WHAT IS MEANT BY PEACE AND SECURITY?

SOME OPTIONS FOR THE 1990s*

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Peace and security: peace research, and security studies

Peace, in its negative and its modest sense, is the absence of war. Less modestly it would also include the absence of threat of war. And this can then be added to peace in the positive sense: a system of inter-acting parties, both inside and among countries, for mutual benefit. Preferably the relationship should be so equitable that all parties gain from the cooperation and the differences between them decrease. Equity in the real sense should lead to equality, or at least less inequality.¹

The term security has a tendency to pick up the first of these three ideas, absence of war. However, the threat of war is then often seen as a necessary condition for avoiding war; another necessary condition possibly being cooperation, even equitable cooperation. Thus in both traditions some of the same dimensions would be made use of, but whereas "peace" encompasses all three by definition, "security" would focus on the first and then look at the other two as positive, or negative, conditions.²

Having said this it is obvious that peace researchers and security researchers are relatively close to each other, sharing important dimensions in their analysis or the whole language of the analysis for that matter, only disagreeing on some basic points right at the beginning. There is mutual understanding, but also a feeling that the other party is simply wrong when it comes to those basic assumptions. I for one would tend to think that the threat of war sooner or later leads to war if the threat is based on a second strike retaliatory capability with offensive arms, meaning arms capable of causing "unacceptable" destruction on the other
side. Security researchers tend to believe that some kind of dynamic balance is possible whereas peace researchers, usually operating in a more holistic and global framework, would say that the warlike activity comes at some other place in the world, and sooner or later hits back in the major "theater" (the super powers, possibly with their allies). In a sense the peace researcher is much more ambitious, aiming for a world without the threat of war and with more cooperative, equitable relations; the security researcher remains content if war can be avoided regardless of the means used, in such a way that the countries are not only saved from the scourge of war but also permitted to develop further on their own premises. At this point the peace researcher will, of course, retort that a system based on a second strike capability leads to so high levels of militarism that internal security is already eroded in the effort to obtain external security.

2. The Reagan approach: Star wars

Rather than elaborating such definitions further let us look at the concrete situation today, 1986.

Take "star wars," to start with. How do we conceive of star wars? Since it was launched by President Reagan March 1983, three years ago, the language of discourse for debates about star wars has essentially contained two positions: taking for granted that it is a Strategic Defense Initiative (SDI) the question has been whether SDI is, say, ninety percent effective, or one hundred percent effective. The argument against SDI if ninety percent effective is that the obvious Soviet response would be to increase the quantity of offensive weaponry tenfold to assure the same level of...
penetration; the argument against the case of one hundred percent effectiveness would be that this would force the Soviets to get their warheads into the heartland on the other side by other methods than the rather cumbersome ballistic or cruise missiles. The obvious method would be to smuggle the warheads into the other country in suitcases or backpacks. 4

If we now assume that Washington knows this, and we also know that there is nothing in SDI against suitcases and backpacks, one might proceed on the assumption that it would be insulting to Washington's intellectual level to accept SDI as the only interpretation of star wars. Hence the language of discourse has to be expanded, opening for a discussion of star wars as a Strategic Offense Initiative (SOI). In that language two positions might immediately be recognized: SOI as a way of making offensive weapons less vulnerable even if the population cannot be protected by such an easily penetrable shield. If that offensive capability at the same time is retained the party developing star wars would arrive at a high level of combination of invulnerability with offensive capability—in other words some of the conditions for first strike capability, which in turn would make it even more difficult for the other side to believe that the offensive capability is for defensive purposes only.

This point is then made much stronger by bringing in the obvious: a laser (not X-ray) beam capable of destroying missiles just
after takeoff would also be capable of destroying very many other things, if not necessarily hardened silos. In short, there is in SOI a capability for burning up anything inflammable, which would also mean nonprotected human beings, animals and plants, most of the man-made environment, in short cities and countries.⁶ The advantage of star wars—a terminology that becomes increasingly appropriate and that was probably the reason why it was so adamantly rejected by the Washington administration from the very beginning—is that the ashes left behind would not be radioactive. There would be no fallout that through convection in atmosphere or hydrosphere could hit back to the party initiating the aggression. Whether a star war winter would nevertheless be likely depends on to what extent the nuclear winter is based on the blast effect of a nuclear explosion as opposed to the heat effects. My guess would be that star wars has been launched not only because its defensive packaging as SDI could be seen as a response to the nuclear freeze movement ("we want to get rid of nuclear weapons by making them unuseable, not to keep them by freezing the level of the arsenals"), but also in its more realistic configuration, as SOI, as an alternative to nuclear weapons that have become too dangerous, not only because of radioactive activity, but also because of the nuclear winter.

I would then say, of course, that the next stage is now an SOI arms race, with the Soviets developing the same type of offensive laser capability. This would cut down the warning time to minutes, perhaps seconds, perhaps to nothing as the lightening bolt might literally speaking come from the open sky—like Pearl Harbor December 1941 and
Hiroshima/Nagasaki August 1945. The Reagan administration already foresees a defense budget for 1991 of four hundred billion dollars, thereby also indicating the effort to force the Soviets out of the arms race economically. The obvious Soviet answer, incidentally, would be to step up espionage activity, a much cheaper way of getting technology, and as indicated by the recent flurry of espionage activity that has come to public attention a growth industry. And I would add to this: this coming arms race, which for all I know may have already started and be well under way, is built into the logic of the idea of preventing war through the threat of war. And the final outcome is also built into the logic. The question is not what will happen, but when, where, how.7

3. The Gorbachov approach: Abolition of nuclear arms

One could now turn from the Reagan approach of star wars to the Gorbachov approach; the idea of abolishing nuclear weapons from the surface of the earth by the year 2000, in fifteen years. The best political weekly magazine in the world, the German Der Spiegel (No. 5/1986) has the following comment:


Bahr: Die zweite Utopie ist die billigere "und die ungefährlichere."
I have no difficulty agreeing with everything, particularly Bahr's final comment. Gorbachov's approach is not only cheaper and less dangerous, but it is also a utopia. I think it is simply speaking totally unrealistic, if for no other reason because being a super-power presupposes super-weapons. The super-powers would still remain super-powers if they withdrew their super-weapons from the various types of forward stationing they now engage in, but they would not remain super-powers if they abolish the super weapons. This would be even more true if the other nuclear powers (officially Britain, France, China—unofficially India, Israel and perhaps South Africa and some others) retained their nuclear capabilities. In that case the super-powers would suddenly be minor powers and the minor powers would be super-powers.

But even if we imagine the approach to be not only wholistic (all kinds of nuclear capabilities) but also global (in all countries) the problem would still remain: what would be left to distinguish super-powers from other powers? One might answer: conventional capabilities, and the other weapons of mass destruction such as biological, chemical, radiological, environmental and now ultimately X-ray and laser beam weapons. However, the first four do not carry quite the same conviction, and the last one is not yet fully developed as an alternative. At any rate the motivation to abdicate as a super power is hardly present in either of them. This may lead to a focus on alternative weapons of mass destruction, and in addition to that the process will get stuck from the very beginning in the usual disagreement as to what constitutes "balance."
Hence, I would tend to think that Moscow has put this proposal forward relying on Washington to reject it so that the bluff will not be called. In doing so Moscow is probably on safe ground, and will remain so still for some time. Thus, not only does the reliance on the threat of war for the abolition of war lead to arms race; it also tends to make disarmament, even arms control impossible.

Where, then, do we find more positive approaches in this general field?

4. **Defensive, non-provocative defense**

I would say, in general, by questioning the assumption that the absence of war can be achieved through the presence of the threat of war. This is not the same as questioning deterrence as there are two types of deterrence: through *retaliation* (offensive deterrence) or by making one's own country *indigestible/unconquerable* (defensive deterrence). The idea of defensive, or non-provocative, defense and deterrence is increasingly gaining ground. Suffice it here only to say that there are three basic components: conventional military (short range) defense, para-military defense (guerilla) and nonmilitary defense.
The point of departure would be, once more, to what extent war can be avoided through threat of war, meaning essentially by building a capability for retaliation. This brings us back to the classification, admittedly a problematic one, of weapons systems into defensive and offensive, and of the latter (and this is a much more problematic one!) into weapon systems that can be used for first strike (attack) and for second strike (retaliation). Precisely because the latter distinction is so problematic there is today also the category of "first and a half strike," meaning weapon systems that may not be intended for a first strike but are nevertheless launched first "on warning," for fear that they will be destroyed unless they are used ("use them or lose them").

Faced with such impossible choices and discriminations the most hopeful approach to get security would seem to be based on two premises right now: to build down offensive capability because it is threatening regardless of what the purpose is, and to build up non-provocative, defensive capability that does not threaten. The argumentation in favor of defensive defense has been made elsewhere, by many authors, on many occasions and will not be repeated here. Suffice it only to say that the military doctrine of all European neutral/non-aligned countries seems to be inspired by a doctrine of that type (Sweden and Finland in Northern Europe, Switzerland and Austria in Central Europe, Yugoslavia and Albania in Southern Europe).\(^{10}\) The debate inside the German Social Democratic Party, and more particularly the famous Pölow-Papier with its forty theses (of which the first and the last are in the old christian-marxist tradition of praising the authorities)\(^{11}\) are clear pointers in the direction of a similar development in at
least some of the NATO-countries in Western Europe—when we add the British Labour Party.  

And that, of course, points to a scenario for a change from conventional security policy based on capacity for retaliation to a more innovative security policy based on capacity for defense. If this change is carried by social democratic parties, with or without some kind of political coalition with green-peace parties (all of them relatively small), a change in the climate if not necessarily in the reality might be possible in Europe within some years. For that type of change to speed up some new factors would be needed, however. Personally I do not think one has to look very far to find such a factor: the coming arms race centered around the Strategic Offense Initiative (SOI). Conceivably that arms race will lead to a peace movement that will make the impressive movement of the early 1980s look pale in comparison, possibly leading to a crystallization of peace forces sufficiently strong to bring about a change also in the reality of military doctrine.

5. **But what about positive peace?**

However, this would still not be what peace research is aiming at. A change from offensive to defensive defense constitutes a quantum jump, towards a world (or a Europe, in this case) less based on fear and threat, but not towards a Europe based on a deeper, more positive peace. Not even a more radical transarmament that would not only eliminate offensive systems but also eliminate conventional military and para-military components in defensive defense leaving the task of *Making Europe Unconquerable*, to quote the title of the excellent book by Gene Sharp in this field, to nonmilitary forms of defense,
would make for that transition. Positive peace has something to do with a world without enemies. There is no defense because there is nobody to defend oneself against--in other words the type of situation that we generally think obtains within many of the nation states of the world, except for sporadic violence and in some cases class (ethnic, race) conflict. So, again the same difference comes up between security studies and peace research: the latter is certainly not blind to the concerns and interests of security studies, it is only much more ambitious. Within the field of security studies intensive research on "abolition of war" will hardly ever arise; within the field of peace research such concerns would be on the top of the research agenda. Peace research is not only more ambitious, but also more optimistic.

And this raises the question of whether some major breakthrough in that direction could be possible in the coming years. I do not know, but my basic intuition would be that if there is to be a major change it would probably be at the level of the East-West conflict itself rather than at the level of the terrible weapons systems that are a consequence of the inability to resolve that conflict. Of course, the conflict is the result of incompatible national interests and incompatible ideological values. The West in general, and the United States in particular, want free flow of production factors and products, of people and information since that is both in the interest of a world-encompassing capitalist system and an expression of the values of a liberal ideology. The Soviet Union wants a buffer zone of border states in order not to be invaded in a land war (a concern that is important even if it sounds somewhat atavistic)
and is concerned with a totally different exercise where construction of a social formation is concerned. The United States stands, particularly under the present Reagan Administration, for the magic of the marketplace, the judeo-christian god and free elections. The Soviet Union stands for a rather rigid state planning, scientific atheism and certainly not for free elections in the western sense—although there is much dialogue inside the Communist Party.

And yet, even though this makes the Soviet Union an obvious candidate for the position as Center of Evil I am struck by the circumstance that there have been other countries occupying that position. Back in the late 1960s, less than twenty years ago, the worst country in the world from a United States point of view was not the Soviet Union. The Soviet Union was seen as being one of two parties in a process of "convergence" (the Soviet Union would have to develop more market economy, and the United States more plan economy, and thus they would meet in the middle—a crazy theory not only because this is not what has happened, but also because there is no reason to assume that countries that are more similar to each other necessarily are more peaceful in their relations with each other. Nor was the worst country in the world Libya although King Idris I had been deposed. It was certainly not Iran either, ruled as it was by a "faithful ally"—and only extremely knowledgeable people had been able to detect that ninety-five percent of the population of Iran was shia Muslims and were antagonized by the two ideologies imposed by the Shah: Western materialist individualism and classical Persian Zoroasterism. No, the most dangerous country at that time was the
People's Republic of China, populated not by human beings but by "Asiatic hordes" that might come in "waves"; their communism being not only red, but also yellow and hence particularly perilous.

And yet, it is remarkable how quickly such an evil country may change; even undergoing a "cultural revolution" where nothing was said that was particularly pleasant to conservative, or liberal for that matter, western ears. One might then speculate: why did this happen at all? One obvious answer would be that the West in general, and the United States in particular, had an enemy in common with the People's Republic of China: the Soviet Union. Another factor might be that China felt hopelessly left behind in general world development and wanted to catch up by opening herself more to the west. No doubt there is some truth to such theories, as there may also be to an other theory: the Chinese were simply tired of the conflict and wanted to call it off. Nevertheless, it is interesting that this took place while the cultural revolution was still going on, even if it was officially called off in 1969.

All of this leads, of course, to a second speculation: could it happen again? In other words, if one now imagines that the most rigid party in the east-west conflict is the Western side, could the Soviet Union be flexible? And what would the Soviet Union have to do in order to convince the western part that the "show should be called off," to quote a Western European peace movement leader, E. P. Thompson.
Of course some weapons would have to be dismantled or at least distargeted, no longer pointing at the west in general and the United States in particular (the latter being considerably more nervous about such matters than Western Europe). But at this point one could argue that experience does not seem to indicate that disarmament leads to peace; rather, peace may lead to disarmament. Reducing or changing the weapon systems might come as a result of changing the conflict system, not the other way around.

So, again, what could the Soviet Union do? Their motivation to "call off the show"—not only because it is dangerous but also because it is extremely costly in a country that wants a very expensive modernization—should be obvious. At the same time there may be a political price the Soviet people in general and their leadership in particular (sometimes for the same reasons, sometimes for different reasons) would not be willing to pay. And there is certainly also a western side in general, and a U.S. party in particular, that might find the political goods and services offered too low in quality, and—or too low in quantity, to warrant calling off the show.

However, consider the following list:

1. Sakharov is released and becomes permanent columnist in the New York Times, for columnies against the Soviet Union.
2. Soviet Jews get their exit visas more quickly, whether they go to Israel or not.
3. The Soviet Union expands its market sector, even if it is only in means of consumption, not in means of production (and this is
where the key to socialism is located, socialism being a system where these means are no longer commodities to be bought and sold on the market, or at least not without severe restrictions as to quantity, for instance with nobody being permitted to employ more than three, five, seven, twelve workers).

4. It becomes more easy for Soviet citizens to get permits for travel abroad—many changes have actually been observed in this direction already.

5. Multi-person elections are started, if not multi-party: like in Hungary.

6. The Soviet Union does what the Chinese did, more or less saying publicly that "for our modernization we need external technical assistance," and issues public praise of American ingenuity and capability.

7. The Soviet Union opens for more aspects of the western way of life in general, and the American way of life in particular, through an open market in blue jeans, possibly also by calling on U.S. technical assistance to construct a Disneyland in the neighborhood of Moscow.

The last point may sound as if it is not serious; perhaps it is the most serious point on the list. Perhaps a major point from the U.S. point of view is to get some affirmative response to the agonizing question, "Do they accept the American way of life?" Or, do they reject it because the leaders think it is too good for the people, in which case the leaders are bad, or because the people think it is not good enough, in which case the people are bad?
Of course, none of this answers the basic question that is so easily answered for an Eastern European country (or China and other socialist countries for that matter) wanting to make themselves popular with the United States: how do they do it? Answer: by standing up against the Soviet Union, an infallible method that has worked very well for Yugoslavia, Romania, Hungary, Czechoslovakia and Poland in certain periods of dramatic post-Second World War history, even for DDR, although in that case the west is slow to realize what happens. The only exceptions are Bulgaria and Mongolia, Cuba and Vietnam and North Korea that have not rejected the Soviet Union and Albania which has, but then at the same time continues rejecting the United States (and practically speaking everybody else for that matter). So the question remains: how can the Soviet Union stand up against the Soviet Union? -- a question similar to the question raised in Yevtushenko's proverbial "to whom shall God pray?"

However, there may be an answer to this question. The Soviet Union can stand up against itself by rejecting a part of itself, and the argument could be made that very few countries have done this in such a thorough manner as was done at the Twentieth Party Congress February 1956--rather than the Twenty-Seventh Congress in February 1986, thirty years later. It may be objected that the rejection and virtual dismantling of Stalinism were not sufficient to placate western spheres; possibly because the west needs the arms race for other purposes, or an enemy for other purposes. Nevertheless, some element of this type can be and is being added to the list of seven points above all the time, the debate in the Soviet press and also
the declarations in the Twenty-Seventh Party Congress certainly being replete with rejections of important aspects of Soviet reality.¹⁹

To all of this it may now be objected: why should the Soviet Union give in on all these points, why should not the west do something? One obvious answer is that the Soviet society is badly in need of change and that all the points mentioned above have to do with human rights, including the blue jeans and Disneyland—the right of access to certain life styles even if these are not the life styles most dear to their leadership. The hippie revolution was not dear to the western bourgeois leadership either, diametrically opposed to the bourgeois way of life as it was—but it was nevertheless, by and large permitted if certainly not encouraged. What the Soviet Union could say, however, and with right, would be: we might undertake such changes simply because they are the right thing to do, and not make them dependent on whether you undertake some changes that you might also consider right to do, most of them in the field of economic relations, such as abolition of unemployment, better social security and so on.

However, there is a second answer that is more important: I would tend to consider the west in general and the U.S. in particular so self-righteous, so convinced that they are right and others are wrong that they cannot even conceive of themselves as a part of the problem, only as part of the solution. If anybody is to change to bring about the solution it will be the other side, the Evil side.
And the best thing that could happen would be for the other side to "cry uncle", to submit to the Chosen People, in this case the North Americans. Here it may be objected that only a few people in the United States today, some of them in the Reagan Administration, would really entertain such fantasies—an objection I am not so sure I would agree with. I am afraid that this is a rather widespread attitude in the United States of America.

Of course, this is what the Soviet Union would never do. What the Soviet Union could do, or perhaps other countries in Eastern Europe better than the Soviet Union, would be to ask the following question: Imagine that we, the Soviet Union, underwent these seven or eight changes indicated above—none of which would actually threaten the leadership of the Communist Party in the Soviet Union—would that be sufficient for you to join us in calling off the arms race and the cold war? And if not, exactly what is it you want? That the Soviet Union should become a Central American dependency, "backyard," of the United States?—never, not even when the shrimps start whistling, or the Volga or other famous Russian rivers start running up stream.

In short, the question could legitimately be asked, and in this case of the United States more than the Soviet Union: what is it you want? Undoubtedly you want quite a lot, otherwise you would not be so angry and so fearful. Please state it, let us have it on the table rather than under the table, and not only for the summit meeting or a closed doors conference, but for the whole world to see. And then let
the world participate in the debate as to whether these demands are reasonable or not. Example of a reasonable demand: that the United States should do more in the direction of a self-reliant economy so that the temptation to support dictatorial regimes around the world in order to support a world dependent economy becomes less. Example number two: that the United States should do more to reduce unemployment and increase social security than is presently done in the name of world peace, not only in the name of the well-being of the United States people; in order to depend less on external conflict.20

6. Conclusion: peace, not only security

I stand by the intuition that if there is change to the better it will be in the field of positive peace rather than negative peace, and in the field of changes in military doctrine towards defensive defense rather than in some minor changes in the doctrines of offensive defense. In short, security studies are an insufficient guide, peace research is a broader one, but often not specific enough. But for anything valuable to happen at all the necessary if not sufficient condition is that we are able to avoid one more devastating arms race, this time around the strategic offense initiative based on laser beams; and for that arms race to be stopped from the very beginning a critical and explicit public opinion is indispensable, not wasting its time on whether "SDI" is effective or not.

But it is not sufficient. Some positive initiative is needed somewhere in the system. We want a Europe (1) without war, (2) without the threat of war and (3) in cooperation rather than conflict. At some point China let it be understood that she was open for a deal. At some point the Soviet Union has to do the same. From the heights of arrogance, Western in general and US in particular, little is to be expected.
NOTES

* Talk given at a meeting of SPD Schleswig-Holstein, Kiel, 10 February 1986. I am indebted to Heide Simonis for organizing the meeting.

1. For further exploration of the definition of "peace", see my "Twenty-five Years of Peace Research: Ten Challenges and Some Responses", this volume, chapter 13.

2. The general orientation of "realism" enters here: this is the best we can hope for, so let us not strive for more and be disappointed! Obviously this is a worst case position, at the time of the writing applicable to US-Nicaragua, Soviet-Afghanistan and Iran-Iraq relations - but not to inter-Nordic relations and only partly to US-Soviet relations. By what right do realists assume that the worst relations are typical and should be the basis for our thinking about the rest?

3. Of course, these figures are much too high, particularly for an SDI concept aiming at protecting not only missile sites but cities, and not only cities but entire countries, continents. But they are used here for a fortiori type argumentation.

4. "Most of the public debate, if not all, is focused on missiles or satellites. This is strange given the ease with which a nuclear device could be smuggled into a country (in a suitcase, not to mention in a diplomatic pouch, in a dwarf sub, etc.), possibly even dug down under a crucial target (such as the legislature in session) and used for blackmail (with an electronic firing device, as well as a system of shielding that would make it explode if efforts were made to destroy the device)." is what I wrote in 1965 (Journal of Peace Research, IV/2, 1967, Essays, Vol. II, pp. 71-2). I am afraid my point is equally valid twenty years later: the thinking is tied to missiles and satellites, not to the methods so simple that there is practically speaking no defense against them.

6. According to Honolulu Advertiser, 11 January 1986, R&D Associates, in a report from Los Angeles, states that "A Soviet laser weapon system . . powerful enough to defend against the U.S. ballistic missile threat can incapacitate our cities without warning on a time scale of minutes per city; minutes to hours for the whole country. To deter such an attack, the U.S. could only threaten to retaliate".

5. This theme is elaborated in some detail in "Offensive Star Wars", The New Republic, February 24, 1986, by Robert English, a former Defense Department policy analyst.

7. Against this one might, of course, argue that in principle the arms race could go on forever precisely because it is a qualitative arms race, in a sense an economic scientific arms race: always giving them something new to be busy with.

8. The Reykjavik summit meeting 11-12 October 1986 can, of course, be seen exactly in this perspective: Gorbachov relying on Weinberger and Perle to do the rejection job.
9. For details see, for instance, my There Are Alternatives!, Nottingham, Spokesman, 1984, particularly chapter 3.2, reprinted in this volume as chapter 2. The book is available in Norwegian, Swedish, Dutch, German, Spanish, Italian and Japanese translation; rejected in France.

10. Particularly important in this connection is the Landesverteidigungsplan published by the Bundeskanzleramt in Vienna, 1985 with a very systematic account of an Austrian, very realistic, defensive defense concept.

11. See, for instance, the version published in Frankfurter Rundschau Dokumentation, 13-14 September 1985.

12. Defense Without the Bomb is the excellent title of the book from the commission on alternative defense; only that I am afraid the title will have to be updated so as to include defense without the laser.


14. I am grateful to Mary Kaldor for always, forcefully, reminding me of this as basic goal of the peace movement. However, I am afraid we also have to find some goals on the way to that one.


16. I am thinking of the Orlando, Florida speech 8 March 1983 for the annual assembly of the National Association of Evangelicals. He talks about communism as the "focus of evil in the modern world" and about the "aggressive impulses of an evil empire".

17. Ultimately it comes down to a question of curing the disease versus getting rid of the symptoms although, admittedly, weapons, like symptoms, tend to reinforce the disease.

18. For an analysis of the level of autonomy of the East German state, see James McAdams, "East German Autonomy", The Journal of Politics, 46, 1984, 822-840.

19. And even more so, of course, the speeches given by Soviet authors, like Yevtushenko and Voznesensky; the artists always being the antenna of their societies, making contact with the future of their country.

20. And this is, indeed, the theme of Noam Chomsky's excellent Turning the Tide, South End Press, Boston Mass., 1985 - US foreign policy as being steered by the greed of the military-corporate complex.