

**VULNERABILITY
AND
SECURITY**

Current challenges in security policy from an ethical and theological perspective

**Prepared by the Commission on International Affairs in
Church of Norway Council on Ecumenical and International Relations**

PREFACE TO THE ENGLISH AND UPDATED VERSION

INTRODUCTION

VULNERABILITY AND SECURITY

1. VULNERABILITY: A SIGN OF HUMANITY

1.1. VULNERABILITY AND PROTECTION

1.2. THE DREAM OF INVULNERABILITY

1.3. SECURITY: THE OPPOSITE OF VULNERABILITY?

1.4. THE STRENGTH OF VULNERABILITY

2. SECURITY: TOWARDS A NEW UNDERSTANDING

2.1. HUMAN SECURITY

2.2. ENVIRONMENTAL SECURITY

2.3. ECONOMIC SECURITY

2.4. THE DIFFICULTIES OF AN EXTENDED SECURITY CONCEPT

2.5. BETWEEN VULNERABILITY AND SECURITY: REALISM OR IDEALISM?

3. ETHICAL CHALLENGES IN SECURITY POLICY

3.1. THE LIMITS OF PROTECTION: THE QUESTION OF HUMANITARIAN INTERVENTION

3.2. THE DREAM OF INVULNERABILITY: THE POWER OF TECHNOLOGY

3.3. VULNERABILITY AND COOPERATION: THE EXAMPLE OF WATER

3.4. DO NOT USE MY NAME FOR EVIL PURPOSES: RELIGIONS AND PEACE

3.5. DEFENCE OF HUMAN VULNERABILITY AND AN OPEN SOCIETY: THE FIGHT AGAINST
TERRORISM

4. THE DIGNITY OF VICTIMS AND THE POSSIBILITY OF PEACE: THE CHURCHES' CONTRIBUTIONS
TO PEACEFUL CONFLICT RESOLUTION AND THE COMBATING OF VIOLENCE

4.1. THE VICTIMS' PERSPECTIVE

4.2. IN THE SERVICE OF RECONCILIATION

PREFACE TO THE ENGLISH AND UPDATED VERSION

This study was written in 2000 by a working group in the Commission on International Affairs in the Church of Norway Council on Ecumenical and International Relations, and was presented in January 2001. The study aroused a certain amount of interest in Norway. Many people confirmed that it managed to highlight the need for a new approach to security policy based on the basic phenomenon of human vulnerability. It was only after the terrorist attacks on Washington and New York on 11th September that the themes of «vulnerability and security» came under the spotlight seriously, however. Our study seemed to provide a language that made people articulate the paradox that the world's power centre proved to be very vulnerable, and reflect upon its implications.

We are very much aware of the magnitude of the topic and the limitations of this study. Nevertheless we hope that this English version of the study will serve as a contribution and inspiration for other churches, organisations, research centres and decision makers as they endeavour to think innovatively about how we can build collective security. We have chosen to keep the text in its original form with the exception of chapter 3.5 («Defence of human vulnerability and an open society: the fight against terrorism»), which has been added to this version. We believe that the concerns presented in the original study are ever more relevant. Through this we hope to contribute to the discussions that are taking place in the World Council of Churches and the Lutheran World Federation regarding criteria for intervention, and the long-term international effects of the September 11 attacks. Our study, «Vulnerability and Security», provides the basis for a broader discussion on the use of armed force.

INTRODUCTION

What force can be used to protect people against atrocities, emergencies and disasters? The relationship between force and the basic security to which individuals and communities are entitled is the main theme of security policy. The question can be interpreted politically or from a purely practical point of view: what sort of force is most appropriate or politically possible to use in order to achieve the goal of security? Such an approach is necessary, but not sufficient. It does not go deep enough, because any use of force and any reflection on the basic conditions and needs of human life involve fundamental ethical questions, which have to be reconsidered constantly in the light of new challenges.

This has become particularly clear over the past decade. The end of the cold war brought about a climate change in international politics. The expectations for a much better climate, in which peace and disarmament would have good conditions for growth, was soon succeeded by anxiety about the uncertain and unstable situation that the change had brought with it. For many people the anxiety turned to horror as the decade drew to a close with the crisis in Kosovo and NATO's attacks on what was left of Yugoslavia. Horror at the attacks that the world was witnessing in the heart of Europe, and horror that NATO - with Norway as a loyal and active member - was at war. The Commission on International Affairs in the Church of Norway Council on Ecumenical and

International Relations (KISP) met the day after the first bomb attacks and said the following, among other things:

«The Commission on International Affairs (KISP) in Church of Norway Council on Ecumenical and International Relations ... regards ... it as deeply tragic that the diplomatic efforts to find a peaceful solution to the crisis in Kosovo have failed. The Serbian atrocities against Kosovo's Albanian population are a gross threat to human worth and the position of human rights in today's Europe. The Serbian authorities bear primary responsibility for the situation that has now arisen. KISP is very concerned, however, that NATO's drastic military operation has been implemented without a mandate from the UN Security Council, particularly with regard to what the consequences may be for international law and the ability of the international community to resolve conflict in the longer term. We recognise that the aim of the NATO countries is to prevent a humanitarian disaster and an explosive development in terms of security policy. KISP fears, however, that the bombing of military targets in Serbia, Kosovo and Montenegro may lead to an even greater humanitarian disaster and further destabilisation of the region. This must be avoided at all costs.»

Looking back at developments after this statement was adopted shows us that these concerns were in no way groundless. Despair at the suffering that the war in Kosovo brought with it, and at the continuing unclear and tense situation in Kosovo, reinforces the sense of bewilderment and impotence in the face of the ethical dilemmas that have resulted from the developments in security policy. This increases the necessity of keeping an ever vigilant and critical eye, including on the part of the churches, on security-related and military development trends at home and abroad.

VULNERABILITY AND SECURITY

What should we base our security on in a new age? What does «our security» mean, and how can we protect it in a better, more humane, more ethically sound way? These are the questions we want to reflect on. And we will do so by inviting to a complete reconsideration of the relationship between vulnerability and security.

Why start with vulnerability? We will try to answer this in chapter 1. The need to protect people against violence and atrocities, but also disaster, calamity and privation, originates in the fundamental vulnerability with which everyone is born. Everyone is at the mercy of her surroundings, both cultural and natural. It has not been possible to eliminate this vulnerability. Modern humankind and society are surprised by this indelible vulnerability. A dream of invulnerability lies behind many of modern humankind's advances.

People have a fundamental right to be taken care of and protected against malice and calamity. This responsibility rests with fellow human beings and communities. Despite great technological and material advances for a substantial part of the world's population in the 20th century, we must continue to face the completely unacceptable fact that war, poverty and environmental destruction still threaten billions of people.

But vulnerability is also a constitutive element of every human being. The vulnerability and defencelessness of humankind are the precondition for its capacity for openness and solidarity.

Vulnerability also represents a unique capacity for susceptibility and compassion that enables people to recognise and fulfil their ethical responsibility for their fellow human beings, their community and their surroundings. This aspect of vulnerability is not something to be protected against. On the contrary, it is a necessary prerequisite for human security that does not simply defend me and mine, or us and ours, based on an implicit assumption that might is right. Recognition of vulnerability as something fundamentally human leads to the recognition of the security of others, of strangers, as my - our joint - responsibility. Recognition of our own vulnerability can encourage a desire for cooperation instead of conflict. Enmity and conflict are a greater temptation for the person who knows him/herself to be invulnerable.

This double understanding of vulnerability provides the motivation for a complete rethink of what security really means (see chapter 2). Nowadays it is not enough to operate with a security concept that is exclusively linked to state sovereignty. This understanding must be extended and modified in many respects. From the exclusively military and nationalist framework that has long marked thinking on security policy, security in our time must be linked directly to the vulnerable individual and his/her need for protection against everything that threatens his/her physical and spiritual survival and liberty. The concept of «human security», which has sprung out of the ethical and human rights work on humanitarian disasters in particular, is a productive way forward in this respect. The same applies to the concept of «environmental security», which stresses that the survival of humankind and nature are mutually dependent quantities. The security of people is now threatened by the planet's ability to sustain life being impaired by environmental degradation and the ruthless exploitation of natural resources. The increasing power and unpredictable effects of the global market economy in the world community now also have to be assessed on the basis of the individual citizen's need for security and control of his/her conditions for life.

Such an extended understanding of security also entails various political and practical difficulties, however. The traditional link between security and armed force may mean that an extension of the security concept leads to an extension of the military mandate. This may cause problems, not least in young and fragile democracies.

What light can such an understanding of the relationship between vulnerability and security throw on the urgent challenges of security policy that we face today? Chapter 3 gives examples of specific challenges that we are facing and views on how they should be met. Particular consideration is given to the questions linked to humanitarian intervention, technology, threats to the environment, the interreligious dialogue for peace as well as the dramatic new challenge from international terrorism.

The churches' work for peace is built on the prophetic words about the rights of the weakest, as well as on the evangelical mission of reconciliation and love of one's enemy. What can the church specifically contribute to the work for a less violent world? This question is raised in the fourth and final chapter. The churches must first and foremost choose the victims' perspective. This shatters the traditional framework of security policy. Self-interest cannot have the last word. Our ethical obligation does not stop at national frontiers, ethnicity or political affiliation. And, not least, the churches must take the initiative for reconciliation. Reconciliation is never an easy path to follow. Reconciliation does not eliminate the right to truth and justice, but is conditional upon it. How can this be realised in a complex political reality?

1. VULNERABILITY: A SIGN OF HUMANITY

It is human to be vulnerable. This basic realisation is vital to theologically and ethically grounded work on security policy in the broad sense. The statement has two aspects.

Firstly: a human being is a vulnerable creature. It has a need for and right to protection against threats to its life and liberty. This is the legitimate basic assumption of security policy. And this is where the ethical dilemmas linked to the use of force arise: what force is it permissible to use to defend oneself and others against atrocities?

Secondly: being vulnerable is part and parcel of human life. In other words, people will always be vulnerable. Not only does this mean that vulnerability is inescapable at one level. It is also important to see that vulnerability is a condition for acting humanely; it is a condition for humankind's ethical capacity and responsibility. Vulnerability implies an openness to one's surroundings, to one's fellow human beings, to specific others, which enables people to recognise the pain of others as their own and accept responsibility for alleviating the distress of others.

1.1. VULNERABILITY AND PROTECTION

From the moment they are born, people are at the mercy of their surroundings and dependent on the active care and protection of nature and their fellow human beings. Dependence is accompanied by a fear that these conditions will not be fulfilled. This fear is legitimate and well founded. Millions of people around the globe do not currently receive the protection to which they are entitled.

Every person is entitled to protection against being threatened or injured. In the Judaeo-Christian and humanist tradition each person is assigned a unique value. Men and women were created in God's image, in other words with unique, innate worth and dignity, as well as with responsibility for managing human and natural resources for the benefit of their neighbour and the community. This view of humanity finds legal and political expression in human rights.

This universal right to protection is supplemented and reinforced in this tradition of values by a clear option for those who are particularly defenceless and especially vulnerable. The greater the vulnerability, the greater the right to protection. The Old Testament prophets preached of a God who very much sides with small, persecuted and defenceless groups: strangers, orphans and widows, the poor. Christ's proclamation of the kingdom of God challenges the prevailing power structure: social and religious outcasts are given priority access to the salvific community, salvation is offered to sinners and the impure, while children, the sick and the poor are held up as examples for believers and as special recipients of God's care and love. The crucifixion can be read as a revelation that God identifies with those who are at the mercy of atrocities; God enters the world of sin and wickedness, takes the suffering upon Godself and sides with the victims. The act of atonement is based on this exposure of God's own vulnerability. Belief in the resurrection implies the hope that victims will be raised up again.

In the Judaeo-Christian and humanist tradition the right to defence against attacks on one's own life and property and the lives and property of those closest to one, and openness to strangers and their needs, are necessary and complementary parts of ethics. This tradition contains both the rights of the weakest and love of one's enemies. Altruism and self-preservation are not opposites, but are both necessary parts of the ethical basis for a decent life. In today's global

reality unchallenged violations of human life and dignity could not only undermine the sense of justice that is the foundation of any legal system. They could also undermine the sense of one's own dignity.

A number of humanist thinkers have made an invaluable contribution to countering such violations of human worth. The Jewish philosopher Emmanuel Lévinas expands on this tradition by pointing out that it is in the specific encounter with another human being that we experience our own dignity most strongly. In this meeting we also experience humility, a humility with its basis in the experience of being part of a larger context, which also puts us under an obligation as responsible persons. We encounter ourselves at our innermost as responsible for the other person's life and dignity. We find our dignity and responsibility through a response to the other person's need for shared humanity. The responsibility we feel when holding a newborn baby in our arms is in many ways the best example of this. A person's dignity is profoundly related to his/her vulnerability.

The most central ethical texts in the Christian canon also emphasise this point. It was the Samaritan, the stranger, who proved himself a true neighbour when he stopped and looked after the injured man (Luke 10, 25-37). And even in the final judgement, when everything is at stake, Christ refers us to the care of the hungry, the thirsty, the sick, strangers, the naked and the imprisoned. Because Jesus identifies completely with precisely such people: «Whenever you did this for one of the least important of these brothers [and sisters] of mine, you did it for me» (Matthew 25, 40). Godself has joined in their fate.

This view of humanity is vital. People's need for legal protection arises from their fundamental vulnerability. Their right to such protection is anchored in a view of humanity that holds every person's right to life and liberty to be constitutive in human nature. And the possibility that such a right to protection can be respected, is based on an understanding of the capacity and duty of every human being to look after the needs of their neighbours.

At the same time it is important to maintain that this vulnerability is not distributed equally. The relationships that call upon us to be responsible for others are generally asymmetrical; it is not a matter here of mutual give and take. Strictly speaking, there is no exchange. It is the other person's vulnerability, *pure and simple*, that challenges my willingness to act out of mercy and justice.

Two tensions of importance to security policy arise from the extension of this fundamental observation. Firstly there is the tension between protection of *people* and defence of *territory*. Secondly there is the tension between our right to defend *ourselves* and our duty to protect *others*. We will return to these tensions in other sections, but first we will see how the need for protection can turn into an unattainable and ultimately harmful dream: the dream of invulnerability.

1.2. THE DREAM OF INVULNERABILITY

Modern humankind's fear of vulnerability has also brought a dream of invulnerability with it. It seems to be an inescapable human experience that there is a bad side to this understandable fear and dream. It can take the form of a dehumanisation of the community and society. The fear is used to build up and support hostile images, and the dream promotes fast, «final» - which often means violent - solutions to conflicts. The armaments race of The cold war can be seen as an example of just this. The present international trends towards a new armaments spiral, with the senseless use of resources and the risk of extensive destruction of human life and the environment that would result, are reason not to lose sight of these negative aspects of the fear of vulnerability. There is no reason to reject the importance of technological development for a decent life. It is

necessary, however, to point out that this very dream of invulnerability is an important driving force in such development; the dream that humankind can create a society without suffering and death. That is why there is also reason to be on our guard: development is ambiguous; it may lead us, not towards a society without suffering, but towards a society without true humanity and passion.

This technological development is a crucial factor in modern warfare. The development of military technology is borne along by a logic that dictates that one has to be able to strike without being struck oneself - to kill without being killed. Such a strife for technology-based invulnerability raises concerns. We see that the gap between technology-based economies and other societies is in the process of becoming unbridgeable, and also that technological development is presented as inevitable. Are people still shaping the technology, or will technology determine what it means to be human? We will return to these questions in chapters 2.3 and 3.2. The point here is that vulnerability is a constituent part of being an ethical subject, and of being human. An invulnerable person would not be able to recognise the ethical challenge that arises from another person's vulnerability. Fundamentally speaking, the invulnerable person would no longer be human.

1.3. SECURITY: THE OPPOSITE OF VULNERABILITY?

Security is often seen as the opposite of vulnerability. But there is reason to ask whether this really is the case. Is it not rather that recognised vulnerability is a prerequisite for security? History provides many examples of the idea that one can protect oneself or one's nation, region or «civilisation» against any form of vulnerability leading to the escalation of conflicts and brutalisation of interpersonal relations. On the other hand, we have examples of the recognition of one's own vulnerability and its exposure promoting cooperation and the peaceful resolution of conflicts.

This perspective is in short supply in the prevailing approach to security questions. An illustrative example is the Norwegian White Paper entitled *A vulnerable society - Challenges for security and emergency management work in society* (NOU: 2000:24). The committee's mandate stated that «(S)ecurity and vulnerability must be weighed against the desire for a more open society». This wording provides an opportunity to take a more fundamental look at the relationship between security and vulnerability. The committee, however, chose to ignore this opportunity and took a simple premise as its basis: vulnerability is negative, security is positive. When one chooses to avoid an ethical philosophy dealing with the inescapable vulnerability of humankind in this way, the question is whether one can come up with a comprehensive approach to human security at all. In other words: could there be a tendency in our social development to conceal and diminish our vulnerability that actually leads to our safety and security being reduced?

Protecting people against threats to their security is without a doubt one of society's most important tasks. The question we are asking, however, is whether society can provide that protection at all without also incorporating the possibilities and strength of vulnerability in its approach to threats to human security.

1.4. THE STRENGTH OF VULNERABILITY

Recognition of one's own vulnerability and that of others is a prerequisite for a deeper

understanding of security. Firstly, this recognition contributes to the development of ethical and political judgement based on the mutual dependence that our lives and community are woven into and based on. This may lead to a down-to-earth approach to ethical dilemmas that takes account of the concrete situation. Secondly, the recognition of one's own vulnerability will lead towards seeking cooperative solutions instead of conflict and the possible use of force. The example of access to water resources illustrates this point (see chapter 3.3). Thirdly, exposure of one's own vulnerability may engender trust in others and so prepare the way for a good climate for mutual confidence. The ever more fundamental political importance of confidence-building initiatives to prevent conflicts from breaking out and escalating, as well as of reconciliation processes after the conclusion of peace, reveals the limitations of power in the personal relationships and political sphere. There are important values that can only be protected by *renouncing* the use of force and unadulterated self-interest.

Great importance must therefore be attached to human vulnerability in the understanding of what security is. The fundamental significance of the encounter with the other person, the stranger, as the way to a truly human life and the opportunity for reconciliation and a new start is, as previously mentioned, deeply rooted in the Judaeo-Christian and humanist tradition. Human vulnerability encompasses both the ethical demand and the ethical opportunity. The challenge is to allow this perspective to influence the formulation of security policy.

2. SECURITY: TOWARDS A NEW UNDERSTANDING

Ever since Machiavelli, Hobbes and Rousseau published their classic works, «security» has been referred to as *state* security, with the close reference to sovereignty of the state that this entails. Even now we continue to refer to the philosophers of the Enlightenment as prominent realists who provide a guide to understanding how modern state systems work.

A number of instances in national and international questions have brought up the question of whether it might not be time for us to expand the security agenda and demand security status for issues in the economic, environmental and social sectors as well. One of the challenges would then be to find criteria for what is, and what is not, a security matter. Traditionally speaking, it has been simple: security matter meant military matter and the use of force. This becomes more difficult as soon as security covers more than the military sector. As time goes on, there is nevertheless broad agreement that this must be done.

The threats today are different to what they were several hundred years ago. The terms «human security», «environmental security» and «economic security» illustrate some of the possibilities - and problems - that are linked to an extended security concept. This extension of the security concept does not simply correspond to central concerns in the ethical framework outlined above. As we shall see, it also corresponds to important development trends in international politics.

2.1. HUMAN SECURITY

Further to the question of changing the traditional concept of security, it is natural to ask: security for whom? Are we still talking about state security? Is the most important thing still to safeguard the sovereignty of individual states? Or do we have to be more concerned with safeguarding the security of the individual? The term «human security» has become increasingly central in the debate on security policy since the end of the cold war. This concept focuses much more strongly on human dignity and safeguarding human rights for all as a vital security matter. Security for the individual also means that steps have to be taken in order for the right to food, water and housing to be realised.

The introduction of the concept of human security does not have to mean the rejection of national or state security, however. On the contrary, there is every possible reason to claim that a well-run state is the most important prerequisite for human security. But here in reality lies the root of the ethical dilemma linked to the question of so-called humanitarian intervention. If for reasons of state sovereignty or the non-intervention principle one refrains from intervening with authorities who are neglecting their duty to protect the population from atrocities and comprehensive need, human security is sacrificed. Consideration of «national security» has, as we know, often been used by oppressive regimes to justify violence against minorities and opponents. But if one chooses to break with the non-intervention principle and so let human security take priority over state sovereignty and national security, there is a risk in the long term of undermining the most important body for maintaining human security - the state authorities.

We will take a closer look at this dilemma in chapter 3.1. Purely as a matter of principle, however, there is good reason to welcome this focus on human security. It shows a necessary and fundamental ethical prioritisation: the state is there for the sake of people; people are not

there for the sake of the state. It also opens the way for more graduated handling of all the borderline questions - in a broad sense - that the ethics of peace will have to deal with in the present situation, given that so many of the current conflicts are intrastate. In other words, they are not clearly defined conflicts between states, but violent confrontations that break out where state sovereignty is being abused, is unclear or does not work.

2.2. ENVIRONMENTAL SECURITY

An international specialist debate on the relationship between *environmental changes* and the security of states and people is still in progress. Here too the so-called *redefining-security* approach is of current interest. This approach operates on two levels. Firstly, there may be talk of redefining national security. In this case the question is then how states can utilise their natural resources individually or in alliances without conflict and how they can avoid conflict in relation to serious forms of environmental degradation. Secondly, it may be a matter of a more holistic approach that chooses to move away from the traditional security paradigm based on political and military security in a system of sovereign states. Instead the question is raised in a more fundamental way: what now threatens our existence as human beings and a community? There are at least four obvious reasons for establishing a direct or indirect link between the environment and security. Firstly, and at the most fundamental level, environmental degradation in itself is a threat to many peoples and nations - and in some respects to the whole planet. The threats to the environment are a serious threat to people's security and life on earth. It is now generally recognised that pollution of the atmosphere and water, deforestation, soil erosion and so on may change our conditions of life dramatically. These changes have already begun to some extent.

Environmental degradation can also be a cause and a consequence of armed conflict. When environmental degradation is a consequence of conflict, it often also leads to escalation. Environmental destruction can also reinforce a conflict that came into being for other reasons. Ecological systems in dramatic change involve unpredictability, something that in its turn increases the probability of violent conflicts breaking out.

The third explanatory factor is normative: use of the term «environmental security» also has a political side. Political and military security has traditionally had the monopoly on being defined as *high politics*. There is a great deal in favour of the environment also being included in such an understanding of what are vital political questions that demand rapid and coordinated action. Security policy is by definition future oriented: the goal is to prevent special, undesirable situations from arising. Predictability and control are essential elements of military security considerations. Predictability is necessary in order to identify clouds as soon as they appear on the horizon. Control is necessary in order to take corrective action as soon as an undesirable development is discovered. This need for predictability and control is fundamental with regard to the environment, which may make it natural also to talk about security when it comes to central environmental questions. Predictability and control in relation to ecological systems are necessary in order to avoid irreversible environmental destruction and implement preventive measures. This is important for experts and politicians alike. The establishment of closer political ties with politicians in former Eastern Bloc countries in Europe, for example, is a way of ensuring predictability, or at least *early warning* systems. This may in turn facilitate rapid action if an accident does happen. The extensive Western economic aid for these countries is intended, among other things, to reduce the risk of a serious accident of the Chernobyl type, or avoid the destruction of fish stocks in the Barents Sea, for example, through the dumping of environmental

waste. It is also important to be able to predict, control and avoid large-scale migration or the movement of large numbers of people as a result of environmental destruction. In this way, introduction of the term «environmental security» can also be seen as a continuation of traditional use of the military security concept.

Fourthly, the link between the environment and security has been established at the cognitive level - in the way people think. Over the last 10 years a number of organisations have argued in favour of alternative perceptions of what security is. In collaboration with researchers, these forces have succeeded in drawing attention to the vulnerability of the globe to non-military factors, and the limitations on the ability of military means to meet these challenges.

All of this indicates that security policy should now also include a focus on the major ecological challenges.

2.3. ECONOMIC SECURITY

It has been claimed that the unstable financial markets represent a risk to global security that can be compared to the nuclear threat. What can be confirmed at any rate is that the economic development trends often described using the term «globalisation» represent enormous forces and rapid changes that exert a great influence on the conditions of life for most of the earth's population. In this context it may therefore be necessary to see economic questions as security matters too, in several respects.

Basically speaking, the opportunity for peoples to control their lives and conditions of life is under threat. Article 1 of the International Convention on Civil and Political Rights lays down that all peoples «...freely pursue their economic, social and cultural development». And Article 28 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights states that «everyone is entitled to a social and economic order in which the rights and freedoms set forth in this Declaration can be fully realised». That is to say, everyone is entitled to economic development which meets their basic needs and which they themselves have the opportunity to influence. In other words, this clearly places an obligation on the international community and the institutions that regulate finance, lending, trade and investments.

The dominant neo-liberal thinking in today's economy does not make much provision for peoples being able to pursue their own development. Comprehensive economic reform programmes have created social unrest and increased the level of conflict in many countries. Strict requirements for compliance with structural adjustment programmes that involve reduced public subsidies, reductions in stocks of necessities and increased trade often leave little room for self-determination. In many places this has given rise to frustration and desperation, with violent results. The dark side of today's globalised market economy is the violence that it promotes. This dark side has gradually become visible to an increasing number of people. The international financial institutions have recently stressed that the countries themselves must have a stake in their own development process. We have seen a positive shift in the strategies of these institutions towards giving anti-poverty measures a much higher priority than before. This is a small step in the right direction. It is important to contribute to the future reinforcement of this trend. This must not remain empty words, but lead to real political change. Combating poverty and fair economic distribution are also important with regard to safeguarding people's security. The discussion of the relationship between state sovereignty and people's right to defence and protection emphasises the responsibility that is particularly incumbent on the nation state when it comes to looking after the rights of the population. Herein lie the legitimacy and purpose of the exercise of state power. Economic globalisation means a weakening of the state in various ways,

however. This also affects the real possibilities the state has for protecting the human rights of its population.

If the state is to be able to play such a constructive role, it must be organised and staffed in a manner that is as functional as possible and suitable for engendering trust among the population that it is to serve. Unfortunately this is not always the case. It is well known that public servants in many places tend to use their formal positions to enrich themselves and those closest to them. In such cases, achieving positions becomes a goal in itself, not a means for being able to use one's influence to positive effect. The apparatus of the state is most attractive for the simple reason that this is where the money is. The culture of corruption is a great threat to the economic welfare of ordinary people. At the same time the victims of this culture are the people least equipped to break with it.

At the same time as the legitimacy of the state is threatened in this way by internal decay, the state is also threatened by ever stronger non-governmental players. These players are a very diverse group and can include everything from armed, illegal groups, through development organisations, to large multinational companies. They cannot be compared, of course. Each in their own way, however, they represent a considerable challenge to weak and vulnerable public institutions, which in many cases are not given an opportunity to consolidate themselves.

If the state is to act as a servant of the community and so help safeguard the human rights of everyone, it is important in other words to support the strengthening of institutions. This may involve the development of systems of laws, the establishment of mechanisms that provide access to capital, distribution mechanisms and ombudsman schemes. National mechanisms for handling conflict are also vital here. Against this background we believe that it would be necessary *security-policy* prioritisation to increase the share enjoyed by social and productive investments - even if this were to lead to a reduction in military spending. This correlation becomes clearer when we extend the traditional concept of security to include economic security as well.

The importance of the economy in the relationship between states also manifests itself in another way - the question of economic sanctions. Many powerful states are resorting to various forms of economic warfare to an ever increasing extent. The aim is to hurt the heads of state, but they frequently manage to maintain their power and privileges while the population suffers. Such economic warfare can also be seen as a threat to the obligations of the state to safeguard the human rights of its own population. The failings of this form of sanctions, which are often intended to replace military warfare, are now becoming increasingly clear. The human costs of the sanctions against Iraq in particular have shed light on the difficult ethical aspects of this instrument of foreign policy. The victims of economic sanctions may be more difficult to count than in the case of direct military attack, but the suffering is great. The question of an ethical assessment of economic sanctions is therefore still pressing and clearly shows the relevance of the economy when dealing with questions of security policy.

2.4. THE DIFFICULTIES OF AN EXTENDED SECURITY CONCEPT

One of the main problems when it comes to the desire to change the traditional security concept is the tendency to include nearly every political and social aspect in security thinking. The terms «human security», «environmental security» and «economic security» have been accused of being too vague. This vagueness reduces their political and analytical value. The desire to avoid overstraining our concepts of security is the main reason for some researchers therefore arguing in favour of *not* extending or changing the traditional security concept.

In this context a critical spotlight must be turned in particular on the tasks to be performed by the

military. Any extension of the sphere of security policy must not bring about an extension of the military mandate. It is important that the military forces are not given or do not arrogate assignments that they do not have a mandate or competence to perform. In Latin America we see a tendency for oppressive and authoritarian military structures to find alternative legitimacy for their power and role in society in the new international context: the fight against drugs, maintaining law and order, and even tasks within environmental protection and land conservation.

It is, of course, important and necessary that changes in the general conception of security threats and challenges should lead to changes in military self-understanding. Changes must be made in training to enable military personnel to carry out their tasks in line with the current situation, and with sufficient competence. In special cases it must also be possible to deploy military capacity and competence in the performance of important civil tasks, such as in the event of natural disasters. But this must in no way lead to democratic control over all aspects of policy being weakened, or to the use of armed force being regarded as a more obvious and usable political instrument.

It cannot be ignored, however, that the constant reference to state sovereignty and state security is incomplete in this day and age. The terms «human security», «environmental security» and «economic security» take account of players other than just the nation state. The focus is on regional organisations and the global society. Terms such as «collective», «joint», «regional» and «global» are more important in relation to environmental security than state sovereignty. If the new security requirements of our age are to be met, international cooperation is just as much the solution as traditional military defence.

2.5. BETWEEN VULNERABILITY AND SECURITY: REALISM OR IDEALISM?

There is a strong, longstanding tradition of wanting to see international politics and ethical questions as separate. This position, which in political science is termed «political realism» or «realpolitik» and later «new political realism», set the tone right up to the present. It assumes that the international system is anarchic, a system without overall forces of order, and that it is therefore basically a case of everybody fighting everybody else, with the power interests of states taking priority over moral and idealistic considerations. This position, as we know, goes back to Niccolò Machiavelli (1469-1527), who in his famous work *The Prince* wrote: «In the actions of all men, and especially of princes, *which it is not prudent to challenge*, one judges by the result. For that reason, let a prince have the credit of conquering and holding his state, the means will always be considered honest, and he will be praised by everybody because the vulgar are always taken by what a thing seems to be and by what comes of it; and in the world there are only the vulgar.» (*The Prince*, chap. XVIII, 5.) Thomas Hobbes's theory of the state of nature and its application to the relationship between states is also a fundamental ideal in the realistic approach. In this way international politics, both their study and their formulation, are turned into an amoral phenomenon.

The opposite of political realism is idealism, which is found in both a socialist and a liberal variant. Here the fundamental assumption is that all participants in the global society basically share common interests. Cooperation, in the form of either international solidarity or free trade and as open borders as possible, is the idealist's key to peace and progress. US President Woodrow Wilson is frequently mentioned as a pioneer of this direction. In other words, the main point of idealism is that one holds ideals, standards and principles to be essential in the study and formulation of international politics.

A portrayal such as the one presented in this study, which chooses to take a nuanced view of the link between vulnerability and security, could be accused of being idealistic almost to the point of naivety. This is all too simple a conclusion, however. It has been said that domestic policy deals with how we live, while foreign policy determines whether we live at all. In an exaggerated way, the assertion is saying that neither the study nor the formulation of international relations can be divorced from ethics. The consequences are too great and too crucial for too many people for that. Politics always involve ethics and morality. What the realist tradition is right about, however, is that politics are not always guided by moral motives or considerations. On the contrary: when the flag of morality is flown high in international politics, increased suspicion is often the best option. Morality is not infrequently a blind.

But this increases the importance of continuous ethical reflection linked to international questions rather than reducing it. A moral assessment is required in order to uncover double standards. And the fact that one neither can nor should assume that foreign policy is guided by moral considerations alone does not make it advisable to go to the opposite extreme by excluding the possibility that moral considerations can play any role at all. If nothing else, politicians in democracies are dependent on popular support. Moral standards will always be an important element in mobilising such support. It is an important point in this context that those very moral standards must be based on a deeper understanding of security than that expressed by an ego- or ethnocentric concentration on self-interest and self-sufficiency.

There is also reason to stress that an extended understanding of the security concept is accompanied by a growing admission that the two traditional positions are linked. The former UN High Commissioner for Refugees put it like this: «Humanitarian concern is *Realpolitik*». If human security is given pride of place, it is also because it is consistent with a fundamental humanitarian impulse in people all over the world. Globalisation means, among many other things, that we know each other better and have an opportunity to do business with each other despite great distances. Another person's need therefore concerns me, even if that person is physically far away. This is not just important on the mental level, however. It is also the case that humanitarian, ecological and other crises far away from our country or our region can actually have serious consequences for life in our society here. In this sense there are also practical political reasons for seeing other people's security and «our» security as interdependent.

3. ETHICAL CHALLENGES IN SECURITY POLICY

As a church, nation and global society alike we are facing a number of far-reaching ethical challenges in matters concerning our security. In this section we will be commenting in greater detail on five central challenges. They are so-called humanitarian intervention, technology, environmental destruction, the role of religion in the work for peace, and the fight against terrorism.

3.1. THE LIMITS OF PROTECTION: THE QUESTION OF HUMANITARIAN INTERVENTION

Should humanitarian considerations weigh heavier than respect for national sovereignty? Or does international protection of people's security stop at national borders? This is the ethical challenge presented by the question of so-called «humanitarian intervention». The World Council of Churches has decided to try to avoid this concept, and has rather proposed to speak of «protection of endangered populations in situations of armed violence». Although we see good reasons for this change of terminology (see below), we will continue to make use of the «humanitarian intervention»-concept in this study. Besides the fact of it having become common terminology in contemporary debates on these issues, the expression in itself, whether it is considered adequate or not, points to the ethical dilemmas it raises.

The issue of humanitarian intervention is highly topical in our time. It is a new development, however. During the cold war the idea of intervention for humanitarian reasons in order to uphold human rights or other standards found no wide-spread support in international forums. The usual objection was that a principle of humanitarian intervention would open the way in the real world for pretexts for intervention for virtually any purpose. The change in this basic position is due to two aspects of the situation with regard to security policy after the end of the cold war. Firstly, the disappearance of the bipolar balance of power between the superpowers made it possible to intervene in the internal affairs of a country without this immediately leading to shifts in the global balance of power with the risk of major conflict that this would entail. Secondly, this period saw a disturbing increase in the scope and nature of humanitarian crises linked to various forms of armed conflict, anarchy and large-scale violations of human rights. In recent years humanitarian intervention has come to be perceived as a more realistic and necessary option than before.

In a - subsequently famous - address at the University of Bordeaux in April 1991 the then Secretary-General of the UN, Javier Perez de Cuellar, pointed to what he considered to be «an irrevocable change in people's attitudes towards the view that the defence of the oppressed in the name of morality should take priority over frontiers and legal documents». Developments since then may indicate that his assumption was correct. It then has to be asked: is this «irrevocable change» something that should be welcomed? Or should it be opposed? What sort of ethical reflection should such a change provoke?

Can intervention be humanitarian?

What actually is «humanitarian intervention»? The designation itself is open to various interpretations and has been criticised for being wide open to abuse for propaganda purposes.

Some people point out that the term «humanitarian» usually describes an action that is characterised by humane considerations, neutrality, impartiality and universality. The extent to which these criteria can be met at all when it is a matter of military action in one form or another is open to discussion, however. The expression «intervention» can, for its part, be given both a narrow and a broad meaning, whether as the use by one or more states of force on the territory of another state, or as a continuum of actions, from rescue missions to military operations that cross state frontiers.

It is implicit in the extension of the security concept that we have been talking about, and in the introduction of the term «human security» in particular, that state sovereignty cannot be made absolute. This opens the way in principle for what we understand here by humanitarian intervention, i.e. *the international use of force on the territory of other states and without their consent with the aim of (re-)establishing elementary human security when it has been grossly and persistently violated.*

A key question in this context is, in other words, whether the use of international force to avert, prevent and, finally, put an end to such crises involving large human costs can be necessary and legitimate, and, if so, on what conditions. A quick look at recent history shows that this is a highly complex question. The UN's intervention in Somalia in 1992, one of the first instances of humanitarian intervention after the end of the cold war, was seen by many as a fiasco. Whether such an assessment is correct is open to discussion. There is no doubt, at any rate, that a great deal went wrong. But does that mean this operation undermines the legitimacy of humanitarian intervention *per se*? Would the victims of war and chaos in Somalia have been better served by no-one intervening?

On the other hand, it might be asked: why did the UN intervene in Somalia but actually withdrew from Kigali in Rwanda in April 1994 when the terrible massacres began? Why did the international community not take action against Indonesia to protect the population of East Timor from the massacres in 1999 as the Indonesian occupation was clearly coming to an end?

The NATO bombing of Yugoslavia in 1999 was also given a humanitarian justification. The British Secretary of State for Defence, George Robertson, stated that the objective of the intervention was to «prevent a humanitarian disaster by stopping the violent attacks that the Yugoslavian security forces are now directing against the Kosovo Albanians, and to limit the capacity of these forces to commit such atrocities in future». The NATO campaign did not manage to prevent a humanitarian disaster. On the contrary, there is much to suggest that NATO's decision to start air attacks accelerated this disaster - and perhaps also made it worse. These examples show that there is reason to urge great caution and meticulous ethical consideration of all aspects of so-called humanitarian intervention. Are there any ethical criteria that can be used for this purpose?

The question of criteria

The discussion of criteria for the who, where, when and how of it being possible to call such intervention legitimate has come a long way since the end of the cold war, politically, academically and in ecclesiastical circles. Central to the discussion is the question of whether the classic criteria for the use of force derived from the so-called «just war» tradition are useful as a point of departure for assessing the ethical legitimacy of humanitarian intervention.

The most important criteria can be summarised as follows:

- 1) *Just cause*: In its broadest definition this can be to «promote good» (Plato, Aristotle, Thomas Aquinas). In its strictest definition it means that only defensive wars in response to unlawful

aggression against one's own territory are legitimate (Luther).

- 2) *Just intention*: The aim of warfare must be to establish or re-establish a just order and stable peace. This must also mean a willingness and opportunity for reconciliation with the enemy after the war.
- 3) *Rightful authority*: Only the legitimate government of a nation state may declare war.
- 4) Current *rules* for warfare must be complied with (*ius in bello*). This includes the important criterion of distinction, which means that one is under an obligation to distinguish between combatants and non-combatants in a war.
- 5) *Last resort*: All peaceful attempts to resolve the conflict must have failed.
- 6) *Proportionality*: The costs of the war must not exceed the value of what is to be defended.

Much discussion has centred on what results the use of these criteria will produce and how applicable they will prove to be in the face of the specific international situation. But since the criteria are often used to argue for as well as against the legitimacy of such intervention, there is reason to claim that they *actually* represent an important ethical framework for dealing with the topic. By suggesting how the criteria can be used as part of an assessment of the war in Kosovo, and in view of an extended understanding of security, we can establish their relevance - and shortcomings.

Just cause?

The first criterion, «just cause» puts the scope, nature and severity of the incipient crisis in the spotlight. Such intervention can only be contemplated where there are systematic, persistent and massive violations of fundamental human rights. An important factor in this context is access to reliable information. The information used by the NATO powers as the motivation for their conduct in relation to Kosovo has since been questioned. Official American sources stated that more than a hundred thousand Kosovo-Albanians were missing and tens of thousands had been massacred. More recent investigations have been unable to confirm these figures.

Faced with an extended security concept, the use of this criterion is made even more difficult. Access to resources is, as already mentioned, very important in terms of human security. What can be judged just cause for intervention in such a context? Extensive deforestation that leads to increased erosion and a greater risk of flooding can represent a source of tension between two countries, but so far has not resulted in the use of force or threat of force. But it is not inconceivable that one or more countries might, for example, threaten a comprehensive response if they experienced falling water levels in the rivers that are the lifeblood of production and community life as a result of control by a state further upstream. Would this be «just cause»?

Just intention?

The second criterion, «just intention», points to the importance of intervention having a clear, realistic and long-term objective that implies the re-establishment of peace and democracy with due respect for self-determination and other democratic rights. Once more there is reason to ask whether the present situation in Kosovo - or the consequences of the humanitarian intervention to protect the Kurds in the wake of the Gulf War - shows that the intervening party did not have such a long-term objective. This in turn raises the question of whether the intention can then be said to have been just or whether other considerations or interests lay behind the course of action. It is particularly important to emphasise this criterion in light of the extensive environmental problems and difficulties of developing commercial activity that modern warfare brings with it. The use of uranium and cluster bombs are just two examples of a form of warfare that undermines the possibilities for complete and effective reconstruction. Even without a direct ban, no state should use such weapons on another country's territory. The actual intention behind intervention must also be read from the way it is conducted, and - not least - the weapons used. In this context there is also reason to ask why it seems to be so simple to obtain the economic resources for warfare itself, but it is always far more difficult to find corresponding resources for reconstruction after the war. Here too the intentions of the intervening powers is put to the test. Kosovo is a glaring example among many.

Rightful authority?

The third criterion, «rightful authority» is not of least importance in relation to the legitimacy of international humanitarian intervention. Ideally and formally the UN is the rightful authority in the global community. Since the end of the cold war we have witnessed ambiguous developments with regard to the UN's potential to perform this role. On the one hand, the end of cold war dynamics has given the UN more room for action and greater authority. On the other hand, increasing regionalisation has not only been a complementary development in cases where the UN is not an adequate structure for one reason or another, or is incapable of action, but has also become increasingly a *de facto* alternative to the UN. The crowning example is once more NATO's intervention in Yugoslavia without a UN mandate, followed by the resolution on NATO's new strategic concept.

According to Article 1 of the NATO Treaty, NATO operations must basically take their authority from the UN Security Council. The vital change in NATO's new strategy, which is explained in the Washington Document of April 1999, is that it goes beyond purely national defence, where it is the threat of an attack against one of NATO's member states that will trigger action. This is expressed in the provision for «non-article 5 operations», where it is made possible for NATO to go into action outside its own territory as well. In addition to terrorism and international crime, it is indicated that interruptions in the supply of central resources and the migration of people as the result of conflict may be the cause of such actions in NATO's immediate area. The term «humanitarian intervention» is only used once in the document, however. Lack of clarity with regard to the meaning of this term may be part of the explanation for it being toned down. At the same time it is important to underline that it is difficult to read anything unequivocal into this new strategy document. It is vague on important points. It will therefore be necessary to follow its implementation critically.

In various parts of the world regional defence pacts are now being developed on the NATO

model. Many of them do not yet have such an advanced command structure and military capability as NATO, but the West African ECOMOG force was responsible for several military operations in the 1990s. There is reason to believe that NATO's bombing campaign of spring 1999 will be appealed to by other defence alliances that might wish to intervene in instances of regional instability «on their own». For this reason too it is important to critically analyse what the new NATO strategy actually implies.

Obviously, the possible positive aspects of states in the immediate area of a conflict region trying to intervene in order to reduce the scope of acts of war must be weighed against the negative aspects. States in the immediate area may have a much lower threshold for the use of military means if they perceive that a conflict threatens their own security or access to resources. This will give rise to a situation in which an extended understanding of security policy coincides with a traditional use of military means.

This may be particularly dangerous if the organisation that has been granted - or has arrogated - a mandate to intervene in a crisis or conflict has a restricted scope. In this context it is possible to point to the difference between NATO's tasks compared with those of the OSCE. Although the command structure in the OSCE is weaker, and the organisation did not manage to prevent the outbreak of war in Kosovo, it has been assigned a much broader set of tasks than is the case for NATO, or a future Common European Security and Defence Policy (CESDP). The OSCE has the following three mandates: the human dimension, the economic dimension and the security dimension, including the question of weapons. The OSCE has made a contribution to defusing tension and safeguarding the rights of groups suffering discrimination in many regions. The OSCE's role is also aimed at establishing a community founded on the rule of law after a conflict, a laborious process. It is vital to give the OSCE the legitimacy it requires in order to continue its observation work.

All in all we wish to point out the necessity of strengthening the UN so that this global organisation really can fulfil the role of rightful authority in the global community as intended. There is little doubt, for example, that the absence of a central command bureau and standardised training for international operations has resulted in different levels of participants in various UN assignments. The proposal of a permanent UN force, which was firstly mentioned in the Brahimi report and endorsed at the Millennium Summit in September 2000, will be a step in the right direction from this perspective.

The UN's various funds and programmes are also important when it comes to ensuring peaceful development in the countries where they are involved. UNEP (the United Nations Environment Programme) and UNDP (the United Nations Development Programme) are examples of this. In Mali UNDP organised the large-scale collection of weapons, a central prerequisite if the work for peace was to progress. Mali subsequently played a central role in adopting and implementing the West African moratorium on trade in small arms.

The UN's role in the work to investigate and prosecute war crimes is no less important. The negotiations of the International Criminal Court (ICC), covering war crimes and crimes against humanity, that were finalised in Rome 1998 is a milestone in this respect. Now it is urgent to make the court's jurisdiction as universal as possible. Even citizens of states that do not agree to the statutes of the ICC can be tried for flagrant war crimes if those crimes were committed on the territory of a state that has ratified the statutes. This is also an example of the work to protect people gradually being given priority over the principle of state sovereignty.

Just conduct of war, last resort, proportionality

If we move on to the last three criteria in the just war-tradition, i.e. «just conduct of war», «last resort» and «proportionality», they too are relevant in evaluating humanitarian intervention. Once again we can see how they open the way for severe criticism of NATO's intervention in Yugoslavia. There is reason to take a critical stand on NATO's definition of military targets and the slide that took place in its use as the war progressed. Fundamental doubts have also been raised as to whether the Rambouillet negotiations were of such a nature and quality that they really can legitimise the statement that a bombing campaign was the last resort once the negotiations had failed. And the proportionality criterion involves the question of the relationship between ends and means in the conduct of the war in general. The means must not be on a larger scale than is necessary to achieve the central objective set for the intervention in question. And the means must be appropriate for achieving the objective. There is little to indicate that NATO's objective, preventing a humanitarian disaster, really could be achieved by the exclusive use of the chosen means, bombing strategic targets from high altitude. The very negative ecological and humanitarian long-term effects of NATO's use of weapons have now also come to light. Here we see once more how the extension of security to include the environment as well is applicable.

The justification for not using ground troops was ostensibly that direct fighting would result in much higher casualties than if the attacks were targeted with precision weapons from long range. But this also made it difficult to comply with the distinction criterion - the obligation to distinguish between civilians and combatants. Hitting civilians is, of course, an immediate risk when the strategic targets are located in densely populated areas. This is even more apparent when the strategic targets are civilian workplaces.

Article 3 of the four Geneva Conventions (the nucleus of the international law of war) lays down the so-called humane criterion. The party responsible for any suffering has a duty to treat the maimed and wounded. This is no simple matter when the warring party in question is in planes or on ships - well away from being exposed to the suffering of the victims.

Criteria make requirements more rigorous

It is important to note that these criteria in themselves reject a *general* ethical legitimisation of intervention. It is in no way possible to issue *carte blanche*. As the above examples show, it is only possible to answer the question as to whether intervention that is described as humanitarian can actually be said to be ethically legitimate based on an in-depth assessment linked to the specific situation.

The application of these criteria to the case of Kosovo and in view of an extended security concept seems to indicate that our argumentation is leading us into difficult territory. Our support for an extension of the security concept opens the way in principle for the legitimacy of humanitarian intervention in extreme cases. Faced with the most flagrant violation of human life and dignity, the surrounding world cannot resign itself to the role of impotent spectator. Our use of criteria from the just war-tradition seems at the same time to indicate how difficult it will be - in the real world - to control the use of force on the basis of such ethical requirements.

The requirements cannot be abandoned, however. Anyone who exercises force is ethically responsible and must be held accountable. In order to do this, a common, binding understanding of how this responsibility can be complied with has to be developed as far as possible. Common criteria can be of assistance in this respect, as the discussions have shown. In order for such

criteria to be agreed, a critical, open and global dialogue on these questions is required, a dialogue in which the churches can and should play an active part. We will return to what the specific contributions to this dialogue might be in chapter 4. The main point must be, however, that the criteria concretise the requirements for any use of force and make them more rigorous.

Criteria are inadequate

All the same, it is necessary to establish that such criteria cannot be sufficient. The danger, as with any ethic based on rules, criteria or written norms, is that they can lead to a legitimising moral assessment that is purely superficial and, in the worst case, strategic. The suffering of victims can often disappear behind the dutiful fulfilment of a criterion. The need for protection and the duty to come to the aid of the suffering do not stop at national frontiers. But protection breaks its own boundaries when it becomes a threat in itself.

More fundamental consideration of the relationship between human vulnerability and security, combined with a broad approach to the security problem, opens the way for a wider perspective. The ethical judgement required to take responsibility for the security of others and «ourselves» must be developed using more than a list of criteria. The absolute ethical yardstick is the vulnerable body of the other person, inviolable in itself, but at the mercy of its surroundings, dependent on protection and ethical responsibility in all its fellow human beings, near and far. There is no absolute answer to how this ethical responsibility can best be taken care of in those extreme cases when humanitarian intervention becomes an option. It is therefore important that discussion of the global community's duty to safeguard the fundamental right of all people to a dignified life in safety - irrespective of where they happen to live - is not reduced to the question of whether to use force or not. Because if this happens, the alternatives for action can quickly become restricted, while moral and political creativity is suffocated.

3.2. THE DREAM OF INVULNERABILITY: THE POWER OF TECHNOLOGY

The driving force behind technological development is a desire for control over existence. The ever-increasing technologisation of society is driven by a dream of protection from both accidental occurrences and conscious acts that threaten human life. These threats include disease, natural disasters and accidents, as well as acts of violence and of war. The continuing commitment to technology in our part of the world finds its legitimacy in the fact that it has succeeded in providing relative protection against such threats. Greater life expectancy, welfare, a stable system of government and peace are all signs of this. These benefits have been achieved and are being maintained not least thanks to a technology that is becoming ever more advanced and integrated in society.

Against this background it is one of the great paradoxes of our time that technological development has led to a more vulnerable society. While the original threats were aimed directly at human existence, the most serious threats are now directed against the (technological) systems that protect people against the original threats. There are many reasons for this increase in vulnerability.

- Firstly, our basic pretechnological competence to protect us against external threats has been weakened, and we have become more dependent on the technological defence against such threats.
- Secondly, the gap between the competence we require to use the implements with which we

surround ourselves and our knowledge of *how and why these implements actually work* has never been wider. This is reinforced by the fact that some of the technology required to make systems work actually are located elsewhere.

- Thirdly, technological development is characterised by ever greater *complexity* and the individual components within the technological system as a whole being *interdependent*. This means that a breakdown in one component will have negative consequences for the system to an increasing extent.
- Fourthly, technological development is helping to create even greater inequality, both within individual societies and globally. As we have already indicated (chapter 2.3), accelerated, technology-driven, economic development means that more and more people and societies fall by the wayside and at best become clients in a global welfare system. In the worst case they become quite simply 'left-overs', or excluded.

In addition to an increased vulnerability in relation to a broad understanding of human security, technological development means special elements of danger within security policy in a narrower sense. One of the most important reasons for the comprehensive reorganisation being faced by the Norwegian armed forces is that there has been a shift in defence spending from investments to administration. This is happening at the same time as Norway's partners in NATO are setting very strict requirements in the form of the Defence Capacity Initiative (DCI) with regard to what technological capacity the Norwegian armed forces must have. Defence Study 2000, the Defence Committee Report (NOU 2000:20) called *A New Defence* as well as the report by the Norwegian Defence Research Institute entitled *European Security in Changeable Times* all by and large embrace these requirements. Everything is being put in place for a massive cut in personnel and just as massive a commitment to technological equipment and competence. But such a one-sided commitment represents fundamental elements of danger in our opinion.

- The conventional and technological arms race that is now in progress, not least between Europe and the USA, will lead to an unbridgeable power gap between north and south.
- A powerful arms industry is behind the race.
- The costs involved in the commitment to weapons technology means that in practice the opportunity for a broad response to the challenges of security policy that we are facing will be lost. Commitment to competence that has human proximity as one of its most important elements will lose out to an approach that has control, distance and avoiding losses on one's own side as its most important basis.
- If the Norwegian authorities endeavour almost without hesitation to fulfil the requirements for weapons technology set by its partners in order to obtain more room for action with a view to promoting the interests of Norwegian security policy, this room for action will prove to be illusory. Because the roles are already fixed before one enters the game; although one can ostensibly contribute a great deal, one is wiped out as a responsible ethical player.

The dream of invulnerability and the accompanying technologisation have therefore led on the one hand to a better, safer and more prosperous existence for many people, particularly in the rich part of the world. On the other hand, the same development means both a general increase in vulnerability and ever deteriorating conditions of life for many people. Seen in this light, it is important to call attention to a more nuanced view of human vulnerability and the place of technology. Such a nuanced view could take *other values* as a basis for the development of the society of the future.

These values do not involve a naive approach to the threats to human security. In our reality force sometimes must be met with force. Instead it involves a difficult balance. On the one hand, what is weakest in us and the weakest among us have to be protected, if and when necessary with force. On the other hand, the necessity and potential of vulnerability must be stressed in order to counteract a spiral of force in which it is all about being as invulnerable as possible.

3.3. VULNERABILITY AND COOPERATION: THE EXAMPLE OF WATER

Anyone who is aware of their own vulnerability will seek cooperation more often than confrontation and conflict. This simple observation is also valid at the international level: in the same way that the individual is vulnerable to other people, in our time states and nations are vulnerable to other states and nations. The individual state is ultimately dependent on what other states do. In our time no state is completely self-sufficient or sovereign. We are all interdependent. In our western part of the world this has gradually become apparent in most sectors of communal life. The European Union is perhaps the strongest manifestation of modern states realising their interdependence, economically, politically, technologically and now also with regard to security policy. In other parts of the world the degree of interdependence is less obvious than in Europe. This is perhaps true of economic interdependence in particular. Many states in Africa are not dependent on each other economically, something which has also made it difficult for them to «take after» Europe in their attempts at economic cooperation. When it comes to the natural environment, however, all states are interdependent. This is perhaps especially obvious when it comes to clean water - the most important of humanity's natural resources.

Two hundred and fifteen of the world's rivers flow through two or more countries. These international rivers are the main source of clean water for a large proportion of the world's population. There are few international conventions to regulate rights to and distribution of this water. Whereas disputes about rivers up to the 1960s were concerned with their use as traffic routes, conflicts have since been about water consumption. There are three factors in particular that reduce access to water in the rivers: drought, population growth and industrial development, with special emphasis on artificially irrigated agriculture. And now that water is starting to become scarce, the potential for conflict is growing. The battle for water in the three river systems of the Middle East, the Tigris and Euphrates, the Jordan and the Nile, is perhaps most disturbing. A total of 15 countries, all with rapidly growing populations, are competing for this water - in a highly volatile part of the world.

The future of the Nile is a particularly good example of a situation in which environmental problems increase political tension. International experts agree that far more people will use the river in future. At the same time it is probable that there will be less water in the river system. The populations in the states through which the Nile flows, currently estimated at 246 million, are expected to reach around 812 million by 2040. For Egypt the Nile is absolutely vital. The country is currently home to around 75 million people. Apart from the areas along the Nile, Egypt is made up entirely of desert. The river provides approximately 90% of Egypt's water supply. The drought in East Africa has reduced the amount of water flowing into the Nile. At the same time Egypt's consumption is rising sharply, not least because of a rapid growth in population. As the last country on the Nile, Egypt has little control over what the eight countries further upstream do. The Egyptians would be very vulnerable if any of these upstream countries were to take more water from the Nile than they do today. And it is probable that they will want to do just that. In order to safeguard further economic development, the government in Ethiopia

is planning to build a large dam on the Blue Nile, which supplies 80% of all Nile water. The result may be that the countries higher up the Nile with new artificial irrigation will start to use so much water that Egypt will no longer be able to maintain the water level behind the famous Aswan dam.

Boutros Boutros-Ghali, the former Egyptian Foreign Minister (and former Secretary-General of the UN), has said that Egypt's security in future will be a matter of water. The former President, Anwar Sadat, said the same. To put it another way, this means that if other countries stop or dramatically reduce the flow of the Nile, Egypt must perceive it as a threat to the country's survival. This would mean war. In order to avoid such a worst case scenario and accommodate development in a peaceful manner, it is therefore absolutely fundamental that the states in the area realise that they are very vulnerable in relation to each other when it comes to access to water. The Nile binds them together in a community of interests and fate, and they must manage its resources together.

In other words, when it comes to international water resources, one state is completely dependent on what the other state does. If we are to avoid such circumstances resulting in violent conflicts - and in the worst case war - it is important for states to cooperate. But it is therefore only when we recognise our vulnerability in relation to each other that it can be exploited as potential for cooperation.

Precisely this has happened in some parts of the world with regard to shared water resources. States have realised their dependence on each other and entered into binding cooperation on the use and development of international rivers. And we have several examples of this type of cooperation helping to prevent conflicts from developing into all-out war. This is true of the OMVS (Organisation for the Development of the Senegal River) in West Africa. The OMVS comprises the three states of Senegal, Mauritania and Mali, who cooperate on exploitation of the region's most important water resource, the mighty Senegal River. In 1989 two of the member states, Senegal and Mauritania were on the point of all-out war with each other precisely because of a conflict about the utilisation of water resources. All diplomatic links between the two states were broken off and a large number of people were killed in both countries. Between 50,000 and 100,000 people became refugees. In these circumstances it is interesting to note that the only place where representatives of the two parties in dispute continued to meet during this period was precisely the OMVS. This demonstrates how important this form of cooperation, based on recognition of mutual dependence, can be in preventing conflicts from escalating into all-out war. Another organisation with roughly the same rationale is the NBA (*Niger Basin Authority*), which comprises nine West African states. The states cooperate on peaceful exploitation of the River Niger, one of the world's very largest rivers. In the Middle East too we have promising examples of this type of cooperation. Agreements recently entered into between Israel, Jordan and Palestine on joint exploitation of the River Jordan show that players who have traditionally been strongly opposed to each other are now ready to cooperate on shared water resources. Their mutual dependence on achieving sustainable management of these scarce and extremely vital resources eclipses other conflicts of interest.

When it comes to the need for and access to clean water, most nations in the world today are highly vulnerable. And this vulnerability is increasing. It may seem as if this vulnerability is driving peoples and states to more creative - and peaceful - solutions than is the case in other contexts. Despite the fact that around one billion people currently have no access to clean water, and despite the fact that so many rivers flow through several countries, we do not yet have any examples of states going to war with each other with water as the central bone of contention. States do not in actual fact make war over water. Instead we are seeing a sharp increase in the

number of international agreements regulating water consumption. This is important. It is a good example of it not always being possible to achieve the objective of protecting oneself against undesirable vulnerability by the use of force or military means. In this case protecting one's own interests in such a way would generally in all likelihood be counterproductive. In other words the concept of environmental security is extremely relevant in this context. Once again we see how an extension of the traditional security concept brings out the necessity of a broader set of security-policy tools than are normally used. In order to achieve environmental security, politicians in different countries must recognise that they are dependent on each other and nature. Deploying military forces, or improving weapons technology, is of little use here. Environment-related conflicts cannot be resolved by means of a traditional power struggle, but only through cooperation based on recognised vulnerability.

3.4. DO NOT USE MY NAME FOR EVIL PURPOSES: RELIGIONS AND PEACE

Since the end of the cold war we have witnessed a greater emphasis on the importance of religion in international politics. There are several reasons for this. Firstly, the connection between modernisation and secularisation that was almost seen as inevitable by many sociologists for a long time no longer seems as clear. Whereas the 'death of God' was spoken of for large parts of the last century as the basis for modern society, the end of the century was marked by a religious boom - both inside and outside the major world religions. The rumours of God's death proved to have been greatly exaggerated.

Secondly, the reduced importance of ideologies in the international area has been replaced by an emphasis on cultural and ethnic identity. More and more conflicts during the past decade have borne the clear stamp of being triggered or exacerbated by ethnic and cultural differences. In this search for and emphasis on cultural identity religious affiliation is a vital - perhaps the most vital - marker. This has given religion and religiosity a new relevance in the context of security policy.

The potential of the religions for generating conflict is often stressed. This focus is undoubtedly justified. Religion being misused to generate strife is old news. Unfortunately it is still a frequent occurrence in our time. Fundamentalism in all religions often dehumanise and brutalise religious convictions. But just as often we see how power politicians are cynically able to exploit religious convictions in order to achieve their own non-religious goals. Both Saddam Hussein and Slobodan Milosevic are examples of this. Religious leaders and followers who allow themselves to be led astray by such political leaders are just as responsible for this abuse of religion.

It is important to stress that the religions contain the potential for both conflict and peace. They are not static, sharply divided systems that lead world civilisations into unavoidable antagonism as Samuel P. Huntington, the American historian, claims. The great world religions have both similarities and fundamental differences. And one of the most important similarities is actually a conviction that it is part of the innermost essence of religion to be a source of peace and reconciliation.

And herein lies a great challenge. Respect for plurality and diversity is put to the test in a special way in worldviews and beliefs that hold - each independently and *in* its own tradition - that they know the Truth itself. The credibility of religious convictions is put to the test in their desire for peace. Martin Luther rejected outright the legitimacy of crusades and holy wars. It has to be emphatically urged today that it is an abuse to make war in God's name.

The link between religion and nationalism has, as we know, highly problematic aspects. Where

such a link is strong it is not accepted that by far the majority of religions have a universal message and were formulated long before nationalism and other forms of exclusionary practice gained support. In order to speak out clearly in such a situation, it is important for religious leaders to confirm that adherence to a religion is open to all - on a voluntary basis, that there can be no discrimination against those who choose to remain outside a religious community, and that religion cannot be used for the purposes of power politics or geopolitics. Religion can make an enormous contribution to building communities, but major problems arise when such communities become exclusive.

The peace-building potential of the religions must therefore be cultivated at all levels. When UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan invited the world's religious and spiritual leaders to a summit to mark the millennium, the spotlight was turned on the role of the religions in promoting peace. This meeting was just one of many expressions of the vital role that the religions play or can play in many parts of the world - either in causing and escalating conflict or in finding solutions and building coexistence. It was proposed at the meeting that an advisory group be set up for the Secretary-General with regard to the contribution of the religions to the resolution of conflict and peace. This is an interesting proposal, while it is important for the role of the religions in this context that they also maintain an independent and critical function in relation to the prominent players in the international political arena.

The number of forums for multireligious dialogue has increased sharply in a short time. This is a positive development. The work for peace and reconciliation in and among religions has become a rapidly expanding activity. Religious leaders who enjoy the trust of both their own fellow believers and others are being involved with increasing frequency in concrete diplomatic and political work. The most widely recognised organisation in this field is still the World Conference on Religion and Peace, which was set up after World War II. Important work is also being done in this area under the auspices of UNESCO. It is significant that UNESCO's «Culture of Peace» programme has been supplemented by a separate programme entitled «Roads of Faith».

It is also important to note the connection between the contribution made by religions to peace and the struggle for religious freedom and freedom of conscience. Section 18 of the Declaration of Human Rights protects everyone's right to freedom of thought, conscience and belief. The UN's 1981 «Declaration on the Elimination of all Forms of Intolerance and of Discrimination Based on Religion or Belief» develops and reinforces this protection of rights. Central to the work of following up on these declarations are the UN's special rapporteurs in this field. In a Norwegian context what is known as the Oslo Coalition represents pioneering cooperation between different religions and beliefs, and an important tool in the work for religious freedom and peace. The Oslo Coalition has actively advocated the strengthening of the Special Rapporteur on Freedom of Religion or Belief in the UN system.

The work for peace cannot be conducted with credibility unless the religious dimension is involved as well. There is a deep correlation between world peace and peace between religions. Religious dialogue is therefore not only important in itself; it is important in that it contributes to peaceful coexistence between peoples and regions. It is a great challenge today to mobilise all the great religious traditions for peace. In order for this to happen, there must also be a process of critical re-assessment of everything in the religious traditions that might kindle enmity between people and ethnic groups. Religious texts and convictions need to be continuously re-examined in the light of new experience. This is an important hermeneutical and theological task in the service of peace.

Religion must therefore be taken very seriously in the formulation of national and international

security policy, and in all work for peace. This requires religious competence in the relevant political and diplomatic decision-making forums, and in research institutes and peace organisations. The churches and institutions where theology and the science of religion are taught should for their part help to increase this competence internally and externally. It also means that religious organisations and institutions that do work on matters relating to peace and human rights should be involved to an increasing extent in the concrete work to find peaceful solutions to violent conflicts. In this context it is essential that religious knowledge is given a prominent place in public education so that religions can contribute to the development of a culture for peace from the youngest generations onwards.

3.5. DEFENCE OF HUMAN VULNERABILITY AND AN OPEN SOCIETY: THE FIGHT AGAINST TERRORISM

The terrorist attacks in the USA on 11th September 2001 have put the recognition of vulnerability at the top of the international and national agenda. More than a few editorials, newspaper articles, media commentaries and speeches have touched directly or indirectly on the link between vulnerability and security. A BBC correspondent reported from Brussels on the day after the attacks on «...a complete new sense of vulnerability». A commentator in the Norwegian newspaper *Aftenposten* wrote the following on 13th September: «The terrorist attack on the World Trade Center and the Pentagon, the financial and military heart of the USA, demonstrates that even a superpower has its moment of impotence. The recognition of vulnerability does something to us, as people and as a community.»

The terrorist attacks in the USA have shown that even the world's most powerful state - with or without a missile shield - is vulnerable. Not even the most prominent symbols of power are safe if the attacks are ruthless and fanatical enough. But what does this recognition of vulnerability do to us? What does it mean - ethically and in terms of security policy and military strategy? It is vital to reflect upon this issue more in depth. Without such fundamental reflection that considers human and political vulnerability in a graduated manner there is a danger that events will steal a march on ethicists and politicians.

It is the essence of terrorism to exploit its opponent's most vulnerable point by attacking civilians and the defenceless directly with a view to spreading general fear. The intention is also to provoke a reaction, which in turn will be exploited as new legitimisation for the cause that the act of terrorism was intended to promote. That it is why it is very difficult to combat acts of terrorism. If the response to acts of terrorism resorts to terror-like methods itself, the terrorists have already achieved important parts of their objective. There are many examples from recent history of the «fight against terrorism» becoming a banner for and legitimisation of continued suppression of legitimate popular protest and resistance. In the period following 11th September we also see civil rights being put under serious pressure. The introduction of military courts is just an example.

To remind people of the inescapability of vulnerability, its fundamental value in fact, is in no way to close our eyes to everyone who is hit or shocked by acts of terrorism. The point is *not* to say that we must accept violations against human vulnerability. We maintain that vulnerability is fundamentally human. Vulnerability cannot be eradicated unless we stop being human. The invulnerable human being is inhuman. At the same time it is human vulnerability that entitles us to protection and defence against atrocities. It is a human right to be defended against terrorism

and war, and a social duty to protect individuals and sections of the population against such atrocities. But the vital point is that this protection defends people's right to be able to continue to exist and live as vulnerable human beings. We must not remove vulnerability, but defend it. It is the same with an open, democratic society. Being vulnerable is part of being a democratic society. It is essential for a democracy to be able to defend itself against attacks against its citizens. Democracy that does not protect the fundamental rights of its citizens soon loses support and stops being democracy. But if a democratic society allows security considerations to gain the upper hand, it will not be able to avoid protecting itself *against* its own citizens. This will increase the distance between the government and the governed, with the government protecting itself against the governed, and the society will stop being democratic. The vulnerable human being is entitled to protection *for the sake of his/her vulnerability* so that he/she can *continue to be vulnerable* and therefore human. A vulnerable, i.e. an open and democratic, society needs protection in order to *continue* to be vulnerable and *therefore open and democratic*.

Taking the ethics of vulnerability as a point of departure, the main purpose of antiterrorist measures is therefore not to remove, but to uphold and defend the paradoxical value of human vulnerability and an open society. That is why terrorism must be repulsed in a manner that rejects the essence and methods of terrorism.

- Terrorism disregards all legal systems and violates the fundamental worth of the individual. It must therefore be fought with justice, i.e. by upholding current international law, especially human rights and international humanitarian law.
- Terrorism paints crude, false pictures of reality, ethnic groups and other people's attitudes and modes of living. It must therefore be combated with truth, not answered with equally false images. The guilty - and only the guilty - must be held responsible and bear the consequences. Whereas terrorism strikes the innocent and «judges» them exclusively on the basis of religious, national or ethnic affiliation, antiterrorist work must insist that no-one is responsible for the misdeeds of others.
- Terrorism seeks to create discord. It must therefore be combated through cooperation, measures that engender trust between ethnic groups and religious communities, and respect for diversity. This makes the UN the most important institution in this picture. In this work to engender trust the ethic of proximity will offer important insights. Trust is built between people, between leaders, who become acquainted with each other and gradually come to rely on each other. The human meeting face to face should not be rejected in such negotiating processes. The *personal* meeting - between the representatives of the parties, and between brokers, third parties and the representatives of the parties - is vital when it comes to restoring trust between enemies.

The terrorist attacks on 11th September seem to have been based on fanatical religious fundamentalism. This reveals with the worst clarity imaginable the most destructive potential of religious conviction: *religious conviction can act as the ultimate invulnerability position*. Through their suicide missions in the name of religious fanaticism the terrorists rendered themselves invulnerable in their own eyes: invulnerable to the ethical appeal that lay in the

vulnerability of their victims, and invulnerable to any human court. In such cases a perverted longing for 'heaven' becomes not only an escape from reality but also direct contempt for one's fellow human beings. This calls for composure and responsibility in all dealings with religiosity in the sphere of power. It is therefore quite legitimate, and extremely necessary, to insist that religions must be subject to severe criticism and ethical assessment. In particular, the religions themselves should lead the way in this criticism. Criticism of a religion needs to come from within. Vital critical questions on which any religion - including Christianity - should be ethically tested are as follows:

- 1) Does the religion promote, or hinder, *true humanity and human value*?
- 2) Does it promote the *cause of victims* against injustice?
- 3) *Does the religion accept diversity* and non-adherence to the faith? In other words: is there room for «heretics» and full human value for «apostates»?

These are central challenges of a fundamental theological and dogmatic nature in the wake of fundamentalist terrorism.

This makes it all the more important to stress the potential of religion to create peace: *religiosity in its best sense emphasises precisely the life-giving character of dependence and therefore vulnerability, and so protects it.* Religion may be derived from the Latin *religare*, meaning be bound or tied (back) to. A religious perspective should therefore promote a decentring of the ego's self-appointed power over existence and life. This impulse contains an important contribution to peace. On the level of security policy it means that religions can play an important role in constantly reminding us of the limitations of power and the paradoxical strength of vulnerability.

4. THE DIGNITY OF VICTIMS AND THE POSSIBILITY OF PEACE: THE CHURCHES' CONTRIBUTIONS TO PEACEFUL CONFLICT RESOLUTION AND THE COMBATING OF VIOLENCE

What can the specific contribution of the churches be in the context of security policy? And what should characterise ecclesiastical work on these questions? We will close with two points in this respect.

4.1. THE VICTIMS' PERSPECTIVE

The link between vulnerability and security to which we have drawn attention here is an expression of a fundamental choice of perspective. In their ethical commitment, the churches should seek to take solidarity with those who are most exposed, those who are primarily affected, as its basis at all times. In Christian theology there are many reasons for the churches choosing the victims' perspective, and insisting on their rights and dignity. The Christian God is first and foremost the God of victims: God is one who bends down to release an oppressed people; the God who is proclaimed as good news for the poor; the God who identifies with the downcast and despised right into death; the God who in Christ became the victim of violent assault and suffered a death of torture on the cross. Just how radical the Christian message is on this point can once more be best illustrated with a reference to Christ's words in Matthew 25, 35: «For I was an hungered, ... I was thirsty, ... I was a stranger, ... naked, ... I was sick, ... I was in prison, ...». In our suffering neighbour it is none other than God whom we meet.

The emphasis on human security that we advocate here reflects this choice of the victims' perspective. But is such a perspective possible? It is not without difficulties. It is a known fact that there is generally disagreement about who are primarily victims in a violent conflict. Both sides in a conflict will present themselves as the party that has been treated unjustly. But these difficulties must not frighten the churches from taking a stand against atrocities and committing themselves in concrete terms to the cause of minorities and individuals. Misunderstood neutrality can lead to the churches failing in their mission of promoting humanity and justice, and running from ethical responsibility.

At the same time it is important to avoid stigmatising and rendering passive those groups who are described as «victims». The churches must not speak exclusively on their behalf, but first and foremost promote their real opportunities to take part in the work for peace and reconciliation themselves. Everyone has a God-given dignity that precisely *can not be sacrificed* on the altar of national or international security.

4.2. IN THE SERVICE OF RECONCILIATION

The churches must then point to the possibility of peace. For many people the hope of change is closely linked to a religious conviction. In the Christian faith the possibility of peace and reconciliation is linked directly to the very core of the message. «All this is done by God, who through Christ changed us from enemies into his friends and gave us the task of making others his friends also» (2 Corinthians 5, 18). It challenges the churches in particular to be agents for peace: «Blessed are the peacemakers: for they shall be called the children of God» (Matthew 5, 9).

By far the majority of people would agree that peaceful conflict resolution is the central objective when faced with apparently irreconcilable interests. On questions of security policy the churches must be the first to insist on peaceful solutions to confrontation and conflict. A first step is to counteract hostile images and xenophobia. Knowledge and contact across social, political, ethnic and religious divides are fundamental. It is also vital to contribute to lessons learnt in one area being transferred to potential and real conflicts in other areas. War is never the first resort. Yet it seems to be too easy still for authorities and political leaders to overlook the importance of the opportunities offered by peaceful conflict resolution while there is still time - i.e. before the tension has reached a level at which there is little scope for action. This is also a matter of resources. The costs of warfare are, as we know, tremendous. In many places the military budgets prevent necessary investments in social and sustainable development, although this is what may build peace and security in the long run.

Through the network that the churches represent, with a unique geographical spread and social scope, it is possible to draw on a wide variety of experience and ensure broad participation on the part of the civilian community in the work to build peace. The churches' local presence and involvement at grass-roots level can mean that church bodies and leaders enjoy a special trust among the population in areas of conflict. This is, as we know, a trust that can also be abused. But if the churches take the service of reconciliation seriously, they can in the best case contribute to engendering or restoring trust between ethnic groups and nations, as we have seen in East Timor, South Africa and Guatemala, for example. This work of building peace starts before conflicts break out and has to continue long after they have been formally and politically resolved.

The many different reconciliation processes that we have witnessed in recent decades show how complicated such processes are. Respect for truth and justice are vital. At the same time,

foundations must be laid for a society in which former enemies can live together. Choosing the victims' perspective, however, means insisting that peace will never be served by keeping quiet about atrocities or placing the perpetrators and victims on an equal footing by simply 'forgetting' the crimes of the past.

If a reconciliation process is to have a hope of succeeding, clear, public recognition of what has actually happened is required. A public expression of remorse or regret over atrocities that have been committed is fundamental to start the painful healing of the wounds that have been created. Then the work of implementing measures to build new relations starts. This is when - in the best case - space can be created for reconciliation. Throughout this process the language of prayer and the liturgy is an important ecclesiastical tool and contribution. Because it is precisely this language, which goes beyond both diplomatic subtlety and political propaganda, that offers opportunities for a genuine seeking out of the truth, settlement, remorse, forgiveness and a new beginning.

The churches' preaching of the gospel can never stop pointing out the opportunity for peace and reconciliation. It is an opportunity for both victims and perpetrators, but without them being placed on an equal footing. And it is an opportunity that not only applies to individuals, but also to ethnic groups, nations and religions. When confronted with the great international challenges of our times, the churches must above all maintain that recognition that the other party is like oneself - vulnerable and infinitely valuable in God's eyes - is also a solid foundation in questions of security policy.

- end