

**3rd International Peace Conference: From Ceasefire to Peace
The Peace Making Role of World Religions**

Securing Peace in Europe and Korea through Spiritual Renewal

Personal Statement (representing EU Region) during the Panel Discussion
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I. The European situation

Since World War II (1939-45) Europe as a whole most fortunately has been granted an unusually long period of peace. Through the reconciliatory policy of German chancellor Konrad Adenauer und his French colleague president Robert Schumann - both convinced Catholics and democrats - as well as of their successors the old hostilities could be settled in a permanent new order for Western Europe, to start with. We are very thankful that through the miraculous historic turn in 1989 the “cold war”, too, ended when the Iron curtain between East and West was pulled down. Next to *Gorbachov’s* realistic *Perestroika* policy - that admitted the bankruptcy of the Soviet economy - , the peaceful insurrection of Polish and the East German peoples played a decisive role in overcoming the totalitarian system of Communist control.

But the event of *September 11, 2001* severely changed the situation again. The suicidal assault on the WTC was not simply an attack on American capitalism. It was a dramatic declaration of war against both the democratic order of Western nations and their materialist “pagan” lifestyle. Those terrorist attacks are enacted by Islamist fundamentalist movements like *al Qaida*. They claim to represent the true religion of the prophet Mohammed and give an extremist interpretation to the Islamic concept of *jihad* = “endeavour, striving” – often conceived as “holy war”. The aim is to subject the entire world still outside the *dar al Islam* (=House of Islam”) to the rule of Allah’s law of *sharia*. Only when this ultimate goal is accomplished, peace on earth would be established.

Central and Western Europe are appointed as specific target of the Islamist network. Two reasons are *firstly* its strategic position and *secondly* the fact that already now 8 Million of Muslim immigrants have settled here. By their high birth rate they change the demographic proportion rapidly. But the most important reason, *thirdly*, is the fact that Western people in

their deplorable cultural situation have become very vulnerable to an aggression performed by a combination of religious penetration and terrorist violence.

Presently our European society is alarmingly suffering from spiritual and ethical erosion. That fact makes Muslim leaders contemptuous of modern Christianity as a respectable religion. It confirms them in their assessment that Europe soon will be ripe for an Islamic take over and the imposition of *sharia*. Concerned Christians likewise are deeply worried about the apparent breakdown of Biblical standards of faith and moral both amongst Europe's people and its churches as well. Why do church leaders silently or openly accept the inroad of sexual libertinism? Why do they show disregard of the holiness of human life by tolerating legalized abortion and euthanasia? Why do they keep silent even when the person of the Lord Jesus Christ is assaulted in blasphemous movies? It is remarkable that public protests have been staged only by conservative Evangelicals and Catholics, supported by Muslim immigrants, who are offended by the desecration of the prophet Isa !

In the proposed *Constitution of the European Union* several governments wanted to integrate the affirmation of our submission to God and our loyalty to our Judeo-Christian tradition. Those proposals were vetoed by the French partners on account of their secularist orientation since the French Revolution. But conservative Christians, Jews and Muslim as well, are persuaded that without spiritual foundation no socio-political order can prevail. Moreover it could be historically demonstrated that ethical values are binding only as long as they are safeguarded by a personal and corporative responsibility to a transcendent divine authority. I am convinced that it is futile to seek for an abiding peace solution simply by resorting to political, economical and military means. Christians and Jews read in their common Bible, the Old Testament, that peace on the horizontal level as harmonious co-existence between nations can only be established, if the even more important peace in the vertical dimension is prevalent: an obedient relationship with God. Christians particularly have to witness about that according to the New Testament "*Christ Jesus is our peace, who has made us both one, and has broken down the dividing wall of hostility*" (Eph 2:14).

II. The spiritual factor

This is a confession of faith, of course. But how can it be applied to the political sphere, e.g. the process of building a united Europe on the ruins of the past, or the conflicts in Northern Ireland, in the Middle East and particularly in Korea ? I cannot go into the details of all these contemporary problems. But I want to share with you what a couple of years ago concerned Evangelicals and Catholics did in my country. We had a meeting in Berlin-Spandau – where

once the leading German war-criminals were imprisoned. Having analysed the situation, we solemnly issued a public confessional statement which we called the “*Spandau Call to Repentance – Our People under the Judgment and Grace of God*”. It was sounding alarm about the spiritual crisis of our country which might spell national disaster, if the dangerous course of our people was not reverted radically. Positively we called for a new obedience to God’s biblical commandments and for accepting His grace offered to us in Jesus Christ, the “Prince of Peace”. For only thus our country could experience a spiritual and moral revolution. Peace is a gift from the holy God. Accordingly it can be attained only when people rediscover the importance of holiness. Holiness means to be consecrated wholly to God our Creator and Preserver of life. This is the Judeo-Christian concept of *Shalom* = Peace. As we enter into an inter-religious dialogue, it should be our major concern to find out, whether and how far adherents of other belief systems could subscribe to such conviction as well. That would bring us one important step nearer to socio-political peace.

III. My personal assessment of the Korean issue

South Koreans should not forget the dreadful experiences of earlier confrontations with the North Korean Communists and their underground sympathizers here. Neither should they allow themselves to get brainwashed by North Korean peace propaganda. Today it is believed uncritically by many of the younger generation, because they do not share the personal experiences of their parents. Particularly Korean Christians should keep alive the memory of their fellow believers who became martyrs. If we refuse to learn from History, we shall be forced to repeat it!

But that does not mean that South Koreans should simply accept the present unhappy state of division. Germany when still divided between East and West did not acquiesce. It is right that Koreans continue to hope and work for re-uniting their common mother country. Here it is important to distinguish between the **people** in NK – your brothers and sisters! – and the totalitarian **system** enforced on them. Every opportunity to show your sympathy with them should be seized: Encouraging meetings; paying visits, writing letters of sympathy and sending material gifts of love. It was by such actions West German people penetrated through Berlin Wall long before it was literally pulled down in October 1989.

But a vanguard of our East German fellow Christians took an even more important initiative on their side of the Iron Curtain. We still remember the famous Monday worship services of the Christian Peace Movement at *Nikolai Church* in Leipzig. In defiance of the East German

police that tried to prevent them, they weekly grew in numbers. Finally they became the nucleus of a movement of several hundred thousands of people all over the German Democratic Republic, with close bonds of sympathy to their fellow Christians in West Germany. On Monday October 9th 1989 in the sight of heavy armoured police more than 10.000 people peacefully marched through the streets of Leipzig, singing, lightening candles and wearing orange scarves with the inscription: “NO VIOLENCE!” The Communist authorities were amazed and unable to interfere. A high ranking member of the politburo remarked: “We had been prepared for anything, but not for candles and prayers!” Exactly one month later, on November 9th, the Berlin wall was broken down. I still remember an elderly man who climbed up the wall and blew his trumpet: “*Now thank ye all our God !*”

I believe that our historic German experience could encourage people on both sides of the 38th parallel of latitude to hope and work for Korea’s reunification. **But it should be a re-unification in which the principles of liberty, justice and democracy are safeguarded for all.** The North Korean government’s first credible step towards that end would be to grant basic human rights for her citizens. Non-criminal prisoners should be released at once, especially the 100.000 Christians who are suffering in cruel labour camps. But to that the North Korean regime will hardly consent as long as it still clings to its national-communist ideology. Its spell has to be broken first.

Korea has four essential problems:

- 1) Political and economic division of the peninsula into North and South;
- 2) Mutual military threat;
- 3) Physical isolation of North Koreans;
- 4) Mental captivity of NK government and people by a fanatical personality cult.

The fourth one is the most serious; thus its solution is the key to the three former ones as well.

Diplomatic deliberations may soften hardened attitudes. Perhaps the representatives of EU institutions visiting North Korea could exercise moral pressure. For the NK government may respect its authority more than that of the United States.

The real break-threw, however, can only be achieved by a secrete weapon of spiritual nature. Jesus said to his disciples: “*This kind never comes out except by prayer and fasting*” (Matthew 17:21). Korean Christians have a long experience with the use of that spiritual weapon. Today, however, it is in danger of being blunted by a similar process of secularisation as we find it in

Europe. So the first condition for effectively praying and working for a unified Korea is, I believe, a new spiritual revival in South Korea.