurlow, made a strong impact.

A promising approach to holistic security: Human Rights to Peace.

Let me now turn to what I see as another important process approaching the issue of human security in a holistic way. I am referring to a revitalization of core strategies for peace through understanding peace as a fundamental dimension of human rights. A declaration on human rights of peoples to peace may even represent the overarching meaning of human rights to life. It is therefore a sign of hope that a process towards codifying the right to peace as human right is gaining momentum. Conferences on this topic have over the past two years been held in several countries, including Japan and Norway.

The Norwegian Institute of Human Rights organized the first meeting on this topic in Oslo in 1997, at which a draft declaration was initiated for UNESCO. The UNESCO General Conference, however, later refused to act on the proposal. Thanks to a number of civil society organizations, academic institutions, and governments, the issue has recently been placed on the agenda of the Human Rights Council and of its more broadly composed Advisory Committee. Key promoters have been the Spanish Society for International Human Rights Law, the International Observatory of the Human Right to Peace, and the World Council of Churches.

A breakthrough on the issue came when The Human Rights Council on July 5, 2012 adopted resolution 20/15 on “The promotion of the right to peace” by a vote of 34 in favor, 12 abstentions, and 1 opposed. The European members who have for years voted against the measure, abstained this year, and only the USA voted against. Western countries have always tried to separate the concept of security from human rights, a hangover from the time of the Cold War. The abstention this time can be seen as a modification of this ideological position.

The Human Rights Council on this mandate moved on to establish an open-ended working group. This group, which is chaired by the Ambassador of Costa Rica, a country with a pacifist constitution, is pursuing its work by means of seminars in several countries around the

world. Many universities and research institutes are actively supporting the process by expert consultations.

I had the privilege to address one such consultation on the human right to peace in Oslo in January this year, which gathered experts on law, military and security issues, human rights, and humanitarian work,

The Human Rights Advisory Committee in April 2012 adopted a *Declaration on standards relating to international peace and security*. Among core standards were peace education, development, the environment, and victims and vulnerable groups. This approach demonstrates a holistic understanding of peace bringing together negative peace understood as absence of violence, disarmament etc, and positive peace as justice and human rights.

This approach is however not new. For instance, the 1993 “Vienna Declaration and Program of Action”, proclaimed that all human rights are universal, indivisible, interdependent, and interrelated, in other words a holistic understanding of individuals rights and social and political rights.

This approach is deeply rooted in the UN Charter the Universal Declaration on Human Rights and in a long range of human rights instruments adopted by the UN and its organizations. Suffice it to recall that the UN Charter presents three pillars on which peace should be built; international peace and security, economic and social development of peoples, and respect for all human rights and fundamental freedoms.

The aim of the process toward a declaration on human rights to peace, is thus to establish a legal foundation for the human right to peace in accordance with the UN charter

The process towards a Declaration on the Human Right to Peace builds not only on the values and visions of the foundational documents of the UN, but on a number of specific resolutions of the General Assembly, such as the 1974 “Declaration on the Preparation of Societies for Life in Peace” and the 1984 “Declaration of the Right of Peoples to Peace”. The Millennium Development Goals can be seen as an attempt to implement a comprehensive, concrete agenda for shared security.

Japanese contribution to human rights to peace

One of the important engagements in this process has been the activities carried out by the Japanese Committee on the Human Right to Peace. Among the many civil society organizations, secular, and religious stakeholders that are involved is the Japanese Federation of Bar Associations.

The four symposia held in Nagoya, Osaka, Naha, and Tokyo have had an intellectual and inspirational effect on the global process. The Nagoya and Tokyo Declarations on the Human Rights to Peace build on the Santiago Declaration of 2010. The Japanese Federation of Bar Associations adopted in 2011 the “Opinion concerning the Declaration on the Rights of Peoples to Peace”. It is important to note that the statement referred to the right of peoples *and* individuals to peace, and that this right should include the prohibition of discrimination on the grounds of, inter alia, race, color, gender, language, religion, political or other opinion, nationality, ethnicity or social origin, birth, or other status.

It is also important that it proposes that all states should develop the full range of potential judicial instruments that will make it possible to realize the right to peace in practice. Of course the justiciability and enforcement of the human right to peace will be a key issue as the process continues.

In this context, I also note with great interest the contribution by the Appeals Court in Nagoya on April 17, 2010, on the right to live in peace as proclaimed by the Japanese Constitution. The Court stated that the right to live in peace is a vital right that supports all human rights. It is not a mere ideal, but a specific right for which people can seek redress from the courts.

To conclude this point, I see the attempts to codify and promulgate a declaration of the human right to peace as a process that builds on a holistic understanding of human security. The process will need to address a number of juridical and political issues, and the outcome is by no means guaranteed. But the process itself challenges world leaders to demonstrate their political will to put into practice the norms and ideals of the notion of human rights as imperative to achieving the goal of human security. It is indicative of the complexity of the issue that the terminology oscillates between, “human rights to peace”, “human rights of peoples and persons to peace” and simply “right to peace”. I prefer the use of “human rights to peace” as this posits the issue within the tradition of defining human rights on the basis of the foundational UN charter and declarations.

Religious contributions to a peace ethos

Finally let me return to the role of religion in the struggle for a universally shared peace platform.

Our religious traditions acknowledge our inherent vulnerability as humans. They call us therefore to care for one another and our world. They also affirm the healing power of an inclusive world view where the spiritual and moral dimensions are vital. The quest for human security is thus underpinned by religious and moral values.

The Buddhist perspective reminds us that hatred is never appeased by hatred. Hatred is only appeased by love. The eternal law (dhamma) is non-enmity, peace, and non-harm. There is no evil equal to hatred and no spiritual practice equal to forbearance. Only an in-depth analysis of suffering and its causes and the means of bringing an end to suffering offer the real promise of ushering in lasting peace.

And from the perspective of the Abrahamic faiths, Jewish, Christian and Muslim, the great commandment that calls us to love God and our neighbor as our self adds a spiritual and moral imperative to a humanist concept of solidarity.

The Golden Rule is echoed in different forms in various religions, including in the Confucian tradition. It calls us to do to others what you wish them to do to you, or, in an alternative formulation, not to do to others what you do not wish them to do to you. This spiritual insight is important for understanding the core essence of a mentality and culture of peace.

Equally, the blessing spoken by the Lord Jesus in the Sermon on the Mount to all peace makers is inclusive. *All* peace makers are called the children of God. There can be given no higher spiritual recognition of the work for peace.

It is my conviction that this shared spiritual heritage, its norms and its values, promote the human dignity of every person. It contributes to the upholding of a wise society that builds on belief in the inalienable right of every human being.

I am convinced that all religions can contribute to a more peaceful and just world and I have great faith in their ability to work for the realization of this vision.