



University for Peace  
Universidad para la Paz



PD/ML/1.4

## **The Prospects for Peace in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century**

**Statement by Mr. Martin Lees  
Rector of the University for Peace  
to the International Politics Society,  
University of St. Andrews, 4<sup>th</sup> May 2004**

I feel greatly honored – particularly as a Scot – to address you in this ancient and distinguished university. I would like to thank the organizers, the International Politics Society of St. Andrews for their kind invitation and for the perfect arrangements.

### ***Introduction***

I have the honor to be the Rector of the University for Peace affiliated with the United Nations. The University for Peace was established in a Treaty endorsed by the General Assembly in December 1980 to mobilize education, training and research in the cause of peace. We are engaged in teaching students from around the world at the graduate level on critical peace-related issues and also in other forms of education such as short courses and community-based education at every level. We currently offer multicultural Master's degrees in seven fields: International Peace Studies; Human Rights; International Law and the Settlement of Disputes; Gender and Peace Building; Peace Education; Sustainable Development and Natural Resources; and Environmental Security and Peace.

We are extending our programmes through networks of cooperation into all regions of the world. And we are beginning to disseminate knowledge on all these topics, using state-of-the-art technologies, to partner universities and other institutions of learning. The multicultural teaching materials developed and tested by the University for Peace reflect diverse international experience and best practice on critical peace-related issues. After suitable adaptation to specific cultural contexts and requirements, they can be used as a basis for teaching in partner universities, colleges and schools.

In this way, it will become possible for thousands of students to study the critical issues of peace in their home countries, thus building up the motivated and skilled human resources on the scale required in the developing countries to prevent and mediate conflict and to build the foundations of peace and progress. By disseminating knowledge and by supporting efforts throughout the world to educate a new generation of leaders, teachers and experts on the critical issues of conflict prevention and the building of peace, we can contribute to a more peaceful and secure future for humanity.

I have chosen a bold topic for my talk: “The prospects for peace in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century.” Those of my generation who have been struggling in the international system for two or three decades cannot claim to have achieved a world to the measure of our hopes. I fear that, in spite of the undoubted progress made, we will leave to our successors a difficult and dangerous world which still suffers from abiding poverty for millions, injustice and threats to peace. Many of you here tonight will have to face, directly or indirectly, the challenges and problems which we will leave in your care.

For this reason, I felt that I should use this valuable opportunity to look beyond day-to-day dramas and events to examine the broader, longer-term issues of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century. In this brief presentation, I will be forced to simplify and to generalize. I will first make some introductory points and clarifications and then identify some of the major trends and issues which will define the challenges to peace in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century. I will then briefly review the present responses of the international community to these challenges and conclude with some suggestions on a few lines of action which can contribute to achieving a more peaceful, secure and successful world.

...

Every day we are confronted on our televisions and in the newspapers by a remorseless tide of tragic events and crises, by violence, terrorist attacks and conflicts in all regions of the world.

Since the terrorist attacks of 11<sup>th</sup> September 2001 on the United States with the tragic loss of almost 3,000 innocent lives, we have followed the war in Afghanistan, the continuing tragedy of the conflict between Israelis and Palestinians, the intensive international debate leading to war in Iraq, the war itself followed by the on-going crisis of the aftermath, and the widening range of attacks in Bali, in Madrid and now in Saudi Arabia.

There is, in consequence, an intense and deep public concern about the state of our world, about relations between peoples and ethnic and religious groups and about the prospects for a stable, peaceful world for future generations.

Viewed from the perspective of the rich, developed countries, a major change has occurred. Threats of violence are now a reality and conflict is no longer perceived simply as happening far away in other countries. Since the terrorist attacks on the United States and the recent bombings in Madrid, the public in developed countries now feels directly threatened by international terrorism.

It is particularly important to recognize that the attacks on the United States have resulted in a profound and permanent change in attitudes and priorities. This change is not only reflected in the policies of the Bush Administration but also, deeply, in the concerns of the American public. A sense of vulnerability is evident across the United States. Indeed, nations throughout the world are now aware of the threats posed by international terrorism to their security, and to the lives and prospects of their citizens.

It is increasingly recognized that if civilized society is to contain and defeat international terrorism, we must confront the threat in two related and mutually reinforcing ways. We must maintain adequate levels of military security and take strong, direct action, including military action where necessary, to confront and eradicate terrorism. This is the principal focus of international deliberation and action at the present time.

But this is not enough. We must also, through international and national action, and through the efforts of civil society, work together to address the underlying injustices, frustrations and failures that give rise to the hatred and intolerance which drive violence, terrorism and conflict and provide the environment in which they can fester.

In this presentation, I am going to stand back from the tense and tragic context of current events to focus our attention on some of the issues, trends and relationships which create the underlying conditions in which such intolerance, hatreds, violence, terrorism and tragedy can arise.

### ***The changing Nature of Conflict and the Concept of Peace***

I will start by clarifying the nature of conflict and the content of the idea of peace in the modern world.

In the past, when we spoke of and studied conflict, we principally envisaged conflict as between sovereign states. However, in recent decades, the nature of most conflict has changed. Today, the overwhelming majority of armed conflicts take place within, not between states. This has important consequences for the conception and implementation of international action to prevent and manage conflict.

One tragic consequence of this mutation in the nature of conflict is that approximately ninety per cent of all those now killed in conflict are civilians – most often women, children and the elderly – with the remaining ten per cent being combatants.

Significant efforts are being made to adapt our thinking and policies to these new realities. There is growing interest in a new concept, “human security”, which is a perspective focused on the need to protect human lives, livelihoods and dignity directly by focusing on the threats to men, women and children in their daily lives. This is now a priority in the cooperation policies of Japan and of a number of other countries. There has also been a surge of interest, of new policies and of action to address the needs and contribution of women in relation to conflict, peace-building and development, and to focus on the impact of conflict on children.

In this context, an important intellectual contribution on the changing nature of conflict and its implications for international governance and for the United Nations in particular was made by the Commission on Intervention and State Sovereignty which published its report in December 2001 under the title, “The Responsibility to Protect.”

There is also a wide concern in the world community to focus more efforts on the prevention of conflict so as to avert the immense human and material costs. Prevention is clearly better and cheaper than reacting to crises and conflicts once they occur. But this approach is not yet widely reflected in practice. Policy remains focused heavily on reaction to events. In this connection, it is important to note that around half of all current conflicts are relapsed older conflicts. It has been a major objective of Secretary General Kofi Annan and of the United Nations to promote the prevention of conflict, as outlined in his Annual Report on the Work of the Organisation for 1999, “Preventing War and Disaster.”

Here again, there have been successes, such as the intervention of the European Union which appears to have prevented conflict in Macedonia, the successful intervention by the United Kingdom to contain and prevent wider conflict in Sierra Leone, and the management and resolution of the crisis in East Timor.

In this context it is instructive to note that, in the decade of the Nineties, the estimated cost to the world community of seven major wars, excluding Kosovo, was of the order of \$200 billion, together of course with a massive human cost of hundreds of thousands of lives. Investments in prevention would have paid high dividends. The costs of the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq will be even more substantial.

As we have seen from the current situations in Kosovo, Afghanistan and now Iraq, and in many other countries, advanced weapons and sophisticated technologies can, in favorable circumstances but not always, rapidly achieve military objectives against less sophisticated opponents. But the subsequent building of peace and of just, progressive societies in a post-conflict situation is an intensely difficult task. It requires international support based on openness to other views and cultures, patience and restraint and long term commitment.

Sustained peace and development also depend essentially on the availability of many motivated and expert men and women in and from the countries concerned who can work to achieve reconciliation, to reconstruct equitable societies and to build the foundations of peace and progress. And peace and progress can only be sustained if deeply-entrenched attitudes and behavior throughout society at large can be changed, away from hatred, intolerance and violence and towards solidarity, respect for human rights, gender equity and reconciliation. In both these vital respects, the role of education for peace through many channels and at every level is of fundamental importance, as reflected in the mission and programme of the University for Peace.

In spite of the crises we see every day, there is some good news also. The number of regional and civil conflicts around the world has in fact declined, as of 2003. But this situation remains fragile. According to an analysis by the University of Maryland Center for International Development and Conflict Management entitled "Peace and Conflict 2003", there are in the world today, "48 unstable regimes, 33 societies recovering from recent wars and 25 locked in violent struggles."

There has also been a significant increase in the number of democracies worldwide, rising from 48 in 1985 to 83 in 2002. Thus we can see that, with some qualifications, there has been a degree of progress towards a more peaceful, democratic world. We should draw encouragement from this. In spite of all the problems and calamities we see so clearly, progress to improve our world is possible. But we must be realistic also. The situation must now be re-evaluated in the new context of international terrorism and of the risk of increasing polarization between different cultures and religions.

In this confused and complex situation, what is the meaning of "peace"? I will not attempt a formal definition here. Besides practical considerations, such a definition would be required to reflect the deep psychological and spiritual aspirations of humanity for peace through the ages. In my view, peace is not simply the absence of conflict. A society at peace is not simply a society which is not at war.

The best metaphor I can provide is to think of peace in the same way as we think of health. If you are truly healthy, this is much more than simply not being sick. You are able to live an active, productive life, to pursue your aspirations and even, to contribute to the happiness of others. Thus, when we wish for a world at peace, we wish for a world of security, justice, dignity, solidarity, opportunity, progress and hope for the vast majority of human kind. We are far from this today.

In the world of today, some of us are highly privileged. We do not fear for our lives or for those of our loved ones. We live in a generally secure and predictable world and we are justified in having high hopes for the future. But for hundreds of millions of men and women today, this is not the case.

This point was well made by William Morris, a great designer, artist and social activist of Victorian times, who wrote, while sitting in his warm study in London: "it was my good luck only of being born respectable and rich, that has put me on this side of the window amid delightful books and works of art, and not on the other side, in the empty street...." He saw his own good fortune as an obligation to assist those less fortunate than himself.

We can in fact, only achieve security for ourselves if the world around us is peaceful and prosperous. Our security and progress are, in the long term, indivisible from the security and progress of others. Thus, a pre-condition for peace in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century is that, through national and international cooperation and action, we must create conditions in which the vast majority of our fellow humans can feel secure and hopeful in their own lives.

### ***Recent History***

Before turning to the trends and issues which will shape the future, let me briefly review the recent past.

When I was a student at Cambridge some forty years ago, at the height of the Cold War, the fear of nuclear annihilation was real. The balance of terror between the superpowers was maintained by a policy of Mutual Assured Destruction, each side having the capability to destroy the other many times over.

The end of the cold war in the early nineties thus represented for millions across the world, a crucial turning point and the profound hope that the central threat to world peace and to the future of humanity had been overcome. We also hoped for a major "Peace Dividend", that is to say, that a substantial proportion of the massive world military expenditures of around \$800 Billion per year could be re-directed to reducing world hunger and poverty and building a more secure future for all. We were disappointed.

In recent years, a series of tragic events has called in question our hopes for a more peaceful world. The vicious conflict and ethnic cleansing associated with the collapse of Yugoslavia demonstrated, on the edge of Europe, that the era of massive violations of human rights is not over. Ethnic conflicts in East Timor, in Chechnya and in several African countries underlined the widespread threats to peace across the world and the massive killings in the Great Lakes Region of Africa exactly ten years ago raised again the horrors of genocide with some 800 thousand men, women and children murdered in around 100 days.

It is in this context that we now face the threats of international terrorism and the consequences of the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq. In fact, from the perspective of peace and security, the world community faces grave challenges indeed at the start of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century.

### ***Trends and Issues affecting the Prospects for Peace***

Having briefly reviewed the past and present, let us now look forward and review the trends, issues and relationships which will affect the prospects for peace and security in the future. In this perspective, to mark the new millennium, the international community has come together through the United Nations to define goals for humanity to build a better world, in the form of the "Millennium Development Goals."

Looking forward into the 21<sup>st</sup> Century, we can see a number of positive trends and potentials which can create a better world. We also see others which will create major threats to peace and progress unless concerted and effective action is taken to counter them.

This leads me to make an obvious but important point. The future is not pre-ordained and inevitable. It is, in large part determined by human choices and actions. We can in fact to some degree, choose our future. Historians will be surprised that it took us so long to realize that we must reach out - before it is too late - to the underprivileged peoples of the planet and work together to achieve a more equitable and secure world of peace and progress for all. This can provide hope and opportunity and release the potential of millions of people across the world.

We do have the capacity to do this. It is not simply a question of resources: we have seen how vast resources can be rapidly made available for war. It is a question of priorities, organization and will. Thus, we should not view the future with fatalism or pessimism but with realism and commitment.

However, I must stress that the passage of time itself is a key factor. Problems which may be manageable today may reach a scale and intensity if left unchecked which will render them insoluble in years to come. It is perhaps the most immediate contradiction we face that, in our present world of confusion, disagreement, short-term focus and delay there is an urgent need for a vision of the common future, for clear and concerted leadership, cooperation and early action.

For my present purposes, I will identify six key factors here which will affect the prospects for peace and the lives and well-being of millions of people in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century. These are:

- i) Demographic growth, which will have immense repercussions. An overall increase in global population from the present six billion to around nine billion is anticipated by the middle of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century. And this massive increase of around 50% of the present world population will almost entirely arise in a number of developing countries. In comparison, the populations in a number of developed countries are in decline. It is, in my view, remarkable how little interest and attention this simple fact receives, even though it will have the most critical implications within the lifetime of our children. In this connection it is instructive that, in the current 10<sup>th</sup> Five Year Plan for the Peoples Republic of China, preparations are already being made to prepare for an increase in the Chinese population of 300 million people by 2050.

ii) Tightening environmental constraints will also play a key role. A growing world population coupled with rising living standards for many will give rise to increasing competition for resources of all kinds and also to wider degradation of the delicate environmental systems on which life depends. Competition for scarce water resources is already emerging as a major element of potential conflict in many regions, for example in Central Asia and the Middle East.

iii) Another environmental trend of profound importance is the increasing impact of global warming and environmental change in large regions of the world, giving rise to drought and flooding and to increased risks of epidemic disease. As a consequence of sustained drought, some regions which have supported human life for generations may become unable to do so, giving rise to migration and conflict. As the major cause of climate change has been the growth of the economies of the industrialized countries, the impact and mitigation of climate change, besides their evident practical implications, increasingly raise intense issues of equity and responsibility in the conduct of international affairs.

iv) Another key factor will be the further consequences of the globalization of economic activities - for both good and ill. The World Bank has concluded in a recent report that around 400 million people have been lifted out of poverty in the past 20 years as a positive result of increased trade and investment, attributed to globalisation. (A substantial part of this improvement arises from the successful modernization of China and, we must hope that this will be the case of India also.)

But we must note that, as globalization proceeds, there are also worsening inequalities in income and wealth within and between countries, which are provoking increased frustration and alienation. Like most complex phenomena, globalization has diverse effects on different participants. The issue is not whether globalization is, on balance, positive or negative: it is what measures must be taken to ensure that the adverse effects are limited and that the benefits are fairly and widely distributed in an increasingly interdependent world.

A recent book by Professor Amy Chua, "World on Fire," analyses such issues in detail and from a very practical point of view. She explores the linkages between the opening-up of markets through globalization and liberalisation, the concentration of wealth in the hands of "market dominant minorities" often of an ethnic nature, and the advancement of democracy. She raises profound questions about the concentration of wealth and the prospects for intensifying ethnic resentment and global violence as globalization continues. And she explores the practical consequences of seeking to advance both rapid liberalization of markets and rapid democratization at the same time.

v) We are also aware of another very serious threat to peace: the diversion of vast intellectual, financial and physical resources to the development and production of armaments and the widening availability across the world of weapons, including weapons of mass destruction. The threat that nuclear, biological or chemical weapons may be used by terrorists has the most profound implications for policy and cooperation in the future.

vi) At a time when the world community is confronted by the need to achieve concerted action in the face of these real challenges to the future of us all, we can identify another adverse trend in recent years: a decline in the solidarity of the world community. This is due to an increasing polarization between cultures and religions, coupled with an increasing sense of exclusion and alienation in a world in which the benefits and opportunities available to the rich are all too evident through worldwide media and information. This situation is aggravated by the further problem that some key participants in the international system increasingly reject many of the norms and structures of international law on which the world community has relied for decades.

These then are some of the major factors which will determine the conditions for peace or conflict in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century: demographic growth; tightening environmental constraints; climate change; globalization and rising inequalities; the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction; and declining international solidarity

Seen in this light, the threats to the lives, human security and well being of hundreds of millions of people in the coming century will not arise only from the willful consequences of conflict – “man’s inhumanity to man” – but from economic and environmental pressures also – from poverty, famine, pollution and disease and the collapse in “failed states” of the minimum social and political capabilities essential to preserve the framework of stable, peaceful societies.

It is important to underline here that poverty does not in itself cause conflict. It does however create conditions under which conflict is more likely to arise, if triggered by entrenched inequality and injustice with no legitimate channels for improvement, or by economic decline and the collapse of the state, or by the deliberate mobilization of grievances and hatred, as in the former Yugoslavia and the Great Lakes Region of Africa.

I have presented these trends and issues at a global level but we can identify more specific concerns and issues in each of the regions of the world. In Latin America, for example the extent of urban violence and a decline in public confidence in and commitment to democracy are key concerns; in Africa, endemic poverty, hunger, disease and environmental degradation, compounded by a number of open conflicts affect countries and regions; and in Asia, ethnic and communal violence and flashpoints such as North Korea and potentially Taiwan and Kashmir, give rise to real concern. Perhaps the most critical, strategic conflict polarising the world community today is the immensely complex, intractable conflict between Israel and the Palestinians.

In summary then, the world community is challenged by a number of trends which, if not checked through international and national action, will severely limit our chances of living in a peaceful and progressive world.

Two critical issues we must confront are therefore: can we together conceive, organize and gain support for the necessary action to improve the prospects for peace and security? And, can we do this in the time available?

### ***The Need for International Solidarity and Cooperation***

Although the present and emerging threats to peace and security affect most directly the peoples of the developing countries and the transition countries of Central Asia, it is clear today that the future of the more developed countries is also at risk. This applies not only to the countries traditionally viewed as the rich, industrialized countries but also to those countries which are now achieving a higher level of development. In our increasingly interdependent world, it will simply not be feasible in the longer term to maintain the intricate web of systems and relationships on which the functioning and security of advanced societies and of the world economy depend within a context of widespread poverty, disease, frustration and hatred.

Nor will it be feasible for the wealthy and privileged of the planet to defend their advantages by military means alone, by vast expenditures of human and material resources on armaments. We must therefore renew our efforts, through international solidarity and cooperation to build solid foundations for world peace. This is not only a moral imperative: it is a practical necessity if we are to achieve a secure, progressive and peaceful world.

Since the adhesion of ten new Member countries on 1<sup>st</sup> May, we, in the European Union are now around 450 million people. We enjoy privileged and safe lives and high living standards. Together with all other developed countries however, we constitute only a small minority of the six billion people on this planet. And, in the lifetime of our children, we will be an even smaller part of the world population of around nine billion people.

Fortunately, a number of developing countries are making real progress in providing better lives to many of their citizens. Some however, where democracy, stability and progress appeared to have been solidly established are now at risk, due in many cases to the frustrations and violence which arise from economic failure, entrenched injustice and corruption. Others are making overall progress but this is coupled with rising inequities and exclusion and frustration. Others are facing stagnation, failed governance and injustice, rising levels of violence and conflict and environmental deterioration. Our planet is at risk of separating into two worlds within and between countries: a relatively safe world of wealth and privilege and a dangerous world of poverty and hunger, injustice and misery.

But these two worlds are fundamentally interdependent. Besides the evident links of trade, investment, finance and globalization, we are linked in many other vital ways: we are linked through environment and climate change for example: we cannot achieve sustainable development so as to preserve our fragile planet on our own. And, the policies on emissions adopted by the major developed economies have major consequences for the prospects and even the survival of other states.

We are intensively linked also through the movement of people, through migration and mass tourism. And we now understand that we are also obliged to face together the threats of international crime and terrorism which affect developed and developing countries alike. We must also cooperate effectively to confront the threat of rapidly spreading, deadly diseases which respect no national boundaries: HIV-AIDS and SARS have shown the potential scale and the speed at which such threats may evolve in the future, calling for a rapid global response.

In effect, the well-being and the security of all of us depend directly and indirectly on an intricate web of international relationships and cooperation. And these in turn depend on good will, trust and common interest among groups and nations. This can so easily be destroyed and is very difficult to reconstitute. We need a functioning world community in which needs and differences can be properly addressed. One of our highest priorities should therefore be to undertake actions explicitly to strengthen international solidarity, trust and cooperation so as to mobilize the potentials of our societies to create a better, more peaceful world. And in this perspective, the role and ideals of the United Nations remain of central importance.

As I have emphasised, it is not yet inevitable that the threats to the future of humanity which I have outlined will lead to conflict and disaster. Humanity has never had greater resources in terms of knowledge, skills, technological systems and resources which could be applied systematically to address the threats to peace, security and development. But these resources are not effectively applied on a significant scale to the prevention of conflict and to building the foundations of solidarity and peace. A few figures will make this clear.

- The resources devoted to world development are pitifully small in relation to urgent needs and in comparison to those devoted to armaments and war. World military expenditures have again reached at least \$800 Billion per year while Official Development Assistance is running at around \$58 Billion per year. Foreign Direct Investment and other financial flows do of course play a major role also but these are focused predominantly on a limited number of developing countries and raise a number of contentious issues as regards their social and economic consequences.
- It is estimated that annual government subsidies to agricultural producers in rich countries amount to about \$200 Billion and that trade barriers in developed countries cost poor countries around \$100 billion per year.
- The average cow in the European Union earns \$435 in subsidies: in Switzerland the figure is around \$1,500. In comparison, the GDP per capita in sub-Saharan Africa is around \$467 per year.

Our current policies, principally focused on reaction to specific and immediate problems, are not in fact laying the foundations for sustainable peace. In the absence of a concerted effort engaging the whole world community to prevent conflict and to build the foundations of peace and progress, the prospects for peace and security in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century are limited, even for the most wealthy and powerful countries.

But the new policies we need are particularly difficult for democracies to initiate and to sustain. These policies must be outward looking, whereas the preoccupations of parliamentarians are more focused on national and local issues. The policies must also be focused and sustained over many years to address longer-term issues, but this is most difficult to reconcile with the relatively short cycle of elections. And the policies will be painful, demanding restraint and requiring commitment to wider, longer term interests beyond the nation state.

Nevertheless, in spite of these difficulties, I believe we have only one realistic choice, and in my view this is also the only ethical choice. We must commit ourselves in practice to building a world based on justice, solidarity and cooperation and of compassion and encouragement for those less privileged than ourselves. This will require new ideas, new policies and new leadership.

***The Need for New Thinking, New Policies and New Leadership***

As Einstein indicated, the thinking which created these threatening problems will not be sufficient to resolve them. We can no longer rely on the concepts and policies which have guided us since the Second World War to manage the challenges of the radically changed world of today and tomorrow. There is a need for a transformation of thinking, for new strategies and for the mobilization of the necessary public support and commitment to address the threats to peace and progress in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century.

This is underlined by the evident fact that the “conventional wisdom” – a term used by John Kenneth Galbraith to describe the framework of ideas which we use to understand our world – is inadequate to address the issues now faced by the world community. It is important therefore that through research and wide consultation, we analyse and define clearly the nature of the present and future challenges we face – if we are to be able to manage them effectively so as to improve the prospects for world peace and development. The University for Peace is developing a cooperative, international programme of research and consultation in this perspective. Briefly, the characteristics of the issues we face are as follows:

Firstly, the issues are not only important in themselves but they are connected in essential ways: they cannot be understood and addressed in isolation from each other. The linkages between them are of the most profound importance. Thus, economic development and environment are essentially interlinked; poverty, hunger and employment must be treated together; employment and economic progress cannot be sustained in a context of tension and conflict; conversely, peace and stability cannot be maintained in the absence of economic progress.

Secondly, the pace of change has accelerated. It is now such as to put immense pressure on long established cultural, religious and social structures and institutions, generating resistance and resentment.

Thirdly, the scale of many processes has increased dramatically: for example, it is estimated that around three thousand Billion dollars move in financial markets each day. This is far beyond the control of any government or international body. And evidently, the practical problems posed by a global population of nine billion people will be substantially different from those faced by the six billion of today.

It is also important to underline another major departure from the past. We are now living in a vibrant information society. As we see every day, the media now play a central role in public affairs, influencing attitudes, events and policy. And the immediate availability of information of all kinds is now driving expectations, attitudes and behaviour in all corners of the world.

We are in fact challenged to manage systemic problems of increasing complexity and under conditions of dynamic change, substantial uncertainty and risk. A more systematic, interdisciplinary approach must be developed which recognizes the key relationships between the issues we face and also between the strategies and policies to address them. And this new approach must take full account of the diversity of ideas, aspirations and approaches in our pluralist world. The days are past in which one philosophy can seek to comprehend and to dominate world affairs.

These challenges raise exciting but difficult problems not only of an intellectual nature but also at the institutional level. The structure of our institutions of government is heavily influenced by sectoral considerations and this is reflected directly in the structure and competences of our international institutions also. We insist on acting as if complex, inter-linked problems and policies can be treated through a series of distinct actions in different sectors. But, in reality, problems usually have complex, multiple causes: they must be understood and treated through cross-cutting, inter-sectoral approaches. These will require cooperation across a broad range of actors and agencies. But new thinking and new policies are easily frustrated by institutional ego and inertia as those who have worked in government will well know. The reform and re-orientation of our national and international institutions to adapt to the challenges of the modern world is therefore one of the most serious problems we face.

In particular, our institutions will also have to adapt to the growing importance of international factors in national policy. The consequences of external trends, decisions and events are of enormous importance for domestic policies in an increasingly interdependent world: for most countries, external factors and decisions taken outside the nation state are often far more consequential than domestic decisions and policies. It will thus be necessary to revise the procedures and structures and the priorities of many governments so as to take proper account of the international factors which substantially determine the prospects for security, employment and growth. In particular, the human and institutional resources devoted to foreign policy, to international development and to all the diverse aspects of cooperation will have to be increased rather than cut back.

We have lived since the early Eighties through a period of sustained criticism of the role of government in the state. In parallel, there has been a sustained and intense attack by powerful interests on the concept and validity of international cooperation. This has resulted in a substantial decline in moral and practical support for the international institutions put in place as an expression of the solidarity of the world community to reconcile diverse aspirations and interests, to resolve disagreements and to decide upon and undertake concerted action.

Faced by the realities of the present day and of the near future, we must strive to rebuild a sense of trust and solidarity in the international community in the over-riding common interest. And we must urgently strive to adapt the machinery of international cooperation to meet the needs of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century. This will require not a restatement of ideas from the past but new ideas and new leadership: a difficult but essential task.

If we are to manage our future problems, we will need a new generation of leaders, adapted to the conditions and challenges of the modern world. They will have longer-term vision and commitment to the future of humanity. They will be able to operate across disciplinary, sectoral and institutional boundaries. And they will not be prejudiced by narrow ideological or national views: they will be open to different cultural insights and opinions. This is an immediate challenge to our academic institutions – to undertake the interdisciplinary research and teaching on which new policies and leadership must be based.

We have seen throughout history, the tragic consequences of narrow ideology applied to complex international issues. It is appropriate to quote here from Robert Burns: whatever our individual origins and beliefs, we should learn above all “to see ourselves as other see us.”

The new generation of leaders and teachers, if they are to function effectively in our pluralist world, must be willing to recognize their own limitations – to understand that they themselves have been conditioned by their own backgrounds and experience.

They must not believe that their task is to impose on others their own opinions because these are unambiguously correct. They may then be able to benefit from and respect diverse cultures and opinions while retaining a clear sense of purpose for the common good.

At the University for Peace, we are developing our academic programme of teaching and research on a multicultural, interdisciplinary and international basis precisely in response to the perspectives I have outlined.

### ***Conclusions***

From the above analysis I believe that we can anticipate growing threats to peace and progress and increasing polarization of the world community in the early decades of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century, driven by, among many other factors, the trends and issues I have identified. However, as I have emphasized, this is not inevitable: we have the capability to act to mitigate the threats to world peace and to the security of all if we choose to do so.

With the enormous capabilities available to humanity today, there is no evident limit to what could be achieved if our energies were focused and mobilized to build an equitable, peaceful and progressive world.

### ***An International Strategy to build Peace and Security in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century.***

We must recognize that the major, long term threats to world peace and progress will arise in the future predominantly from conflict and violence generated from the widespread poverty and hopelessness of hundreds of millions of human beings, mainly but by no means exclusively in the developing countries. This is the seedbed of despair, frustration, hatred and alienation which breed violence and terrorism. It is quite unrealistic to believe therefore that terrorism and violence and other threats to peace and stability can be eliminated without addressing the underlying conditions in which they can thrive. This has been recognized by a number of world leaders in recent months.

We must find an effective balance between the short-term measures required in response to events and to immediate threats and the longer-term programmes needed to improve the underlying conditions which breed terrorism and violence. Ideally, the short-term measures in response to events and the longer-term programmes aimed at improving underlying conditions should be mutually reinforcing. By adopting a thoughtful, coherent strategy, it will become possible to ensure that the short term measures in response to immediate threats and events do not aggravate the overall longer-term threats to security and peace by further alienating and polarizing the vast majority of all ethnic and religious groups who strive to remain moderate and constructive.

In short, we will not be able to achieve security and safety and a decent future for our children by military means alone. Classic notions of defense and reliance on the military dimensions of security will not be adequate to deal with the threats of today and tomorrow. Of course we must maintain an effective level of defense and military security. But this is no longer enough.

It is now necessary, and will become feasible in time, to conceive and launch a major, long-term international programme to address the underlying factors which give rise to conflict and terrorism and to build the foundations of world peace.

This is not an unattainable goal. There have been turning points in human history when enlightenment, restraint and common purpose have overcome prejudice and narrow interest, for example: the surge of international institution building which followed the lessons of the Second World War, including the creation of the United Nations; the conception and implementation of the Marshall Plan; and, in the Seventies, the intense process of international "North-South Dialogue" in which the leaders of the developed and developing countries saw their common interest in trying to set out together, a framework for action to achieve a better world. The conception of a concerted international programme for world peace and development is therefore neither new nor unrealistic.

We are now at a similar turning point in world affairs which demands a new vision and leadership to develop and implement a concerted international strategy which can build peace and security and thus reorient the future of humanity onto a positive path. In this way, we can together mobilize and direct the enormous capabilities available to prevent conflict and to achieve sustained peace and progress.

Another vital benefit would be derived from such a strategy. There are of course, profound differences of views and objectives among States on many important issues. The process of consultation will therefore be contentious and the practice of collaboration will be difficult. Nevertheless, consultation and collaboration among states towards a more equitable, peaceful and prosperous world, would in itself, contribute to rebuilding the international solidarity of the world community on which any concerted strategy must rest. It would build bridges of trust, tolerance, common purpose and hope between races, cultures and religions and create the conditions in which our efforts may be concerted and mobilized in the cause of world peace and development.

It is easy to be cynical about the possibilities of public sector action to address national or international problems. There is however, no alternative. We have lived since the early eighties in a world dominated by extreme views skeptical about the role of government in the State and by derivation, skeptical about the possibilities of action through international institutions.

Fortunately, a less extreme, more balanced view is now emerging in which the contributions of the State, of the private sector and of other social actors are seen as complementary and mutually reinforcing. Thus, a central purpose of any strategy to promote world peace and security at the start of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century would be to mobilize, within a coherent framework of new and re-oriented policies, not only increased flows of public funds but also the dynamic contributions of the private sector, of non-governmental and civil society organizations and of the scientific and intellectual communities.

If we are to reduce poverty, alienation and violence in the lives of millions of men, women and children, this can only be achieved through effective cooperation and commitment, in which the Western democracies must play a major role. And in spite of failures and disappointments, we have in fact acquired tremendous experience in government and in the international system over the past fifty years in the application of resources of all kinds to improving the lives of disadvantaged people in both developing and developed countries, and to laying the foundations of peace. For all its limitations, public action has been effective in many essential respects.

Even in these difficult times, we could find the resources for a coherent programme to extend peace and prosperity across the world. As the war in Iraq demonstrates, it is possible to generate tens of billions of dollars for armaments and war. But it is immensely difficult through existing procedures, to raise funds for the prevention of conflict and for the building of peace.

In the longer run, innovative new arrangements could be put in place to generate finance to address the critical issues of world peace and development which will, in fact, determine the future of humanity. In relation to the scale of the world economy (of around thirty thousand billion dollars per year), a major programme would be feasible. The issue is not primarily whether the finance required can become available: it is one of values and commitment, of wide awareness of future threats and opportunities, and of design and organization.

In practical terms, the first step would be to undertake a broadly-based, multi-cultural programme of consultation and research to map out the elements of an innovative strategy for peace and security in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century. This would establish a vision and a network which will serve as the focus to mobilize and inspire the necessary support. The second step must be to create a wide public awareness of the challenges and opportunities ahead and to build coalitions of the willing in favour of a defined programme to build a peaceful and progressive world. The third phase would be, on the basis of wide public concern and support, to engage the political leadership of the world community in launching and guiding the necessary activities.

We must recognize that an investment in such a programme would directly address the most serious long-term threats to security and peace of both developing and developed countries: it would therefore be the best investment that we could make to assure the future security and peace of humanity. It is difficult to see how peace can be assured in the absence of such action.

### ***The Contribution of Education for Peace***

I am sure that it will not be surprising if, in my conclusions, I draw attention to the importance and potential of education as a means to improve the prospects for peace and security in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century.

The developing countries cannot be stable and cannot reduce poverty, illiteracy, hunger and disease unless violence and conflict can be prevented and resolved. This can only be achieved if there are thousands of leaders, teachers and professionals in these countries who can work to prevent and mediate conflict and to achieve reconciliation, to teach non-violence, tolerance and human rights, to build the basis of good governance and democracy and to undertake the targeted programs necessary to achieve sustainable development. And the very large numbers of future leaders and teachers must be trained in their home universities and schools: they cannot all be trained abroad.

Also, to prevent conflict, it is essential to change attitudes and behaviour in society as a whole away from intolerance, hatred and violence and towards tolerance, reconciliation, respect for human rights and gender equity and mutual understanding among different ethnic, religious and cultural groups. Such changes in deeply-held beliefs and attitudes can only be encouraged by education through many channels and through a positive role of the media.

For these reasons, the strengthening of educational capacities in developing and transition countries to provide teaching, training and research on critical issues of peace and development at every level is increasingly recognised as a means to build the foundations of peace and progress and to reduce the prejudice and hatred on which violence, conflict and terrorism are based. It will also be especially important to provide information on world issues and broad peace education on a wide basis to men, women and children in the developed countries. It is essential in these democracies, that the voters come to understand the present and future realities of world affairs if they are to support the policies needed to achieve a secure and peaceful world for all.

On the demand side, increasing numbers of young people throughout the world who are confronted by war, violence, poverty, injustice and environmental degradation wish to study and to devote their lives to all issues related to peace, security and development. There is also a need to provide education and training for those who are already engaged in such fields as humanitarian assistance, security sector and judicial reform, post-conflict reconstruction and reconciliation and economic and business development and who need to acquire special skills in the prevention and mediation of violence and conflict.

The demand for knowledge and skills in all these fields is immense. But educational institutions in the developing countries are generally not able to teach the essential subjects: this teaching must be multi-disciplinary, multicultural, international and specialized. Consequently, most universities and teaching institutions in developing countries find it difficult to respond to the growing demand and to the clear needs within their societies for expertise in the critical fields of peace and conflict studies. Besides other obstacles, they lack the qualified teachers, the essential course content and access to international knowledge and expertise.

With this vision, Secretary General Kofi Annan has challenged the University for Peace to become “the centre of a world wide movement of education for peace.” Consequently, the University is establishing the content, the methodology and the partnerships which will make it possible to generate, to share and to disseminate knowledge and skills in the field of education for peace across the world. Students, professionals, academics, civil society leaders and officials in developing and transition countries and in developed countries also, will be able to improve their understanding and expertise and to obtain academic qualifications in fields related to the prevention of conflict and the building of peace through the use of state-of-the-art technologies.

A key component of any strategy to build the foundations of peace and security in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century must therefore be a coherent, focused programme to mobilize education so as to build up the necessary human resources in developing countries which are essential to prevent violence and conflict and build peace.

### ***The Role of the United Nations***

Finally, let me conclude with some brief comments on the future contribution of the United Nations to building peace and security in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century. The re-orientation of international security policies to adapt to “the war on terrorism”, coupled with the consequences of the international divide over the Iraq War have triggered an intense debate on the role and capabilities of the United Nations and more generally, on the validity and application of the norms and processes of international law as these have evolved since the Second World War.

As we have all seen, the United Nations has experienced a period of tension and difficulty in seeking to fulfill its collective security mandate under the Charter. This has principally arisen from profound disagreements between Members of the Security Council. The view of the United Nations itself as an institution can be expressed as follows: “Enforcement actions without Security Council authorization threaten the very core of the international security system founded on the Charter of the United Nations. Only the Charter provides a universally accepted legal basis for the use of force.” (Annual Report of the Secretary General, 1999.)

If we are to improve the prospects for peace, this can only be achieved through effective international cooperation and commitment. And for this cooperation, a framework of international institutions and of international law is obviously essential to guide concerted action towards commonly shared values and objectives.

We who believe in the importance of international law to guide and constrain the actions of states are now being criticised as naïve and unrealistic. It is in fact, far more unrealistic to assume that the profound problems which directly threaten the future of our interdependent world community can be resolved on a durable basis by the unilateral action of individual states or by ad hoc coalitions.

In my view it is evident that, in the field of peace and security, the United Nations will become more central to international action in coming decades, not less. The UN alone has the international reach, the expertise, neutrality and legitimacy for such a task. It is particularly interesting to see, in the case of Iraq, how the unique role of the UN has now been recognized late in the day as essential for building the consensus on which a new democratic process may be established.

Clearly, the United Nations must be adapted to meet new challenges and this is indeed difficult. It is therefore all the more important to define carefully what the challenges of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century will be, as outlined in this presentation. But the United Nations is the only global institution which enjoys world wide legitimacy: it attracts the hopes and enjoys the support of millions all over the world. It is needed and valued by the vast majority of people on this planet. This recent crisis should in fact be seen as an opportunity to strengthen and to consolidate support for the United Nations as custodian of our common future.

....

I hope that you have found this presentation of some interest and that some of you will wish to pursue these vital issues further, perhaps in your future careers.