

**INTERNATIONAL PEACE SYMPOSIUM  
GERMANY – JAPAN – KOREA**

**Peace and Human Security:  
Global Insecurity and Overcoming Violence  
March 31 – April 4, 2008  
Seoul, Korea**

Organized by  
DOAM Deutsche Ostasienmission, Tomisaka Christian Center, Korean Peace Foundation,  
in collaboration with the World Council of Churches  
(Decade to Overcome Violence 2001-2010)

**Letter to the Churches, to the World Council of Churches, and to our Governments:**

After the end of the cold-war era, concepts on security have changed from primarily “national security” to “human security” – with a different approach to and subject of security. The hope was that this people-centered concept, protecting individual human rights and responding to ordinary people’s needs, would bring about regional and global peace. The UNDP 1994 development report stated that the most fundamental necessity for building human security is to guarantee “freedom from want” and “freedom from fear”. The concept of ‘human security’ is meant to be cooperative (internationally), comprehensive (personal, social, political, economic and environmental dimensions of security are interlinked), and common (different players are involved). People themselves should be empowered to contribute by identifying and implementing solutions to insecurity in order to overcome violence.

During this conference we have learned about the “myth of security”, the ambiguity, and even the misuse of the concept of human security by the economically dominating powers as well as by the governments of our countries. Who defines security? Personal witnesses, experiences and reflections have taught us that the concept of human security needs to be redefined. Achieving human security must include all human voices, especially the voices of the marginalized. The so-called “war on terror” led by the USA, which all our governments have become part of for the sake of “security”, is generating a growing militarization of foreign politics. These developments are in fact raising the level of insecurity for all instead of enhancing human security. There is a need to discern the real reasons of terrorism and the “war on terror”. In addition, the domination of the economy in neo-liberal globalization processes is a growing factor of insecurity, which leads the powerful to defend their economic safety by violent means, generating vicious cycles of violence and increasing insecurity for the majority of people everywhere. Subsequently, fear – the most obvious expression of insecurity – becomes the dominating motivation in political decision-making.

**A. SEE: We have shared our concerns...**

... that the Japanese government is taking alarming steps to distance the nation from its learnings from World War II. In 2006 the “Basic Law for Education” was changed in order to enhance nationalism and a “sense for community”. In 2007 the former Office of Defence was elevated to the status of a full Department. Procedures have been initiated to facilitate changes to the Japanese peace constitution. Particularly the pacifistic Article 9 of the Constitution is in danger, since the ruling LDP intends

to allow for a “self-defence army” (*Jieigun*), contrary to the existing constitution, which specifies that “land, sea, and air forces, as well as other war potential, will never be maintained.”

...that in Okinawa – as in many other parts of the world – the US military bases occupy lands, violate the self-determination of the host-communities, cause environmental damage, and lead to the loss of indigenous cultures. Above all, women and children suffer terrible sexual violence and rape by the foreign soldiers. These violations of human rights and of human security are accepted in the name of “national security” and defending democracy as the rationale of the US military presence. Combat and sexual violence are essentially tied together; militarized national security is closely linked with patriarchy, racism, and gender discrimination, since violence is intrinsic to the very structure of the military that controls others by force.

... that the Reform Treaty of the European Union (*Treaty of Lisbon*) is calling for “free and fair trade” and a “highly competitive social market economy” (Art. 3) at the same time. It will base “missions outside the Union” on “civilian and military assets” (Art. 42). The EU Treaty requires the right to carry out “joint disarmament operations” by “military means” in other countries but does not speak about disarming the EU. Instead, member states shall “improve progressively their military capabilities” (Art 42). In addition the *European Defence Paper* confirms “economic survival” as a vital interest of the EU and claims that military options are legitimate for “projecting stability to protect trade routes and the free flow of raw materials.”

...that leading politicians in Germany speak in favour of weakening the distinction between inner and outer security. Plans to change the constitution are underway in order to allow for a militarization of inner security. A new concept of “linked security”, which allows a linkage of different security forces to operate within the country and intervene in other countries, shall provide economic stability (which speaks against the UN-Charter, Art. 51).

...that rising xenophobia is a challenge to “security” in Japan, Korea and Germany.

...that thousands of refugees who try to enter the EU are dying at the borders. Migrant workers in Asia often are excluded from main-line societies and treated disrespectfully; their human dignity is denied.

...that in North Korea economic security is not adequately provided (such basic needs as food, clothing, medical care); Personal testimonies tell us about the severe risks that defectors face and their difficulties in finding their place in South Korean society.

... that in the Korean Peninsula the ongoing threat of nuclear war has been exacerbated by the recent statements of the South Korean government and its military officials. The Korean members of our Symposium reasoned that the possibility of a nuclear attack is low because the two countries are interdependent economically and culturally. The greatest fear of most Koreans lies in the possibility that the United States of America will be the instigator of pre-emptive military attack on the North.

...that in South Korea the gap between rich and poor is ever growing; unemployment is a sign of the price the society pays for economic development. The poorest are excluded from the social safety net.

...that in all of our countries the income gap between the poor and the wealthy is widening. Neo-liberal globalization has ingrained economic values in the people and they do not care about the impact of these consumerist values. Moreover, the people have not been made aware of the impact of consumption on the environment. The concern about global climate change is well articulated but it does not include concern about climate justice e.g. use of energy, food, water and other resources.

## **B. JUDGE: We have been re-oriented by our biblical and theological reflections**

The Biblestudy on Psalm 85 has reminded us about the interrelatedness of justice and peace. In revisiting the New Testament passages of Luke 2 and Colossians 1 (Christushymnus) we have been reminded of the Peace of Christ as a counter-story to the *Pax Romana* – as well as to all earthly empires. From a Christian perspective, the empire's concept of security is violent and exclusive, aiming at the elite's happiness and enjoyment of their possessions (Josephus, Antt XIV, 156f), whereas the angel who announced Jesus' birth by proclaiming "Glory to God" and "peace on earth" is speaking to ordinary people. In order to bring peace to the world, God is making himself/herself vulnerable by becoming human. "For in him all the fullness of God was pleased to dwell, and through him God was pleased to reconcile to himself all things, whether on earth or in heaven, by making peace through the blood of his cross."(Col. 1:19-20)

This liberating gospel is the ultimate unmasking of political imperialist ideology. This Bible-story entails a realistic anthropology; it informs us about our own vulnerability and the limits of human-made securities. Vulnerability is a mark of our being created; vulnerability is not to be deplored, but to be accepted and appreciated, for its counter-side is our receptiveness, our ability for love, compassion, and sympathy. People will suffer and feel fear as long as they live, we cannot erase that by promising security. Only if people's basic needs are cared for, will fullness of life become possible.

"Do not be afraid" is the essential message of the 'gospel of the poor' (Luke). It is proclaimed to all, first of all to those who live on the margins of society, the poor, the oppressed, the most vulnerable who cannot "secure" themselves. Personal testimonies from those imprisoned during the time of the democratization movement in Korea tell us about the truth of this gospel. Faith in God – who became human in Jesus Christ – can be a liberating power from the restless search for security (*securitas*), since it provides certainty (*certitudo*). Therefore the primary goal for Christians can never be to achieve a high-scale security at the cost of others, but rather to work for peace and to strive to overcome violence and insecurity for all, starting with the weakest of society.

Based on these insights, for Christians the means to reach human security are crucial. Security will not be reached at the cost of some, nor by violent actions. In 1934, the young German theologian Dietrich Bonhoeffer went as far as to say "There is no way to peace on the way of safety... Peace is the opposite of security." Reading the signs of the time, he saw clearly the danger of a government that was ready to preserve its own security and build its own prosperity by exclusion and violence. There is no way to human security by violence. A realistic approach needs to build trust among people by sharing of power and resources. Human rights need to be strengthened, not weakened, in order to build confidence in political institutions. The degree of real human security will have to be measured by the implication those actions taken have for all within the *oikoumene*, first of all for the weakest.

## **C. ACT: We respond to the challenges**

We invite all the churches to pray for the following concerns together.

We welcome and support...

- ...the formation of the "Ecumenical Forum for Peace, Reunification and Development Cooperation on the Korean Peninsula";
- ...the organisation of the international Women's Network against Militarism to continue their work and enlarge the circle of participants;

- ...the program of the EMS (Association of Churches and Missions in South Western Germany) to exchange personnel between the countries to create possibilities for mutual learning and integration (not assimilation).
- ...every effort to interreligious cooperations for justice, peace and the integrity of creation.

We invite our churches as well as churches all around the world...

- ...to support and make room for foreigners and migrants in their midst;
- ...to continue to invite people from different regions to get together;
- ...to commit themselves to 'God's option for the poor'. In many contexts our protestant churches have become middle-class churches and have left behind the poor in their midst.
- ...to provide social education in order to become able to appreciate and celebrate cultural and religious diversity in pluralistic societies.
- ...to encourage and support those initiatives and groups within and outside the church communities which engage actively in promoting justice, peace and the integrity of creation.

We recommend that a thorough monitoring process be initiated...

- ...on the increasing involvement of the military in the "war on terror" (e.g. German troops in Afghanistan) and on how systems of surveillance have become increasingly pervasive;
- ...on the activities of the mass media in creating fear and feelings of insecurity.

We need to...

- ...collect good examples of and strategies for nonviolent peace-making and case studies to enhance real "human security" for all, starting with the most vulnerable, and widely share these "good news" and methodologies;
- ...strengthen democratic tools, by creating ways of direct participation of the people in each sector of society;
- ...build up a network of people to discuss the subject of genuine security for all creation, as the basic need of life. Food, shelter, clothing, dignity, belief, race, etc. should be protected;
- ...address the issue of growing militarization in Germany, Japan, Korea and other countries which impose fear on people. These countries believe in militaristic solutions to problems in other regions of the world;
- ...encourage every country to adopt a resolution prohibiting their government from going to war, like the Japanese constitution Article 9, in order to break the cycle of war and violence.

We urge...

- ...the lifting of economic sanctions (based on UN Resolution 1718) against North Korea;
- ...that the armistice between North Korea and the U.S.A. must be changed into a peace treaty as soon as possible;
- ...that the Korean peninsula becomes a nuclear arms free zone;
- ...the South Korean government to give more freedom for conscientious objection;
- ...that personal security will be guaranteed (especially for women and children, who are the most vulnerable);
- ...that the Pyongyang Declaration by the former Prime Minister of Japan, Koizumi Junichiro, and the Chairman of the National Defence Commission, Kim Jong Il, of North Korea should be implemented as soon as possible for normalization of relations between the two countries.
- ...the churches in our countries to express, through their partnerships with US churches, their concern that the USA should establish diplomatic relations with North Korea in order to strengthen the peace on the Korean peninsula.

During this Symposium we have heard that in Tibet more people have been killed, injured, and arrested. We are deeply concerned about their safety and we hope that these violations of human rights will stop immediately.

We ask the World Council of Churches to initiate and support an international ecumenical study project on “human security” and overcoming violence, and to bring this topic to the International Ecumenical Peace Convocation in 2011, which marks the culmination of the “Decade to Overcome Violence”.

We, sixty participants of the Symposium (and more than sixty additional guests), met in northern Seoul, enjoying the fresh air and the beautiful landscape. We were welcomed and hosted in a wonderful way by our Korean sisters and brothers. We appreciated the chance to talk with a priest in a Buddhist temple in Seoul and to travel to Kaesong in North Korea. We are most thankful to have had this opportunity to gather together in this truly ecumenical community. We studied and discussed together, we worshiped together and we shared Holy Communion – the feast of reconciliation.

Approved on April 4, 2008 (40 years after the assassination of Martin Luther King Jr.)