

Speech by Dr. Arias
Society for International Development
Building Global Human Security

Rethinking Peace and Security

In considering peace and security, we undertake an effort which is not without precedent. Over the years, myriad assemblies have gathered to tackle the difficult task of consolidating these two bastions of international order. And the years have produced myriad prescriptions:

- from Westphalia in 1648, when order was linked to respect for sovereignty;
- to San Francisco in 1945, where order depended upon collective security;
- to the present day, when we foresee that order will be found in the eradication of the hazards which threaten humankind's chances to achieve personal and collective progress.

While the conception of order has differed with time, its significance, and even more, its pertinence has held true. We need order for human sustenance, for human development, and ultimately, for human survival.

As conceived by the founders of the League of Nations and the United Nations, order was characterized by the absence of conflict between states. It entailed the establishment of universal organizations to enforce global rights and responsibilities, to restrain potential aggressors, to foster economic welfare, and to promote the rule of law.

The ensuing Cold War forestalled the realization of this vision. In the order which



followed, the discourse on universality and globalism was replaced by the rhetoric of antagonism- a rhetoric with a vocabulary all of its own. Terms like national security, containment, and deterrence came to substitute for global security and solidarity. Likewise, human security was eclipsed by balance-of-power politics.

With the collapse of the Soviet Bloc we have once more begun to hear the murmurs of order regained, of security recaptured, and of democracy vindicated. But these murmurs are quieted by the laments of a Third World which seems, once again, to have been forgotten.

What does the end of the Cold War mean to the starving children, to the heartsick mothers, and to the desperate fathers of the Third World? It means nothing if they do not have access to food, to clothing, to housing, to education, and to health care.

The end of the Cold War won't mean anything if we do not replace the outdated concept of security that prevailed during the East-West conflict. Today, security must mean more than the avoidance of nuclear war; it must mean the absence of want. It is time for security to mean food for the hungry, books for the ignorant, medicine for the sick, freedom for the oppressed, and work for the unemployed. In essence, the search for security begins with the search for human dignity.

No strategy for peace and security can ignore the fact that the world's poor will, if left out of the world economy, seek alternative means of subsistence that could jeopardize global



security. We already know that economic backwardness is often the cause of political instability and social conflict. We also know that it lies at the root of much of the damage done to the environment.

Many of the shortcomings of present development efforts in the Third World have to do with a lack of understanding about true global interdependence in the industrialized world. In the past decade, North-South cooperation has deteriorated considerably, in large part because the Third World is no longer of geopolitical significance to the great powers.

Levels of development aid have tended to stagnate and fall, and tariff and non-tariff barriers have been maintained or increased on many of the products exported by the developing countries. It is a well known fact that debt-servicing has significantly deteriorated living conditions in the Third World and has aggravated social and political instability.

Fundação Cuidar o Futuro

The industrialized countries must understand that true security depends, both in the North and the South, upon the construction of prosperous, just, and vigorous economic and political systems. It is in the interest of the North to put an end to the development crisis and close the gap that divides the two hemispheres of the planet.

Cooperation from the South is vital to solving problems of the North such as migration, environmental degradation, drug trafficking, terrorism, and the spread of disease. It is also fundamental for reaching coherent and lasting agreements about such crucial issues as the respect



for human rights, population control, and consolidating democratic governance. The industrialized nations must redirect international cooperation towards incorporating the poorest nations into the current process of economic globalization.

While developing countries must themselves remove the obstacles to development such as corruption, the abuse of power, and armed conflict, industrialized nations must facilitate and free resources for development through more generous aid policies, debt relief, improved market access, and technology sharing. We need a global pact for human security.

We need a pact to unite the will of developing countries to expand the range of choices and opportunities for their citizens, with the will of developed nations to create a more secure global environment. This pact could consist of the following five-point agenda:

-In the name of security the industrialized nations should open up their markets to be consistent with their proclaimed commitment to globalized free trade.

-In the name of security, industrialized nations should limit their military build-up and dedicate some of the resources towards removing the potential sources of instability and conflict. Over the past six years, global military expenditure has been reduced by 250 billion dollars. But what has happened to the heralded peace dividend? Why haven't international leaders taken the initiative to invest the money previously used for human destruction into desperately needed human reconstruction?

-In the name of security, foreign aid to the Third World could be linked to a substantial reduction in military spending by those countries. The resources saved would be sufficient to generate the capital necessary to accelerate social and economic progress for the more or less five billion inhabitants of the developing world.

-In the name of security, we should establish a **Global Demobilization Fund**. Under this scheme, every dollar spent by a developing country to retrain and re-educate former soldiers, would be matched, five-fold, by industrialized countries. The Global Demobilization Fund could be managed under the auspices of the United Nations.



-In the name of security, the United Nations should be equipped with the institutional and financial means, not only to address global emergencies, but to prevent global conflicts. The UN must expand its role in accordance with the fact that human freedom and prosperity are just as important to human security as the absence of armed conflict.

Friends:

We have come here today, not to reinvent the wheel, but to set it in motion. The world is tired of complaints. We need urgent action.

We already know the agenda for the future. Part of it is in defining a new concept of security, the concept of human global security, to foster discourse on the interdependence of global problems and the need for a comprehensive agenda to confront the extensive threats facing humankind. Part of it will be in strengthening systems of global cooperation.

Fundação Cuidar o Futuro

Growing global interdependence has given rise to problems which individual states cannot solve on their own. Only global cooperation can prevent ecological disasters, stem international drug trade, and halt nuclear proliferation. Only global cooperation can foster the peace and security which we have sought for so long, but which has eluded us so frequently. Let us make the tough decisions and take the difficult steps to consolidate peace and security once and for all....for our time and for all time.

Thank you.

