

PEACE & SECURITY AND DISARMAMENT

**A speech by Gita Brooke (delivered by Kate Smith) of
Operation Peace through Unity (OPTU)
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First of all I would like to thank the UNANZ for inviting me to participate albeit from a distance in the group activity of this conference, and a warm thank you also to Diane for having patience with me and living in the hope that I would deliver something useful for today's deliberations on peace and security and disarmament! Another big thank-you to Kate for agreeing to deliver my presentation.

Before we start may we have a moment of silence in which we place the words peace – security – disarmament - into the light in our hearts and let them remain there throughout our discussion and decision making – thank you.

Is it not a most wondrous thing that human beings have somehow been given the opportunity to experience themselves to be self conscious units within a universe infused with life? Looking up into the sky from our planet we are today able to see ever further into space. The appearances and disappearances of heavenly bodies are being recorded, and the ordered process of construction, destruction and re-construction in this evolutionary progress can be traced to the deepest space right down and through to the atomic level. As above so below.

One thing is certain. Life is never static. It follows rhythms of livingness. So is it not entirely possible that, within the chaotic, dysfunctional and collapsing state of affairs on our little planet – at the very heart of all trauma, tension and upheavals – we shall be finding the blueprints which can guide our evolutionary process and transform all planetary relationships?

And the three words covering the theme for our workshop may well stand at the core of the many challenges and opportunities we are facing together.

With regard to Peace and Security, the UN Secretary-General – in his report on security sector reform to the Security Council (23 January 2008) - stressed that a holistic and coherent UN approach to security sector reform is vital. There is a need for a common understanding of what security might mean, to the nation as well as to the individual human being, and the Secretary-General felt that the UN Millennium Declaration had captured the core principle on which a common vision of security could be built when it states that *'men and women have the right to live their lives and raise their children in dignity, free from hunger and the fear of violence, oppression or injustice'*.

Although each state and society will tend to define and pursue security according to their own history, culture and needs, and that therefore no single model of a security sector is possible, the report specifies some common features, one of which highlights the importance of establishing a strong culture of service: *'promoting unity, integrity,*

discipline, impartiality and respect for human rights among security actors and shaping the manner in which they carry out their duties’.

Security sector reform will need to demonstrate that security goes far beyond traditional military elements and come to include a much wider range of actors who work together with a shared vision of peace and security. Among the important lessons learnt is that, for a sustainable peace and development to be restored to a country after the withdrawal of international peace keeping operations, a nationally led and inclusive process will need to be in place in which *‘national and local authorities, parliaments and civil society, including traditional leaders, women’s groups and others, are actively engaged’.*

Ban Ki-moon also emphasised the important role that the Peacebuilding Commission can come to play in this regard.

In the NGLS (UN Non-Governmental Liaison Service) Development Dossier, published in 2005, entitled ‘Designing a Peacebuilding Infrastructure: Taking a Systems Approach to the Prevention of Deadly Conflict’ its author, Tobi P. Dress, describes armed conflict as a process, not an event. *“It is”* he says, *“a process of destruction or deterioration that can be chronic and disabling over a long period, or rapid and devastating.”*

Prevention of conflict is similarly a process and not an isolated one-off project, but rather a *‘confluence of attitudes, activities and institutions that, to be sustainable, should not be accidental or serendipitous, but well planned and strategized.’* In other words real healing and restoring can not be hurried. It requires patience and persistence – and a steadfast belief in the outcome.

While the global military infrastructure is well structured, well funded and well prepared for action, the international efforts for the prevention of conflict are generally under funded and lacking adequate resources and planning. Says Tobi Dress: *“The world will always be forced into crisis reaction rather than engaged in preventive action if the international community does not collectively create an infrastructure for durable peace planning.”*

Most people working for a peaceful, healthy and non-violent world are realizing – sometimes with considerable frustration – that such a goal can not be achieved by force, or by inducing a change of behaviour through fear, bribery or totalitarian means. Peace cannot invade a country, a culture, or a person. Through our many years of travel and work within the world disarmament movement in the 1980s early 90s Anthony and I saw the results of such attempts to quick conversion and recruiting of people for disarmament. This often led to rather intolerant, judgmental and confrontational approaches to peace. Peace cannot be built on fear or indoctrination. It must be built on reliable and balanced information, resulting in deeper understanding, leading to carefully considered action. It is a process of change and transformation from the inside out – for all of us.

For building a peaceful world we do indeed need many different talents and skills: the need for maintaining a holistic vision while working on specific projects; for keeping a balance between analytical and intuitive approaches to any conflict-solving; and for moving the process forward without losing sight of what has gone before, or of the road ahead. While a military set up is organizational in its structure, it could be said that the

structures needed for a world in peace resemble more that of an ever evolving integrated organic whole. While war can take place through the dictate of a few, and the press of a button, a world in peace will only emerge through the united labour and common resolve of all peoples.

What is now needed, says Dress, is systemic thinking and systems planning to replace the current fragmentation in the fields of conflict prevention and peacebuilding. And in this regard he too believes that the UN Peacebuilding Commission could come to play an increasingly important role.

The establishing of a UN Peacebuilding Commission (PBC) was one of the many recommendations in the UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan's report "In Larger Freedom" prepared for the September 2005 Millennium+5 Summit. This new UN body - the first ever joint subsidiary body of the Security Council and the General Assembly - will aim to identify countries at risk of violent conflict, organize prevention efforts, and 'marshal and sustain the efforts of the international community in post-conflict peacebuilding'. The Commission will also *'bring together the UN's broad capacities and experience in conflict prevention, mediation, peacekeeping, respect for human rights, the rule of law, humanitarian assistance, reconstruction and long-term development'*. The PBC is made up of an Organisational Committee, which includes 31 member countries: 7 each from the Security Council, General Assembly and ECOSOC, plus members from financial contributors, military personnel providers, civilian police to UN missions and 7 additional members to make up for any geographical imbalances, elected by the General Assembly. The Commission's real work however will be in its 'country-specific committees', each committee made up specifically to suit each peacebuilding activity, and involve country representatives as well as other relevant contributors from regional organizations and banks and international financial institutions. (More information in Q&A paper available)

The report furthermore recommended that a voluntary standing fund for peacebuilding be created and supported. It also asked the Secretary-General to establish a small peacebuilding support office within the Secretariat, staffed by qualified experts to assist and support the Peacebuilding Commission. (paper on Peacebuilding Support Office available)

In the first session of the Commission's Organisational Committee (June 07) some general guiding principles for civil society participation in PBC meetings were drawn up, which clearly shows the Commission's recognition of the important contribution of civil society. And the equal participation and full involvement of women in peacebuilding efforts was emphasized. The conditions for inclusion of civil society organizations are also spelled out in these guidelines, but in spite of this, their active participation is still somewhat nebulous. It is, I think, still waiting for us, 'civil society', to seize the opportunity it offers. (copies of paper and perhaps also thepaper from Friedrich Inst..)

At the opening of the PBC's first Retreat (January 2008) the UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon once again expressed his unequivocal support for its work, saying that the Commission embodied all aspects of the UN's work: Peace, development and human rights. By integrating them into one coherent approach the Commission is helping to

close the existing gaps in the international response to countries emerging from conflict. Ban Ki-moon also praised the Commission for leading the way in involving national actors in substantive decisions. But financial support for the Commission remains critical, said the Secretary-General. Even pledged support for peacebuilding sometimes does not eventuate.

Having already embarked upon its two first peacebuilding assignments in Burundi and Sierra Leone, the PBC met again in January 2008 to discuss its future work in Guinea-Bissau, and approved the new member states, sub-regional, regional and international organizations and UN entities who wished to join the country-specific configuration. Just to give you a little idea of what kind of money is available to the work of the Commission: the estimated cost of its field visits during 2008 is \$676,300!

The Security Council as well as the General Assembly have clearly and consistently been expressing their will to strengthen the UN's working relationship with civil society in order to create the broadest possible conflict-prevention and peacebuilding strategies, and underscored this by creating a new body to this end. The UN has gone as far as it can. The UN can not enforce. Now governments need to show the political will to enable the Peacebuilding Commission to do the work it is set up to do. And it is civil society who needs to insist that they do so. (I. proposal for a resolution.)

But people throughout the world community have not been idly waiting for the UN or their governments to solve the world's problems. There has been a great upsurge of violent conflict prevention and reconciliation initiatives and activities within civil societies throughout the global community, as well as an increasing emphasis on co-ownership of and co-responsibility for the state of affairs of the world. And what is more, these issues are being approached with a holistic mindset as well as a real concern and compassion for the individual within that whole.

The 2005 Paris Declaration, for instance, outlined five principles: ownership; alignment; harmonization; managing for development results; and mutual accountability; and these principles subsequently provided the basis for the extensive discussions of the "Workshop on Development Effectiveness in Practice: Applying the Paris Declaration to Advancing Gender Equality, Environmental sustainability and Human Rights" which took place in Dublin, April 2007 (funded by the governments of Ireland and Denmark).

The media is also waking up to its responsibilities, and in June 2008 an International Conference will take place in Bonn on the theme 'Media in Peacebuilding and Conflict Prevention', co-hosted by Deutsche Welle and the Foundation for International Dialogue. Media representatives from around the world, high-profile experts, artists, politicians, entrepreneurs and scientists and NGOs will all participate in these discussions around the role and the potential the media has for influencing the direction of public understanding of the affairs of the world. (II. Resolution)

Disarmament.!

So much has happened since OPTU was actively involved in the Disarmament Campaign during the very *cold* cold war period in the 1970-90s. During this time we met with union members, teachers, students, NGOs, politicians, church groups and individuals, business people, lawyers and scientists in many countries including Russia, middle European states, UK, Scandinavia, African countries, China, the Philippines, India etc. As an opening for discussion we had a few tools which we used wherever appropriate. One of these was two videos made by the USSR and USA International Physicians for the Prevention of Nuclear War, which showed interviews with Russian and American school children, giving them the opportunity to express their feelings about the arms race and the threat of nuclear war. Their eyes and their simple words told the naked truth of what it did to them, reflecting their fear and lack of hope for the future. Not one of these students however blamed either country; they simply pleaded for some explanation to the arms race, and what those in power hoped to achieve. With the videos providing a basis for discussion and soul searching we usually found a way straight to the personal level of the arms race issues, sharing deep rooted mistrust and fear between peoples and nations, who once had joined forces against totalitarianism. People either carried, or had inherited, the deep scars of the two world wars and, while feeling the nagging pain of separateness and alienation between peoples, they found it almost impossible to decide whether or not a strong military power, even with nuclear arms, might be the sad but necessary defense against an invasion by a foreign state. Furthermore many people, both men and women, were earning their living in arms related industries, which enabled them to provide food, shelter and education for their children. How would they survive without the jobs provided by the military defense industry? These were, and are still, serious and valid questions needing answers on many levels.

We also used another tool: a graphic presentation, published by the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI) in 1983, which highlighted the amount of all the firepower used in WWII – 3 megatons - with one little dot in the middle of an A4 paper; and then showed, through other dots representing the same amount of firepower in nuclear weapons, how much firepower the world had in its possession in 1982, namely 18.000 megatons. Enough for 6.000 WWIIs! (show the paper)

According to Scientists for Global Responsibility, humanity today possesses a nuclear weapons arsenal which totals more than 5,000 MT. Each megatonne has the explosive power of one million tons of TNT – just a little under a tonne for every person on the planet. And, according to SIPRI, the global military expenditure is currently US\$1.2 trillion per annum – which amounts to \$185 per year for every man, woman and child on earth – including the approx one billion human beings who are living below the poverty line of one dollar a day.

The notion that the military industry is the best provider of job opportunities may also prove to be a myth. According to a recent (October 2007) survey by the Department of Economics and Political Economy Research Institute (Univ. of Massachusetts), entitled ‘the US Employment Effects of Military and Domestic Spending Priorities’, the number of jobs created by spending \$1 billion on defense is 8,555; same amount on health care:

10,779; on education 17,687; and on mass transit: 19,795. (taken from YES magazine: www.yesmagazine.org))

The act of locking human skills and talents and planetary resources into the construction of tools for destruction which, if used, means self-destruction, belongs to a mindset for which governments alone are not responsible. We, the world's peoples, need to take co-ownership of the disarming process. When we decide to find ways of combining our different skills, talents and practices into a sustained collective effort, then we can turn the trend and create a climate - an atmosphere - of mutuality in which disarmament not only can but will happen. A united and determined public pressure, will also help give governments the political will to demonstrate greater disarmament resolve.

A small sign of a 'climate change' within 62nd UNGA's 1st Committee on Disarmament and International Security, became momentarily visible when a suggestion was made by the representative of Benin that delegates should strive to set aside their national priorities when negotiating and deliberating, and instead see themselves as *'agents of change whose job it is to find solutions to the problems of humankind'*. This is an example of the way we individually can - if we truly believe we can - increase public pressure on each and every governments to agree on disarmament measures which take to heart the interests of all peoples and nations.

We all carry within us a fraction of the problem as well as the solution. Unitedly we have the power to change and transform all relationships. It is within our reach to disarm the world, bit by bit and in total. And today we are seeing so many signs of the thawing - the meltdown - of the mindset on which the military complex has depended for its resources and its capacity for war. Although debris of the old resentful and intolerant mindset are still spreading the chill of fear and mayhem throughout the world, the shimmering green of a new season and of a new culture is becoming visible in all neighbourhoods of our global community.

Peace through Unity has for several years been involved in an initiative to establish Ministries or Departments of Peace within each nation, based on the UN Declaration and Plan of Action for a Culture of Peace. This initiative is growing rapidly and has members in countries on all continents. A NZ chapter has also been established, now focalized by the NZ Peace Foundation. The next Summit will take place in Australia in September this year, where NZ will be represented by Sophia La Toa. (info plus bookmarkers and possibly other material on the alliance, such as the statement of principles).

OPTU believes that the work of the UN Peacebuilding Commission could be greatly enhanced by the establishing of ministries/departments of peace in all UN member states. So we have drafted a resolution which is calling on the UNGA to encourage the establishment of Ministries for Peace within all UN member states. The resolution points to some of the reasons why such ministries could play a significant role in unifying the many local, regional and international efforts towards creating better relationships between all peoples and nations. (copies available) (III. Resolution)

The first decade of the new millennium has seen humanity owning up to many challenges and setting itself some important goals. The MDGs are summing up many of the issues

that urgently need to be dealt with, and - slowly – old habits, lethargy and indecisions are being overcome on all levels of society, making way for new and better relationships.

The Universal Declaration of Human Rights defines in its first Article the sovereignty of each individual saying that: *“All human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights. They are endowed with reason and conscience and should act towards one another in a spirit of brotherhood”*. This Article holds the key to the correct and true implementation of the rest of the Declaration’s articles.

This year the recently formed group called “The Elders” is encouraging people to ‘discover and re-discover’ the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, urging us to “read it, sign it, and pledge to live by its principles” It can be signed at <http://www.theelders.org/>

When we resolve to building good relationships across all borders and between all peoples, respecting the dignity and rights of all men and women and children - then the world will disarm;

When human ingenuity follows the decree of the heart and let goodwill characterize all we do - then we will bring order out chaos and - abandoning all intent to harm - create a world in which freedom is partnered with responsibility.

When it is commonly accepted that the only constant in life is continuous change and transformation - then we may discover a sense of security which no earthly threat can touch.

A Teacher of humanity reminds us that: “Above the brain, there is the Heart”.

And Rainer Maria Rilke put it like this: “The work of the eyes is done. Now go and do heart work”

It is Heart which renders the power of goodwill and the wisdom to transform the world and usher in a culture of peace. Let us use the tools created; develop the needed inner as well as the outer skills; and go and to do *‘heart work’* - together.

Workshop resolution proposals:

I. Could this workshop agree on the text of a resolution which asks the Government of New Zealand actively to explore the possibility for the Peacebuilding Commission to assist countries within this region (f.inst. Timor L'Este) in post-conflict peacebuilding, provided its Government agrees to such an initiative.

Could the workshop also ask that our government promotes the work which this new UN body is set up to do; helps to provide the necessary funding for it to fulfill its overall aims and goals; and enables the active involvement of civil society in future peacebuilding missions by the Commission.

{II. Perhaps this workshop could explore who is participating in this conference from New Zealand, and ask that a report from this conference be made available to the public. Perhaps this workshop might consider ways of how we, the readers, could influence the media through stressing the importance of it regaining our trust in the media through becoming good networkers of reliable information and through raising public awareness on urgent issues of common concern? Could the workshop also urge the media to make a clear distinction between 'gossip' and fact, and take its responsibility to the local/global community seriously.} *suggest deleting this resolution in favour of the reconciliation one?*

III. Could this workshop consider supporting this initiative, through formulating a resolution that recommends that a Ministry for a Culture of Peace/Ministry of Peace be established within the New Zealand government through which it can focus its conflict resolution and peacebuilding activities, within New Zealand as well as within this region and the rest of the world, and using also the Peacebuilding Commission as a valuable instrument for restoring peace to conflict ridden nations within the Pacific Region.

Quote: *' Because, before I, the individual human being, within the unity of nations, am willing to change, no real and lasting changes can in fact come about. If we people continue to keep our vision of the ideal society at arm's length and mock the idealist; if we keep pretending that a few surgical corrections of the old will make it new, we shall continue the dreary, life-less and uninspired merry-go-round of re-organising the status quo, busily preoccupying ourselves getting nowhere.'*

Quote: comment made by a journalist re media at a workshop in Peace, Power and Politics conference: *"An institution seeking to make profit should not be expected to give moral leadership"*

References and Suggested Further Reading

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