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The Gothenburg Process

Peter Brune

Faith based advocacy for disarmement

In the end it is the most marginalised people, often in the global south, that pay the price for the madness of vast amounts of armaments in the world

The Gothenburg Process

Faith-based advocacy for disarmament

Peter Brune

Life & Peace Institute, Uppsala

The quotation on the front cover is from p. 21 in this book.

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Foreword

Life is stronger than death

In 2001 a new ecumenical initiative was launched by the Christian Council of Sweden, the Swedish Mission Council and the Swedish Fellowship of Reconciliation and later the Life & Peace Institute to highlight the growing church concern regarding the increase in transfers of military equipment, primarily to the global South. In 2004 I inaugurated the second Gothenburg conference with the following words:

"We met in this room three years ago at the first ecumenical conference on the arms trade. At that time it was a new idea for all of us, and we had no guidelines or anything else to lead us. It was just a feeling to see if this was the right moment to begin a work for the churches and their policies concerning the trade in armaments."

It is thus roughly a decade ago that we started to plan for what has developed into the Gothenburg Process. So far three global meetings have been arranged and in 2010 Gothenburg IV is scheduled to take place.

During the beginning of the 1990's we could see that the end of the Cold War was followed by a decline in the production and proliferation of arms, a tendency that prevailed until the end of the last millennium. The growth in the arms trade that we have witnessed during the last decade meant a rupture to this positive trend. After a series of ecumenical meetings on regional and national level, the second global meeting took place, again in the city of Gothenburg in Sweden. At this occasion the idea of a "Gothenburg process" was launched in response to this concern. And in November 2007, we met for a third global encounter.

There are some specifics about the Gothenburg Process, which are also further elaborated on in this publication. But in summary there are two aspects that we have carried with us:

a) We are only looking at the legal trade of conventional weapons.

b) We seek to include all the different actors involved, i.e. also the military industry and those who buy and eventually might use the weapons.

Of course there have been many meetings on arms trade and it is definitely not an area that has been neglected by the churches. The partly new approach in this attempt is that we deliberately have chosen a smaller mandate (referring to a), and that we seek to involve also those who out of their position and jobs would maintain different views (referring to b).

The intention with the book is to present an overview of the Gothenburg Process, what has been done so far, why and how. We have the conference reports, we have reports from the different seminars, we have notes from the different meetings and we have media clips from the different events. However, what has been lacking is a publication that accounts for what the Gothenburg Process is.

Over the years I have been able to participate in various opportunities for dialogue with different actors involved in the arms trade and I have learned a lot. Especially challenging is the dialogue with representatives of the military industry and the armed forces. It has been a most interesting experience, especially when talking to committed Christians engaged in the production of arms or engaged as military personnel. This dialogue is necessary and, I dare say, mutually beneficial. There is need for more personal contacts. All of us who have been at the Gothenburg conferences, government and inspectorate, producers and the churches wish for and try to work for a peaceful world even if we are not always in agreement on how to create it.

In the final document from the first Gothenburg conference we cited Saint John: "Metanoia is conversion – a turning away from forces of death to the promise of abundant life" (John 10:10). This is indeed true. Christ tells us that life is stronger than death and it is in this conviction that we are pursuing the goal of a world free from arms.

Birmingham, November 2009

Bishop William Kenney
Chairperson of the Gothenburg Process

1. The Gothenburg process – a background

I was once challenged by a fellow parishioner in my parish in Stockholm, who in his previous job happened to be deeply involved in the control of the export of military equipment from Sweden. He stated that "the churches could definitely do more when it comes to advocating a more responsible arms trade in the world". A natural reaction from my side was of course to ask what he meant by that. He replied with a laugh: "That you have to find out yourself."

In 2001, three Swedish ecumenical institutions, the Christian Council of Sweden, the Swedish Mission Council and the Swedish Fellowship of Reconciliation, started a joint project to highlight the growing transfers of military equipment, primarily to the global South. The Life & Peace Institute later joined the initiative. The increase in these transfers ruptured the positive trend of a decline in the production and proliferation of arms, which prevailed until the end of the 1990's, following the end of the Cold War. The new approach that characterises this church-related initiative is to restrict the scope of action to the legal trade of conventional weapons ("government to government") and to see that an inclusive dialogue with all the actors involved is developed and maintained.

Gothenburg I, II and III

Over the years this initiative has become known as the Gothenburg Process. A series of national, regional and global conferences have been carried out, the first two in the city of Gothenburg, Sweden, in 2001 and 2004, respectively. The third ecumenical conference on arms transfers took place in Nairobi, Kenya, in November 2007. In between the larger global conferences there have been a number of meetings, consultations and minor seminars. This book accounts for the development of the process, since its inception, covering roughly the first decade.

The Gothenburg Process has (so far) neither a secretariat nor any judicial status. It is a coalition of different Christian actors that are concerned with the growing trade and production of military goods. At the first meeting (Gothenburg I) in June 2001 some 30 persons met for a three day conference. In the final document (Appendix C) four recommendations were presented by the organisers. Important topics that were dealt with were the EU Code of Conduct, the upcoming first UN meeting on Small Arms and a call upon the churches to continue to engage in dialogue with the industry.

Between Gothenburg I and II a number of additional meetings took place. Together with the main Catholic and Protestant European umbrella organisations a Europe-oriented seminar was held. An ecumenical delegation visited USA and met with a number of actors, including the UN Under-Secretary General for disarmament affairs.

The second conference took place in May 2004, with about two thirds of the participants from the first, continuing the process. Again the debate about the theological elements was very interesting and created much discussion. Attention was given to the view of civil society and churches in recipient countries in the Global South, with representatives from Africa, Asia and Latin America being present.

Also between Gothenburg II and III important activities were carried out, e.g. a second seminar with EU-focus in 2005. A first targeted meeting with US participants took place in Washington in 2006.

At the Gothenburg III conference in Nairobi, we could see that the interest in the matters discussed at both Gothenburg I and II had increased considerably since the last global meeting. The number of NGOs, government initiatives etc, working for better global control of both the production and proliferation of military equipment has increased, and it is easier to find partners. The Nairobi meeting was indeed very successful and laid a good foundation for the coming years. Especially important was the strong participation from African faith leaders, providing the participants with important insights into how the faith communities can promote disarmament at all levels. Furthermore the participants discussed "working principles" for the continued work and the following preliminary list was compiled:

1. The Gothenburg Process was started by and will be commended by and to the faith communities worldwide.
2. There is an added value in maintaining a dialogue with all the contributors through what is referred to as Chatham House Rules.[1]
3. The Gothenburg Process requires a long-term commitment from the churches, and resources must be set aside in order for them to be able to support his endeavour.
4. The scope of attention is limited to the legal trade of conventional arms.

1 www.chathamhouse.org.uk/about/chathamhouserule/

5 It is important to highlight also the "recipient country perspective", especially if this concerns a country where large shares of the people are excluded from the common good and living in poverty, thus threatening their dignity and human security.

6 There is a need to develop the ethical dimension and keep the focus on the most vulnerable and suffering.

7 In a traditionally male context it is important to strive for a gender balance in the analysis and building of capacity.

Finally, in this series of activities that have taken place until now, an Asia consultation was arranged together with the Christian Council of Asia in February 2008. Also a Latin American consultation was held, co-hosted by the Catholic Bishops Conference for Latin America and the Caribbean and the Latin American Council of Churches. A more complete account of all the activities can be found in attachment A.

Faith based action – how and why

Over the years my fellow parishioner and I have now and then discussed the issues dealt with here, and clearly we have quite different views on the necessity of the arms trade at all. I can now, with some years of involvement in the advocacy efforts against the arms trade and arms transfers, at least say that I understand better what he means. This man, who is still working for the Swedish government, had in his former job seen all the negative sides of the arms trade and the lack of a responsible attitude and action by the producing countries to ensure that military equipment did not fall into the hands of undesirable recipients. From his point of view arms are necessary in certain situations, and thus the production and proliferation of these goods is legitimate.

Sweden claims to have some of the strictest regulations and control systems in the world. On several occasions I have met government representatives from repressive regimes who, in their wish to show the legitimacy of their leadership, stated that even a state like Sweden is willing to sell military equipment to them. On one occasion I heard a Swedish Member of Parliament claim that if all countries in the world would be allowed to buy Swedish arms, the planet would be a perfect place. However, it is a fact that Sweden in recent years has been among the largest exporters of arms in the world, a fact made even worse if the numbers are looked at per capita of the population.

And again, in the continuous debate referred to above, my fellow parishioner could deplore the lack of serious engagement by civil society in general and churches in particular in the discussion on when arms transfers should be allowed. He even went as far as to say that certain church-related agencies held a substantial amount of information. So, for this reason, they could be said to be ”real players”, in the sense that when these structures made use of this information they could have a tremendous potential influence. In this way, he said: ”The churches could do more”. I share his view.

The Gothenburg Process is precisely about this – to get the churches to “do more”. Or put differently and as a question: What can churches, ecumenical and interfaith institutions do in order to promote a better world, when it comes to the trade and proliferation of arms? These issues are interconnected and there is need for a cross-disciplinary analysis.

One observation is that while churches without much hesitation have protested against, for example, the horrendous risk that the nuclear threat is posing to humanity and also recently have spoken out against small arms rather strongly, they have said surprisingly little about the “normal” trading of conventional arms, which is the focus of the Gothenburg Process. Arms transfers are accepted by most mainstream churches as supporting a state’s legitimate external security needs, as well as allowing for the use of minimal armed force internally to stop violent criminal acts where there is a direct threat to life. At the same time it has been all too evident in recent history that the excessive proliferation of arms often puts people at risk, fuelling violent conflict and creating a rising insecurity and fear. So how do we pull together all of our efforts to see that we do more and achieve more?

As described above, one of the strategies we have been following in the Gothenburg Process has been to involve all of the different actors in the arms trade. We distinguish between the following four agents:

A) The producers (the arms industry)

B) The users (mainly the armed forces in the recipient countries)

C) The controllers (mainly the control authorities on national and regional levels)

D) The “critical civil society” (in the Gothenburg Process this comprises, in a simplified sense, mainly churches, ecumenical and interfaith institutions)

So far, we have managed to have all of them on board at the meetings that have been convened, although not all of them at the same time. Nevertheless, there has been at least a serious engagement and a surprisingly strong and honest participation, in spite of the fundamentally different views on the necessity of producing and trading in arms. In this regard it is also correct to say that the Gothenburg Process does not primarily aim to have an "activist" approach; its scope is more to promote dialogue in order to achieve a sustainable change.

This does not rule out the possibility that churches can also support activist-related activities. A good example is the campaign for better control of small arms, to which most churches have signed up. To describe the churches as always functioning under the label 'critical civil society' is, as stated, clearly simplified. Unfortunately, there are many examples of how the churches support, directly or indirectly, both the military industry and warfare. But in the Gothenburg Process it is more the potential role as disarmer we are interested in exploring.

We have seen the risks that the transfer of arms bring along. In recognition of our common vulnerability as human beings, churches need to respond to the realities of the arms trade, not least from a theological and ethical perspective. In many countries, churches are also in a better position to invite different actors to engage in dialogue, compared with many others. This comparative advantage is further elaborated on in the following chapters. A serious shortcoming though is the lack of church-related expertise. There are simply not enough people who can provide the churches with relevant information, and there is a need to bridge this gap. This is yet another ambition that the Gothenburg Process wants to promote.

Change takes time

This publication covers "arms transfers' theory" from a faith perspective, studies of how the churches have acted in some specific countries (Sweden and South Africa) and accounts for the first decade of the Gothenburg Process. It is our hope and aspiration that it will be a source of inspiration and guidance for future action. Some processes take time. We know that real changes are normally not seen at once, especially when dealing with the two "traditional" institutions that are involved here, namely the churches and the military industry. The production and trading of military equipment has for many years been a profound concern for the churches, but there is a need for additional action. The development of an increasingly

global trade in and transfer of arms represents a moral problem that the churches need to deal with.

At the same time it is necessary to understand the complexity of the issue and recognise that the vision of a world free from arms can only be reached through a step-by-step approach. The achievements within the Gothenburg Process so far might be considered limited. Some conferences have been arranged, some reports have been compiled and some more people know a bit more about the issues raised. But the potential impact might be huge, if the churches and faith communities in general really start to realise that it is time "to do more".

Managua, November 2009

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Member of the Gothenburg Process steering committee

2. The global trade in arms*

With the end of the cold war at the end of the 1980's, a positive trend of declining military expenditures could be noted. We were part of the many who thought that the madness of the arms race, as it was expressed in the doctrine of Mutually Assured Destruction (MAD), had finally been overcome. Unfortunately this trend did not last long. Already in the mid 1990's military expenditures started to increase again. Recently they passed one thousand billion USD a year.[2] The Gothenburg Process tries to address this issue, in dialogue with those who are in the position of being able to influence future development. This chapter tries to illustrate the problem from different angles and different geopolitical locations. The responsibility lies with all of us, and as we have said before, more can be done by all of us to combat the continuously growing market in arms. If an increasing number of "ordinary people" find out more about these facts and get a better understanding of what they stand for, it will lead to a sound questioning of the present circumstances and create an active public opinion.

While military expenditures are skyrocketing, warfare has also become increasingly dependent on high-tech material and advanced techniques. Parallel to this, the military industry is becoming more and more transnational, in line with general globalisation. At the same time, the monitoring of what is produced and where it is shipped is becoming more and more globalised, not least through the active involvement of civil society organisations; also, it is to a large extent a matter for national control mechanisms. Every government should know and have control over what is manufactured within its territory and where it is shipped. Maintaining and developing an optimum level of know-how, and having access to the most advanced techniques, are driving forces for governments. Transparency, both national and transnational, is a crucial concept in this context.

The market

The trade in arms can be broken down into three general categories: the white, the grey and the black market. The white market is the transfer of weapons in accordance with national laws and international agreements. Often the price, amounts and type of equipment are made public. But the white arms market can be manipulated, not least through using loopholes

* This chapter has been written in co-operation with Håkan Mårtensson at SweFOR.

2 www.sipri.org, arms transfer data

in regulations. Thus the white market becomes a grey one, where the final recipient often is not identical with the purported recipient. This may be done by disguising, or even falsifying, an end-user certificate, or bribing an official in a third country to sign an end-user certificate but then allowing a shipment of arms to pass through another country en route to a third location. At the end of the spectrum is the black market where the gun running and smuggling occurs, often by specialised agents with access to effective networks worldwide. The very same agents may however also be involved in the grey or even the white market.

Departing from these three categories, one may have the impression that the white market is tightly controlled and transparent. Unfortunately this is not the case. Furthermore the white market cannot be treated separately from the black market. It is estimated that as much as 90 per cent of all illegal and illicit weapons have once started their circulation on the white market. They come into circulation on grey and black markets through thefts in military arsenals, through bribing policemen and military personnel to sell surplus weapons, through selling old second hand arms when new arms are being procured etc. One well known example in recent years was the case of up to 200,000 surplus AK 47 from the Bosnian war which simply vanished into thin air, when the US after buying them wanted to transfer them to Iraq. No one could confirm that the arms had arrived in Iraq, in spite of US end-user certificates. The arms could have ended up in Iraq, among enemies of the US, or in other countries.[3] No one knows.

Countries may also use the grey and black arms markets when they want to pursue national interest without the risk of being questioned by the international community. This was clearly revealed in the Iran-Contra scandal of the mid 1980's, when the US in secrecy sold arms to Iran (the country was the subject of an arms embargo at the time) and used the revenue to finance the armed group, known as the Contras, in Nicaragua.

The richest and technically most advanced countries are the main producers. Seven of the eight G8 countries are among the largest global arms exporters. The widespread reach of the global arms trade stems partly from the fact that the arms companies and national governments often have a unique relationship and are intertwined in different ways. Governments are not only authorising and controlling the arms trade, they are also, for political reasons, spending huge amounts of resources in promoting their sales.

3 According to the documentary film Devil's Bargain

The scourge of war

More than five million lives were lost due to the scourges of war in 1990-2000. We all know that armed conflicts, whether internal or international, force people from their homes, kill parents, force children to become soldiers and killers, destroy social networks, use mass violation as an instrument of war, etc. The casualties of conflict today are, to an overwhelming extent, civilian, increasing from a clear minority of war-related deaths in the first half of the twentieth century to 90 per cent by the mid-1990's.[4] But not only civilians are wounded and affected. So many soldiers, women and men, are traumatised for a life-time by their service on the battle fields.

All these horrors cannot be attributed to the pure existence of arms. But it is true that selling arms to a country engaged in conflict frequently fuels the conflict, makes it more deadly and causes it to last longer. In situations of tension between countries, arms purchases are likely to increase this tension, thus enhancing the risk of armed conflict.

Most of the armed violence in recent years has been within states rather than following the historical pattern of wars between states. There are currently a few international disputes, but very few of these are being fought through military means. It is therefore sad to note that several European countries continue to arm both Pakistan and India, in spite of the tension between the two countries during the last 50 years. In fact France, the fourth biggest arms exporter in the world, had Pakistan as its second largest buyer in the five year period 2004-2008.[5] Another example is the export of small arms from the Czech Republic and Slovakia in 2005 to Colombia, with the risk of fuelling the internal conflict that has been going on there for more than 40 years.[6] Sadly, not even the UN arms embargoes to countries in armed conflict are respected.

Hundreds of thousands of people killed in times of peace

Thousands of people killed by firearms are not only a phenomenon of war, but are also victims in countries which are not involved in what is normally referred to as "armed conflicts". Approximately 200,000 people die every year from small arms in places without an ongoing "conflict". Partly this

4 www.icrc.org

5 www.sipri.org, arms transfer data

6 Good conduct – Ten years of the EU Code of Conduct on Arms Exports, Saferworld and others, 2008

may be blamed on organised criminal groups, using arms to gain power and money, and partly on individuals committing robberies and assaults. However, firearms also kill people in accidents at home, through suicides and in private quarrels that escalate beyond control. In Brazil more than 40,000 people are killed by firearms every year. There are regions and cities in the world, where being killed by a firearm is the most probable cause of death for certain age groups. Guatemala has an average of 44 killings per 100,000 inhabitants, and in 70-80 per cent of the cases the persons were killed by firearms.[7]

Firearms flooded into Guatemala after the ending of the civil war in 1996. It is now estimated that there are around 1.8 million firearms in the country, 90 percent of which are unregistered. But more weapons continue to pour into Guatemala. Between 2004 and 2006 Argentina exported about 10 tons of firearms to Guatemala, thereby increasing the risk of more killings.[8]

A lot of research is currently going on to explore further the relationship between the control of firearms, gun culture, inequality in societies and the number of homicides. The normal indicator is the number of homicides (by firearms) per hundred thousand inhabitants.[9]

Military spending versus development

In its 2006 report, the UN's global Development Programme emphasised the problem that military investments in poor countries often come at the expense of life-saving investments in clean water and sanitation. Pakistan is given particular attention since it spends 47 times more on its military than on water and sanitation, with 118,000 people in Pakistan dying of diarrhoea each year. In 2006, one of Sweden's largest arms exports ever (the radar system Erieye) was given the go-ahead. The deal cost Pakistan about US$10 billion, an amount 12 times Pakistan's yearly budget for water and sanitation. In this way, misdirected spending on arms may in fact indirectly kill the inhabitants of poorer countries. Thus the very existence of arms may kill without actually being used.

Military expenditures are about 15 times higher across the globe than the totality of all global development funds, including the whole UN system and multilateral and bilateral agreements between nations and organ-

7 Blood at the Crossroads – making the case for a global arms trade treaty, Amnesty International, 2008

8 Ibid

9 www.iansa.org

isations. Armed conflicts and the use of arms have, of course, also had detrimental effects on development in direct ways. Vital resources of society are tied up for the care of victims of armed violence, e.g. in the health sector. It is calculated that in El Salvador 14.9 per cent of the nation's GDP is destined to cover costs related to armed violence, even though El Salvador is not involved in any armed conflict.[10] These resources could definitely be used in a better way, regardless of the suffering all this causes for the victims, their families and of social unrest in general.

Even if the effects of large arms procurement are more severe in the poorest countries, there are also middle income countries like Turkey which still struggle to achieve the Millennium Development Goals, such as reducing child mortality. This is partly due to the huge costs of its debts, which include a 15 billion dollar loan for the import of arms.[11] It may be noted that Turkey was ranked as the top buyer of German arms exports during the decade 1999-2008, and among the three largest buyers from both France and the UK during the five year period 1999-2003.[12]

There are numerous examples of how richer countries have spent enormous amounts on weaponry that in the end turns out to be totally useless. But countries, with a large percentage of their populations living in extreme poverty, which buy expensive weapon systems, are a special case. This is an example of how poverty reduction efforts are neglected. It is even worse, if the inequality ratio between the citizens in these countries is high. It is also sad to see that well needed research resources are spent on developing new lethal tools, resources that could be spent on developing tools for food production, improved medical health care or energy saving technology. Besides the direct misuse, there are also ethical considerations concerning why public funds should be used for the development of new arms. Compared with public interest and debate in the area of medical research, little focus is laid on the moral side of military research.

Repression and human rights violations

Gross and systematic human rights abuses are facilitated by arms sales in three main ways. First of all, the arms may be used in carrying out human rights abuses directly. Secondly, all arms exports, and imports, increase the power of the military and its capacity to mistreat governments. Thirdly, the

10 www.undp.org, regional human development report 2009 on Central America

11 Shooting down the Millennium Development Goals, Oxfam Briefing Paper 120

12 www.sipri.org, arms transfer data

sales convey one of the strongest messages of international acceptance and approval. This international acceptance may of course reduce the incentive to improve the human rights situation or to reform an existing dictatorship.

While many countries have introduced restrictions on arms exports to nations with gross and systematic violations of human rights, exports still continue to be approved to such countries, such as Saudi Arabia. This country is one of the world's most brutal dictatorships and is often sharply criticised for its lack of respect for human rights. Political parties are forbidden and demonstrations illegal. In accordance with Shari'a law, bodily punishments are administered in the form of flagellation and amputations. The death penalty is in use, often in the form of decapitation for men and execution by firing squad for women.[13]

Furthermore, Saudi Arabia is considered to be a politically fragile country; there are fears that the country could crumble and give place to radicalised groups. In spite of this situation, Germany and the UK in 2006 granted licenses for small arms and armoured all-wheel-drive vehicles, and in 2007 the UK licensed the export of heavy machine guns. However, the largest export from Europe has been done through the UK based company BAE Systems, which since the mid 1980's has supplied and maintained the Tornado jet aircraft, up to a value of 50 billion dollars.[14]

When arms are sold to human rights violators and dictatorships, the military capacity is strengthened and through this a repressive capacity is further reinforced. Furthermore, the legitimacy of the regime is enhanced in the international community.

Corruption

Transparency International says that "Arms and Defense" was rated the second most corrupt business sector by the Transparency International (UK)'s 2002 Bribe Payers Index.[15] The US Department of Commerce estimated that the sector accounts for 50 per cent of all bribery-related complaints. Characteristics specific to the trade render it particularly vulnerable to corruption.

The normal mechanisms, where the "best" and "cheapest" product wins, do not apply here. The procurement process is seldom open and transpar-

13 Four things you didn't want to know about Swedish arms export, January 2009 by Amnesty Sweden, Diakonia, SweFOR and SPAS

14 Good conduct – Ten years of the EU Code of Conduct on Arms Exports, Saferworld and others, 2008

15 http://chapterzone.transparency.org/policy_research/surveys_indices/bpi/bpi_2002#size

ent. Excessive secrecy, often invoked in the name of national security, allows corruption to fester and remain hidden often for years. The complexity of the deals makes commissions hard to detect, and the widespread use of agents and middlemen has allowed firms to remove themselves from corruption while their agents use it to secure contracts on their behalf."[16]

These types of bribes are of course especially detrimental to a country, as they are directed towards parliamentarians and government representatives involved in the decision-making process. In this way, bribes undermine the development of democratic accountability. Corruption is not just an add-on to the trade, it is central to it, increasing spending on arms by giving decision-makers an incentive to purchase weapons.

According to Swedish Television,[17] all the evidence suggests that bribes were used during the campaign of selling and leasing the Swedish jet fighter JAS-Gripen to Austria, Hungary and the Czech Republic. These assumptions are also confirmed in a top-secret report from the Serious Fraud Office in the UK in 2009. There are also strong indications that bribes were used when the same type of jet fighter was sold to South Africa at the end of the 1990's (see chapter 4).

As the trade in arms is not just any trade, the quest for extraordinarily high standards of transparency, anti-corruption measures and other controls must be applied, especially by those who sell arms.

Analysing the relationship between poverty, inequality and violence

Latin America is the most violent continent on our globe, going by the number of persons killed per hundred thousand inhabitants. At the same time, Latin America is the most unequal continent, with enormous economic and social differences between different groups of society. While the world average is nine persons killed per hundred thousand each year, it is more than four times as high in some countries in Central America. We know that there is a connection between poverty, violence and inequality. We still need to find out more about this relationship, as there are also very poor and unequal societies where the level of violence is much lower.

Some of the countries continuously appearing on the list of the most violent nations are Colombia, Honduras and South Africa, with yearly death rates by firearms per hundred thousand inhabitants of 48, 40 and 35 persons respectively. As a comparison, some countries to be found at the bot-

16 www.transparency.org/global_priorities/public_contracting/key_sectors/arms_trade

17 http://svt.se/2.112190/1.1586644/brittiska_utredare_gripen-_br_kampanjen_var_korrupt

tom end of the list are, for example, the UK with 0.06 persons killed and Japan with 0.003 persons killed per hundred thousand.[18] It is also a significant fact that it is very difficult to get access to a firearm in the UK.

Between 10 and 14 billion rounds of military small arms ammunition is produced every year. That is roughly two bullets for every human being on the planet. Each year roughly 8 million new small arms are produced, while only half a million are destroyed, thus leaving a surplus of 7,5 million small arms. The problem may best be addressed by curbing the demand rather than spending all efforts on dealing with the supply. Over the last few years, it is estimated that half a million people are being killed annually by small arms and light weapons, meaning that three people per minute on average die in this way. The number of people killed by war varies over the years, while the number of people killed by small arms remains relatively stable. However, there are noteworthy and inspiring examples of how concerted and committed action has been able to reduce the number of firearms' killings. A lot of research is going on regarding the reasons for the violence; within a few years more knowledge about these matters and a better understanding of how to combat the armed violence will probably become available.

Organised crime and violence

There is also a close link between terrorism, organised crime, trafficking in drugs and precious minerals and the arms trade, especially the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons. The high profits to be made from smuggling arms and drugs strengthen the groups of organised crime. In the case of Latin America, the drugs (especially cocaine) tend to flow toward USA and Europe, while guns from USA and Russian organised crime groups flow in the other direction; often these guns are used as whole or part payment for the drugs.

During the past years we have heard about escalating violence in Mexico following the growth of the drug cartels there. The violence does not only affect the drug cartels themselves. Civilians are often caught in the midst of the violent struggle between the different cartels and the police and military. It is estimated that half of the firearms sold in the USA are sold in the proximity of the US-Mexican border. In 2008, the Mexican authorities seized some 30,000 firearms from criminals. At least 3,480 of these arms could undeniably be traced to the USA, where private individuals can buy

18 www.iansa.org

firearms legally and easily.[19] Mexican authorities often point to this very problem in its dialogue with the USA.

The danger of believing that armed responses solve conflicts

The more weapons there are and the better equipped armies are, the higher will be the temptation to "solve" conflicts with violence and arms instead of striving for dialogue and political solutions. If the only tool you possess is a hammer, everything appears to be a nail. Both the licit and illicit trade in arms helps to equip those who choose to fight with weapons, thus tending to prolong and deepen the violent dimensions of a conflict.

The transfer of arms is a highly risky business. We will never be totally certain about where they end up and how they will be used. No one can guarantee that the weapons arrive at their destination or that they are not used in ways that violate human rights or international humanitarian law. No one can be certain that the present government will not be replaced tomorrow by a more hostile government using violence towards its inhabitants or threatening its neighbouring countries. It is even harder to guess what will happen with the weapons in 20-30 years time, when they may be replaced and sold to those who pay the best price in the white, grey or black market. And once the arms leave the white and legal market, they may be recycled continually in the grey and black markets, always ready to be used by those desiring to commit armed violence.

The bigger the flow of arms, the more probable it is that actors who use them for warfare, criminal acts, human rights violations or the destabilisation of society have easy access to them. We must never forget that in the end it is the most marginalised people, often in the global south, that pay the price for the madness of vast amounts of armaments in the world.

Every gun that is made, every warship launched, every rocket fired signifies, in the final sense, a theft from those who hunger and are not fed, those who are cold and not clothed. This world in arms is not spending money alone. It is spending the sweat of its laborers, the genius of its scientists, the hopes of its children. This is not a way of life at all in any true sense. Under the cloud of threatening war, it is humanity hanging from a cross of iron.

Dwight D. Eisenhower, From a speech before the American Society of Newspaper Editors, April 16, 1953

19 Economics and arms trade, Scott Steward and Fred Burton, article published at www.stratfor.com/weekly/20090708_mexico_economics_and_arms_trade

3. Arms transfers – faith based considerations

In his message to the first meeting in Gothenburg in 2001, Dr. Oscar Arias, 1987 Nobel Peace Laureate and current President of Costa Rica, stated that about two thirds of the international trade of conventional weapons concerned the global South, and that this constituted a major challenge for the rich countries in the North as well as for the developing countries in the South.[20] At the Gothenburg III meeting in Nairobi, the representative of the World Council of Churches (WCC), Mr. Jonathan Frerichs, elaborated on the topic "When are arms necessary – a Christian ethical reflection".[21] From his point of view the answer is somewhere "between hardly ever and never". The World Catechism of the Catholic Church says in article 2316 that "The production and the sale of arms affect the common good of nations and of the international community. Hence public authorities have the right and the duty to regulate them".[22]

In the publication "The international arms trade – an ethical reflection" by the Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace it is stated that "no transfer of arms is morally indifferent".[23] The WCC has in numerous statements called the governments of the world to act in favour of general disarmament and to promote the conversion of military production to that of civilian goods.[24] Also other church denominations have clearly taken a stance against both the production and trade in arms. It can also be observed that there is a bias towards the (easy) condemnation of e.g. nuclear arms or the illicit trafficking of small arms. When it comes to the "normal" trade in conventional military equipment the churches have been less outspoken.

The politicians and the state related authorities must take the often very difficult and controversial decisions, and there are many good examples of how the churches have claimed their right to analyse and criticise these decisions. The principal concern is that the dignity of each human being is safeguarded, regardless of citizenship, gender, age, social background, religion or any other reason. In short, human life is sacred and the "security" of states is subordinate. This tenet has a direct impact on a Christian position when looking at the production and proliferation of weapons. Furthermore there is a legitimate

20 Report from Gothenburg I, ISBN 1650-9196 www.gothenburgprocess.org

21 Report from Gothenburg II, ISBN 1650-9196 www.gothenburgprocess.org

22 www.vatican.va/archive/catechism/p3s2c2a5.htm

23 3:4 Pontifical Commission Justice & Peace, Ethical Reflection on the Arms Trade, 1996

24 Disarmament on the WCC agenda, compilation of policy documents and statements, 2007

demand that for each decision on arms transfers there is a person, or a group of persons, that can be held accountable for the decision taken. The decision-makers are often faced with very difficult dilemmas. Those who are set to take these decisions should be helped by clear guidelines in order to take decisions that can be justified, from political but also ethical points of view. The churches are and should be concerned with the moral side of the arms trade.

Recent developments

In the analysis of the trends, there are some important developments that affect the way the Christian churches understand their specific contributions to disarmament. A first tendency is that in recent years there has been a shift in the understanding of what security is, from what kind of threat a state needs to defend itself against towards the concept of human security.[25]

In the aftermath of the end of the cold war there have been several new attempts to restrict or prohibit specific weapons and there have been successfully targeted campaigns that have focused on specific dimensions of the legal production and sale of conventional weapons, i.e. the scope of the Gothenburg Process. The campaign to ban anti-personnel mines and the work to outlaw cluster munitions are good examples of this. These examples show that it is possible to reach planned goals through concerted actions. Churches and ecumenical organisations have played an important role in both these campaigns.

Another trend in recent years has been to take into account the view of the recipient country (i.e. the "demand" perspective of the importer), namely to what extent they, especially developing countries in the global South, have allocated resources for weapon procurements. Approximately half of the countries in the world produce weapons and many of them also export. It is often a challenge for the local churches to enter into a discussion on the military needs of the purchasing country, even when it is a democratically taken decision that has to do with the country's security policy, but even more so if the recipient is an authoritarian regime.

Yet another tendency is to take more seriously the threat that armed violence constitutes for humanity. Roughly one thousand persons are killed every day by small arms. In the Geneva Declaration[26] the connection between the prevention of armed violence and development is highlighted, and a number of nations have committed themselves to increase the efforts in support of

25 Human Security Report 2008, www.humansecurityreport.info

26 www.genevadeclaration.org

preventive measures. It is often said that if the Millennium Development Goals would have been written today, the focus on the costs of armed violence in all its aspects would have received much more attention.

Globally there is a quest for a more coordinated "behaviour" that can promote the development of guidelines also in the realm of the arms trade, and to some extent these efforts are built on ethical considerations. The most serious and promising is the global initiative for an Arms Trade Treaty (ATT). This process, initiated by a group of Nobel Peace Laureates, has been going on for some years and has been highlighted in the UN context in recent years. In a joint work by leading international civil society organisations (including church related organisations) in favour of an ATT, a number of principles have been compiled, on which a joint global agreement should be built:[27]

The treaty must hold governments to account

It must be based on states' legal obligations and other responsibilities. States must ensure no transfer is permitted if there is substantial risk that it:

- will be used to violate UN Charter obligations, including UN arms embargoes
- is likely to be diverted
- will be used: in serious violations of international human rights or humanitarian law;

  to commit acts of genocide or crimes against humanity; to facilitate terrorist attacks;

  to facilitate a pattern of gender-based violence, violent crime or organised crime;

  to adversely affect regional security; to seriously impair poverty reduction or socioeconomic development; in corrupt practices.

The treaty must be all-inclusive

It must include all weapons – including all military, security and police arms, related equipment and ammunition, components, expertise and production equipment.

It must include all types of transfer – including import, export, re-export, temporary transfer and transshipment, in the state-sanctioned and commercial trade, plus transfers of technology, loans, gifts and aid.

27 www.armscontrol.org

It must include all transactions – including those by dealers/brokers and those providing technical assistance, training, transport, storage, finance and security.

The treaty must be workable and enforceable

It must provide guidelines for full, clear implementation.

It must ensure transparency – including full annual reports.

It must have an effective mechanism to monitor compliance.

It must ensure accountability – with provisions for adjudication, dispute settlement and sanctions.

It must include a comprehensive framework for international cooperation and assistance.

At the UN General Assembly in October 2009 a strong vote in favour of establishing a timeline for the adoption of an ATT was reached, meaning that the process shall come to a conclusion through an international conference in 2012. It is still to be seen what the final version of the ATT will look like, but the process is on its way and it is very important that churches do not miss this important opportunity to make their voices heard.

Ethical considerations on the arms trade

Within the Gothenburg Process, the ethical challenges posed by the production and trading of arms have been one of the crucial questions and have been a topic that has generated some of the liveliest debates at the conferences held so far (see chapter 5). One instrument that has been scrutinised from an ethical point of view is the European Union Code of Conduct that was adopted in 1998 and that became legally binding in December 2008. The countries in Europe, being responsible for an important part of the global production and proliferation of arms, have been discussing ways to develop an integrated security policy also in the realm of the military industry and military export.

In 2002 the SIPRI[28] based researcher Sybille Bauer wrote a report on behalf of the Gothenburg Process: *"The European Code of Conduct – much accomplished, much to be done"* .[29] The report elaborated on three basic concepts that formed a framework for scrutinising the eight points on which

28 Stockholm International Peace Research Institute

29 Report from Gothenburg II, ISBN 1650-9196 www.gothenburgprocess.org

the Code is built, namely *accountability, coherency* and *sustainability*. Her report was discussed at Gothenburg II and was also cherished by several European export control authorities. These three concepts can be applied in the analysis of ethical and developmental arguments from a Christian-ethical perspective.

Accountability: As stated above the quest for accountability in all areas of life is legitimate, and one precondition for accountability, not least when it comes to arms trade, is transparency. When difficult decisions have to be taken, with apparent dilemmas embedded, clear guidelines are needed. One example that was discussed at the Gothenburg III meeting was about the UK government equipping the government in Sierra Leone with weapons in order to hold back the guerrilla group RUF, despite the government forces being involved in Human Rights violations and using child soldiers. The rationale was to choose the lesser evil.

Another well-known example is about an advanced Swedish anti-missile system, belonging to the Swedish armed forces that was used during the Gulf war by the US-led coalition against Saddam Hussein, despite Sweden's officially claimed neutrality in the conflict (due to the lack of a clear UN mandate). This was made possible through a lot of technical and administrative manoeuvres, stretching the rules and regulations to their very limit. When the question was scrutinised by the Parliamentary Committee on the Constitution, it turned out that the question as to who should be held accountable remained somewhat unclear.[30]

Similar situations will probably be numerous in the future with increasingly integrated defence cooperation between the main producing countries. It is important that the churches, together with other actors in civil society, function as watchdogs in these circumstances. While it is clear that transparency in general has increased at the national level, it is more and more difficult to maintain control of the increasingly globalised military industry.

Coherency: In the global struggle to strengthen democracy and good governance, the concept of coherency between different political areas is imperative. It is not enough for an industry in an exporting country to say "we follow the law", when it is clear that the exported goods will be used in a way that goes against other political goals. The wish of a government to procure arms must be checked against other policy areas. The responsibility of a producing country when allowing transfer of military goods requires

30 www.riksdagen.se/webbnav/index.aspx?nid=3322&dok_id=GR01KU20

thorough knowledge and long-term commitment to ensure that there is no "misuse" or re-exports.

In the example of South Africa, highlighted in chapter 4, the lack of coherent approaches vis-à-vis the needs of the South African people could have been used as a warning to reconsider large parts of the procurements. The cooperation between the churches in the exporting and recipient countries, respectively, has also been an important dimension, in order to put the right questions about whose security is actually at stake. The growing interest recently in making the Geneva Declaration operational on the connection between development aid and the prevention of armed violence provides a good basis for further analysis.

Sustainability: Criterion 8 in the EU Code of Conduct is often referred to as the "development criterion" as it deals with the balance between what states set aside for meeting social and economical needs and defence spending. There are a number of questions that deserve plausible answers before countries agree on an arms deal. Is the transfer of certain arms or military equipment sustainable from a political, ecological and economic perspective? What about the promotion of human security and the efforts to reduce poverty? But the question of sustainability can be posed also with regard to domestic consumption in the producing countries. The environmental impact of the rapid growth of military production worldwide has been given far too little attention. Which resources are tied up in the form of, e.g., research capacity, and how could these better be used?

Security for whom?

In the perspective of the Gothenburg Process, in the end these questions have to do with the role that a state gives those entities in society that are allowed to carry arms and use force. Also among churches and church-related institutions there is a wide range of views on this and what the mission of these entities is. Some recent examples:

The Southern Baptist Convention (SBC) is the largest Protestant body in the USA. In October 2002, shortly before the Gulf war was initiated, five prominent North American Christian leaders wrote an open letter on the letterhead of the SBC to President George W Bush:[31]

"We are extremely grateful that we have a President who has learned the costly lessons of the 20th century and who is determined to lead America

31 www.bpnews.net/bpnews.asp?id=14373, Southern Baptist Convention

and the world to a far different and better future in the 21st century." The basis for this analysis was made on the just war criteria.

In 2003, Caritas International organised a conference on civil-military relations. The following quote is from the intervention by a representative of a national Caritas branch in West Africa:[32]

"In Africa, the main principle is that each nation needs a body that can offer defence, stability and deterrence. These give positive space to a country to go about its business of nation building. Armies in Africa have played such a positive role. It is also, however, true that the same means that are used for security can be and have been used for destruction. The army has also been the cause of many problems. In Africa examples of the negative and destructive nature of armed forces include participation in civil wars, ethnic conflicts, coups and recruitment of child soldiers."

Despite these negative examples, the African Caritas representative argued that one should "think positively and consider the type of army that allows nation building". He continued arguing that "positive elements of the work of the armed forces included improved communications and health care, the opening up of inaccessible areas, training, building projects, construction work and the general protection of national resources."

Nevertheless, many questions remain to be answered from a Christian-ethical perspective: Who will produce the weapons that e.g. are needed by police to exercise necessary force in order to control organised crime? Which type of technology is required, how will this technology be developed and who shall have access to it? What kind of equipment shall the armed forces have, who shall produce them and who has the mandate to decide on this? Often reference is made to article 51[33] in the UN charter, saying that every country has the right to protect itself. What does this mean in this regard and who has the mandate to make a decision in line with the responsibility to protect? Article 26[34] says that every nation has an obligation to promote disarmament; this Article should be of equal importance to the former one in this discussion.

Military spending is too high and the current situation with absurd amounts of planet's limited resources spent on the production of weaponry is unacceptable. In order to have a real impact and bring about change an exceptionally well structured response avoiding simplistic answers is necessary.

32 CMR Report, Caritas Internationalis

33 www.un.org/en/documents/charter/index.shtml

34 Ibid

4. Case studies – South Africa and Sweden

The Gothenburg Process is to a large extent based on and inspired by concrete experiences in which churches have spoken out against arms transfers that have been considered erratic or at least very difficult to justify. In this chapter the work of the churches and the ecumenical entities in two specific countries are highlighted, namely South Africa and Sweden.[35]

South Africa – the post-apartheid defence review process

The transition of South Africa from an apartheid based state to a non-racist democratically functioning state where peace and justice prevail meant a transformation in almost all aspects of society. The defence theories/policies and practices also had to come into alignment with the broader transformation process. The South African Constitution, section 198a), spells out the direction: "National security must reflect the resolve of South Africans, as individuals and as a nation, to live as equals, to live in peace and harmony, to be free from fear and want and to seek a better life."[36] The purpose of South Africa's defence force was clearly no longer to suppress the opposition of citizens against illegitimate apartheid governments or to intimidate neighbouring countries.

In the mid 1990's a so-called White Paper was elaborated, in which the well needed defence review process was described. It stated that the greatest threat to South Africa's security does not come from any external aggressor, but rather from poverty and inequality within the country.[37] Against this background the White Paper argued for containment of military spending. Contrary to this, the South African government in 1997 circulated a so called Request for Proposals inviting tenders on corvettes, submarines, fighter aircraft, maritime helicopters, light utility helicopters and battle tanks. In 1999, the Cabinet announced a final package, somewhat reduced compared with the original plans.

The South African churches, through the South African Council of Churches (SACC), already from the beginning questioned the need for the procurement of advanced weaponry, mainly because of a concern that the socio-economic needs of the population should be given priority. In a

35 The first part of this chapter is based on a presentation by Dr. Nico Koopman, Beyers Naudé Centre for Public Theology at Stellenbosch University, South Africa, presented at Gothenburg II in 2004. See the full presentation on www.gothenburgprocess.org

36 www.info.gov.za/documents/constitution/1996/96cons11.htm

37 www.info.gov.za/whitepapers/1996/defencwp.htm

meeting with the SACC in October 2001, the South African Minister of Defence explained the background of and motivation for the arms deal and why a well-equipped military would be important. Not least, the armed forces should enhance South Africa's peacekeeping role especially in the Southern African region, protect the country's marine and other resources, and play a bigger role in social delivery, for example in the case of natural disasters, in reinforcing the police, and delivering books to schools.

The SACC monitoring of the post-apartheid defence review process focused on four key concerns:

- converting the South African arms industry to create sustainable employment that does not depend on the export of weapons;
- prohibiting the sale of South African arms to countries in conflict;
- banning the development, production, stockpiling and use of landmines; and
- reducing the military budget and using the resulting "peace dividend" responsibly, with particular emphasis on the need to prioritise social development and investment.

The SACC consistently acknowledged the duty of the State to protect the integrity of its territory and to safeguard its citizens from external aggression. The Council accepts that this responsibility includes the maintenance of a defence force and the capacity to wage war for defensive purposes. The Council's objections have focused on a few key themes: the cost of the weapons and the budgetary implications' developmental impact of the deal, the appropriateness of the weapons package in the context of South Africa's new understanding of national security, the ramifications for regional security, and, to a lesser extent, the potential for corruption. The Council worked with domestic and international partners, specifically the Christian Council of Sweden and the Swedish Fellowship of Reconciliation, to place these concerns on the public agenda through statements, public forums and advocacy.

Four types of dealing with social issues

What have been the theological and ethical considerations when opposing the post-apartheid "arms deal"? The South African theologian Dr. Nico Koopman has analysed the most important arguments that were used, and his findings were discussed at Gothenburg II. He described and evaluated

the role of South African churches in terms of the well known distinction of the North American ethicist, James Gustafson, on how churches in the international ecumenical movement deal with social issues. Gustafson distinguishes between the prophetic, narrative, technical and policy discourses.[38] In the analysis of Dr. Koopman the responses of South African churches to the arms review process and the subsequent government decisions and actions can be commended. The way churches have tried to hold the government accountable for their actions during the first ten years gives helpful directives on their future role.

The ecumenical movement in South Africa spoke *prophetically* by spelling out a vision of a society where arms deals are not done at the expense of the most vulnerable in society. Moreover, they courageously voiced their opposition to actions of the current government that they did not agree with. The churches fulfilled their prophetic role by indicating that the security of people is served in a sustainable way when challenges like poverty and unemployment are adequately addressed.

The thorough engagement of the South African churches in the *technical discourse* was also clear. From the outline above it is clear that a detailed scientific and technical analysis of the arms review process and the deals that the government eventually signed, was made. SACC also considered the views of other institutions of civil society, like the Institute for Democracy in South Africa.[39] The church positioning took cognisance of how Christians have responded elsewhere in the world. In this regard it has been interesting to recognise the similarities of the vision and strategies with that of other ecumenical actors in other contexts.

The *narrative dimension* of how to understand the post-apartheid defence review process was developed both domestically and in dialogue with international partners. Particularly important was the impact of the latter dimension in helping e.g. Swedish churches to increase their engagement and mutually understand why and how they could cooperate on this specific matter.

The churches also engaged in the so called *policy discourse*. Direct talks took place with, among others, the Ministers of Defence and public works. Presentations were tabled and individual leaders made public appeals, as indicated above. All of this occurred to influence eventual policies and to

38 Gustafson, JM 1988a. An analysis of Church and Society social ethical writings, in: The Ecumenical Review Volume 40, p. 267-278.

39 www.idasa.org.za

ensure that they were in line with provisions in the Constitution and the vision of the Arms Review Process. Nevertheless, this engagement on the policy level did not convince the government to cancel the arms deal.

Some progress, however, was made. The way was paved, for instance, for greater participation of churches and other civil society institutions in future discussions on security related matters. Concrete issues for further involvement include matters related to transparency, oversight by Parliament, contracts and off-sets and especially the building of a culture of peace and security.

Moreover, the way in which the churches dealt with the challenges posed by the arms deal convinced the Government and other partners that South African churches can be taken seriously as dialogue partners. Not only do they spell out clear moral visions, but they also engage in the complex and technical process of formulating policies and actions that coincide with that vision. This engagement, however, does not suggest that churches pretend to be experts in the fields of weaponry, economics and politics, who can formulate blueprints on these matters. The churches were aware that their contribution needed to be faith based. However, to make that contribution adequately and faithfully they needed to inform themselves about the complex technical factors that have to be taken into consideration.

Constantinianism versus sectarianism?

In line with the four dimensions as described by Gustafson, the expressed "prophetic" vision of a peaceful society informed the technical analysis, which prevented the churches from limiting their solutions to what they view as militarily, politically and economically possible. It rather challenged them to search for innovative alternatives in an imaginary and creative way. Simultaneously the insights of technical analyses enabled the South African churches to speak prophetically and critically in a well argued and therefore credible manner. In the end a well founded prophetic voice and technical analyses enabled them to influence public policy on the arms deal.

Thorough technical analysis also made it possible for the churches to enter into a dialogue on possible compromises. Possible solutions to dilemmas meant that, although one would ideally like to see that the world is peaceful and free from arms and weapons of all kinds, in a world of sin compromises were sometimes inevitable.

Where the dignity of people, especially the most vulnerable members of society, is threatened, it is a well established principle to opt for the lesser

evil and to protect potential victims from perpetrators. Awareness of and inspiration by a prophetic vision of a peaceful society were helpful in the analysis of making morally justifiable compromises.

Looking back on the way the tasks regarding the arms deal were fulfilled during this first decade, the before-mentioned South African theologian Dr. Nico Koopman thinks that it would be relevant to say that churches in young democratic societies had to guard against two real dangers that threaten them. These dangers are those of Constantinianism[40], which means that one is co-opted by the agenda of the state, and sociological sectarianism[41], which means that the churches withdraw themselves from public responsibility.

In the arguments that churches offered in the arms deal debate, the one central guiding criterion for the positions upheld was the traditional Christian conviction that God in a very special way is the God of the poor, the wronged, the suffering and vulnerable.[42] Standing where God stands entails asking what the impact of policies and actions are on these vulnerable people. This question surfaced continuously in the responses of churches to the arms trade. The arms deal was decided on, having a long term negative impact on the South African society and political life (contracts valid for decades, allegations of corruption etc). At the same time it increased the interest and the capacity of the churches to act on matters related to human security and providing an alternative answer.

Sweden – a world leading nation in what?

The churches in Sweden are deeply involved in advocacy efforts against the trading and proliferation of arms. This is in many ways logical – the country is one of the biggest global actors in the arms trade in spite of its reputation of being a nation concerned with peace and disarmament. Although a small country, it nevertheless finds itself among the ten biggest arms producers in the world, it has steadily climbed up the in recent years. The per capita figure gets even more striking as Sweden during the first decade of the new millennium has often shared top place with Norway (or the bottom end of the list, depending on how one chooses to see it). The value of

40 The first part of this chapter is based on a presentation by Dr. Nico Koopman, Beyers Naudé Centre for Public Theology at Stellenbosch University, South Africa, presented at Gothenburg II in 2004. See the full presentation on www.gothenburgprocess.org

41 The first part of this chapter is based on a presentation by Dr. Nico Koopman, Beyers Naudé Centre for Public Theology at Stellenbosch University, South Africa, presented at Gothenburg II in 2004. See the full presentation on www.gothenburgprocess.org

42 Gutiérrez,G 1974. Theologie van de Bevrijding. Baarn: Ten Have

the arms export has increased dramatically during the last decade, approximately three times more since the end of the 1990's.[43]

At the end of the 1990's the Swedish military industry stood at the crossroads, as the theoretical basis and the rationale, on which the law on arms transfers was built, had become outdated. The idea of maintaining a self-sustaining national defence industry, with the ability to provide the Swedish military with necessary equipment, had lost its meaning. The world was no longer bi-polar and the need to avoid becoming dependent on one side in the Cold War dynamics was not a relevant argument any longer. At that stage it was either about scaling down the military industry (and its exports) or opening up for new markets, regardless whether these new market "needed" Swedish arms or not. Unfortunately, at least in the view of the churches, Sweden chose the latter option. Swedish politicians did not hinder this development in any way; on the contrary, it became an explicit policy that the military exports should be supported by the state. Apparently Sweden produces weapons that are "efficient" and of high technological quality.

So far the biggest deal is the export of Swedish jet fighters to South Africa, a part of the "arms deal". As described above the churches in Sweden and South Africa worked closely together in their advocacy efforts to stop the deal. It was not only in South Africa that this provoked strong reactions. Politicians, industry representatives and others in Sweden argued that the Swedish churches had no reason to involve themselves in this particular case. Questions like, "Are the South Africans not competent enough to take their own decisions? Why are you (the churches in Sweden) taking up this paternalistic, neo-colonial attitude towards the new South African democracy?" were publicly posed and discussed.

An obvious argument for Christians in Sweden was, of course, that when the churches in South Africa called for international solidarity with their case, the voice and opinion of the South African sister churches were given priority before e.g. the opinion of the Swedish military industry. It was not only the SACC that asked for international support in their efforts to stop the deal. Also the South African NGO Coalition (SANGOCO) and the South African trade union movement (COSATU) distanced themselves from the plans. In a joint statement these three very influential structures called for a stop to the procurement programme.[44]

43 www.isp.se

44 www.cosatu.org.za/show.php?include=docs/proposals/2001/pbud2001.htm

There were and are needs in South African society that the churches in both countries would consider more urgent, and while there were certainly arguments presented in favour of the Swedish option, these were to be weighed against other needs. The churches' line of argument was based on ethical considerations, and as discussed earlier, these do not always coincide with political viewpoints.

The voice of the churches

Also the South African government took the advocacy effort by the Swedish churches seriously. During the sensitive final phase before the decision, a number of meetings, seminars and consultations took place. A high ranking person on the staff of the former South African President Thabo Mbeki demanded a meeting with representatives of the Swedish churches in connection to a visit to Sweden. He regretted that the Swedish churches had taken such an active stance against the deal and asked instead for their support of the democratically elected South African government and the decisions taken by it. Again the reply was that the Swedish churches were more inclined to listen to their South African sister churches than to South African politicians.

Swedish government officials expressed their deep discontent with the negative positioning of the Swedish churches vis-à-vis the export of the "national pride", the Sweden-produced jet fighter. The polemics peaked in connection with a visit in 1999 by the then Swedish Prime Minister, Göran Persson, to South Africa, just before the decision in Pretoria was made public. The consortium selling the fighter got full support from the Swedish government. Few people within the government dared to protest openly, but the Swedish NGOs involved in the campaigning got anonymous messages from civil servants within the government expressing their disagreement with the way Sweden made use of its reputation of being supportive of the African National Congress during the anti-apartheid struggle by promoting the selling of Swedish arms to South Africa.

It might be helpful to list some of the major events in chronological order:

June 1998, an international seminar in Stockholm, in support of the new campaign "Stop the selling of the Gripen jet fighter", with participation of the Nobel Peace Laureate Dr. Oscar Arias.

June 1998, an open letter from the former Anglican Archbishop of Cape Town, Desmond Tutu, where he strongly condemns the plans for major arms procurements to South Africa.

November 1998, a joint statement by the SACC and the Christian Council of Sweden (appendix F)

March 1999, a broad civil society campaign, supported by two leaders of parties represented in the Swedish parliament, claiming that the plans to sell jet fighters to South Africa are not in accordance with the agreed policies on Swedish-South African cooperation.

April 1999, a public message from the Anglican Archbishop of Cape Town, Njongonkulu Ndungane, where he warned against the risks of negative societal consequences of the procurement package.

August 1999, a Christian National Meeting in Linköping (the Swedish town where the jet fighter is produced), with a very well attended public debate between church leaders, politicians (representing different positions) and the Chief Executive Officer of the jet fighter consortium.

October 1999, a big South African Ecumenical delegation visits Sweden, in order to discuss inter alia how to cooperate with Swedish churches and ecumenical partners on ways of continuing the advocacy work against the production and proliferation of South African and Swedish military equipment, with specific focus on the planned jet fighter deal.

November 1999, the Swedish Prime Minister Göran Persson visits South Africa just before the signing of the contracts. South African and Swedish Christian organisations hold a public seminar on ethical and developmental aspects of the "arms deal".

November 1999, the contracts are signed in Pretoria, for 9 fighters, with an option of buying an additional 19 fighters on a later occasion.

February 2001, Swedish civil society organisations, among them Christian organisations, highlight how official export credits and state loans helped to finance the jet fighter deal.

February 2001, a public statement by the SACC on Job Creation and Defence Procurement, again criticising the arms deal.

August 2001, the SACC tri-annual conference issues a declaration in which SACC urges the South African government to use the option not to buy the additional 19 jet fighters.

April 2002, a new NGO report, endorsed by the Christian Council, called "The Gripen jet fighter – Swedish foreign policy at the crossroads" by Dennis Pamlin. In connection with the report a joint debate article is published in which the government is called to establish a commission that can scrutinise the consequences of the arms deal. At this time the public allegations of corruption become more vocal.

August 2002, in connection to the UN Global Summit on Sustainable Development, taking place in South Africa, SACC, SANGOCO and COSATU publish an open letter to the Swedish Prime Minister suggesting that he should discuss with his South African counterparts whether South Africa should make use of the option foreseen in the arms deal, of dropping the purchase of additional 19 jet fighters.

October 2002, a public seminar at the Swedish International Development Cooperation Authority on the NGO report.

The churches and the arms trade

It is important to underline that both the Swedish churches and the South African counterparts were less interested in searching for "scandals" than in the ethical and long term societal consequences of the deal. Later on, the judiciary systems in South Africa and Sweden have started to show interest in possible cases of corruption in the arms deal, including the Swedish parts of the procurement programme. Recently also the export arrangements/leasing of the jet fighters to Austria and the Czech Republic have been subject to investigations by Swedish anti-corruption agencies.

As stated in the beginning of this chapter, the Swedish churches have become more and more organised and vocal in their efforts to see that Sweden reorients its policy when it comes to arming the world. While it is correct that there is a very broad parliamentary support for the right of Sweden to export arms, the churches continue to show their disagreement. The State invests considerable resources, both financial and political, on promoting Swedish weapon exports. At the same time the legislation has become increasingly outdated. Several attempts to update and make an overview have failed. The gap between "the strictest legislation in the world" and "the biggest exporter in the world" is becoming increasingly difficult for Sweden to handle.

Over and over again the embarrassing fact that Sweden is arming the planet more than any other country in the world is raised by the churches. In the long run this will seriously harm the image of Sweden. This goes against the perception of Sweden as a nation concerned with peace and disarmament. This is a political price – but there may be many other reasons that speak against the development we have witnessed. There are obvious arguments that arms cause extensive human suffering in the form of direct victims. At the end of the 1980's and until the collapse of the former Yugoslavia, this country came third on the list of recipients of Swedish weapons.

The increased engagement of the churches has been noted by the Government. And in the dialogue in which the churches constantly have brought up this matter a certain discomfort can be noted from the governmental side. Statements like, "Of course it is not ideal that Sweden exports so much, but we have a very strict law", or "It is a dilemma, but we cannot tell other democratic governments what to do", are often heard in this dialogue.

From an environmental point of view the military industry and the extensive use of the products constitute a substantive charge on the planet's limited resources. The military spending diverts resources that could be better used for other purposes. The issues that churches bring forward in their dialogue with governments are similar all over the world. In the case of Sweden, the rapid growth and the "top position" does not reflect the (self-)image of the country, being progressive in issues related to disarmament and a partner in peace related matters.

Furthermore it is correct to say that also within the churches there has been an aversion to a too strong commitment against arms exports. A number of Swedish firms are deeply involved in the production of military equipment; among them the well-known Swedish firm Volvo. Churches hold stocks in these companies and shy away from the complexity of the issue. In 2002, Leni Björklund, Secretary General of the Church of Sweden, representing some three quarters of the population, together with Bertil Persson, President of the Church Commissioners for the Church of Sweden, published an article labelled "Therefore we invest in the Defence Industry".[45] For many "ordinary people" the issue has been perceived as too political and many followers think that churches should stay away from these kinds of "sensitive issues".

45 'Därför placerar vi pengar i företag som tillverkar vapen.' Kyrkans Tidning nr 42/2002, www.kyrkanstidning.com

It is worthwhile mentioning that while the military industry obviously has a different view from the churches involved in the Gothenburg Process, there has been a very open attitude and a great willingness to meet and enter into honest and straightforward discussions with church representatives. The same is valid for the National Inspectorate in charge of export control but to a lesser extent for politicians.

Together with a number of secular actors the Swedish churches have become more structured in recent years and do not respond only on an ad-hoc basis vis-à-vis specific "affairs". A standing committee of the Christian Council has been active for some years. There is also a joint agreement that the advocacy work shall be channelled through the Christian Council, of which almost all churches are members. Also the churches in Sweden have a special responsibility to see that Sweden contributes to global disarmament, not only with words and through agreements, but also in concrete deeds and actions, so that a case like the Swedish involvement in the South African "arms deal" does not occur again.

5. Elements for a theology on disarmament

Two traditions dominate Christian approaches to war and, by extension, to production and trade of weapons. The first, dating from the first decades of the Church, is pacifism. The early Christians renounced violence and refused to serve in the Imperial Roman Army. While the mainstream Church gradually compromised on these principles, some Christian communities sought to retain this early pacifism, which has experienced resurgence during the last century as a result of the extent of the destruction that modern warfare has already caused and threats to cause.

The second major influence is the doctrine of just war. This set of ethical guidelines on going to war (*ius ad bellum*) and behaviour in battle (*ius in bello*) was elaborated by St Augustine of Hippo and St Thomas Aquinas, in the 5th and 13th centuries respectively, to help Christians – who then ruled the Empire – to balance the tenets of their faith with their civic duty to defend the state. From the time of Hugo Grotius, the 17th century "father of international law", the doctrine has gradually been secularised. Today the principles of *ius ad bellum* (just cause, proper authority, last resort, etc.) are effectively enshrined in the UN Charter[46] and those of *ius in bello* (proportionality, distinction between civilians and combatants) in the Geneva Conventions of 1949.[47] In recent years the dimension of *ius post bellum* has been introduced.[48] It is very common that countries that have gone through armed conflicts lapse back into renewed levels of increased violence; efforts must be made by the international society to avoid this happening. Another dimension is how to hold people and governments accountable, once an armed conflict has come to an end.

Within the Gothenburg Process issue of the legitimacy of arms and use of force has been very much discussed. In the efforts to advance, both with regards to contextualising the church response and to striving for a deeper understanding of a faith-based position vis-à-vis the legal and democratically decided trading of arms, the ethical-theological dimension has been a key component at all the meetings. Most of the contributions and summaries of some of the discussions are to be found on the website of the Gothenburg Process (www.gothenburgprocess.org) and can hopefully serve as material for future studies. This chapter is not a summary of the theo-

46 www.un.org/en/documents/charter/index.shtml

47 www.icrc.org/web/Eng/siteengo.nsf/html/genevaconventions

48 Reed C. & Ryall D. 2007, The price of peace, Cambridge University Press, ISBN-13 978-0-521-86051-2

logical discussions as such but rather a compilation of some of the questions that have been dealt with.

The vision of a world without arms

The basis for the Christian disarmament commitment is found in the vision of a world without weapons, a vision expressed in the Bible. Dr. Lennart Molin, Associate Secretary General of the Christian Council of Sweden, at Gothenburg II elaborated on three different points of departure:[49]

- Every human being is created in the image of God. Therefore it is a duty to defend life as God creates it, and to promote human dignity.
- Christian ethics also calls us to promote a world order based on justice.
- It is a Christian responsibility to work for a reconciled and healed world, to restore broken relationships between human beings and to work faithfully for the peace that comes with the Kingdom of God.

As pointed out in chapter 3, the EU Code of Conduct was an important topic at the first two global meetings in 2001 and 2004. The attempts to establish Codes of Conduct can be seen as another example of a secularised just war tradition. It does not ban arms exports, as a pacifist approach might advocate, but establishes a set of commonly agreed conditions – relating to peace and security, human rights, sustainable development and other concerns – that must be fulfilled in order for such exports to be considered legitimate. Given their contribution and commitment to many of the norms on which these codes are based, the churches must not fail to be engaged in the development of global guidelines of this kind. The challenge has been how the differing views on the "legitimacy of arms" within the churches shall be put on paper.

In the case study on South Africa, a reference was made to the US ethicist James Gustafson and the four ways of dealing with the Christian involvement in social matters (narrative, prophetic, technical and policy). Among the suggestions that were made at the conferences on how churches could engage more were:

1. Churches could play a continuous monitoring role in cooperation with local and international partners when scrutinising the morality of military agreements. This might entail that they ask

49 Report from Gothenburg II, ISBN 1650-9196, www.gothenburgprocess.org

for regular defence review processes, participate in the debates on whether arms deals are unavoidable at specific times, and ensure that where deals are unavoidable, transparency and accountability are adhered to, under oversight by parliament and civil society. With regard to current and future arms deals, churches need to act responsibly, i.e. pro-actively, and not in a predetermined, reactionary way.

2 Churches need to develop their understanding of what security means. Human-centred security involves more than providing security through violent action. Security prevails where people enjoy economic security, reconciliation, health care, education and employment. This broader definition of security coincides with the approach of e.g. the South African churches as outlined in the case-study above.

3 More can be done by churches to influence public opinion, mobilise and organise civil society. This would entail churches not only dealing with public issues on the denominational and ecumenical levels as has mainly occurred in the past decade, but congregations and individual Christians also becoming involved.

4 The Church in all its forms is to be involved in addressing the challenge of the arms trade.

The potential impact of the Christian community

The identity questions of who Christians are, what stories they read, in which tradition they stand and are formed by, what role models they adhere to and what values they embody are articulated in the worship services and the rest of the life of the Christian community. This avenue could be utilised more in order to ensure that Christians are equipped to participate in various ways in the public discourse on arms deals and the building of a society of human security, but also, for the sake of embodying them in the micro and personal facets of life, the values that enhance human security. The last mentioned practice asks for processes of moral formation in and through our parishes and congregations. Exploring the potential of the liturgy and local Christian community for personal and social transformation has been an important tool for many churches in crucial situations, e.g. in South Africa but also in Mozambique and the Philippines, examples that were discussed at the Nairobi meeting.

Another debate at the Gothenburg meetings has been the understanding of what it means to be vulnerable and how vulnerability connects to interdependency. A classical quote referred to at the meeting is by the Soviet Union leader Stalin who asked how many divisions the Pope had at his disposal. How churches can make use of "soft power" and how churches can unite better, were other questions.

When representatives of the Gothenburg Process have met with politicians, industry and control authorities, one of the first questions has been how it interprets Article 51 of the UN charter[50], about the right of each nation to defend itself, implying whether the Gothenburg Process is oriented towards a radical pacifism or whether it is more in the vein of the "main stream church just-war tradition", accepting certain weaponry and the use of force. There has been a demand at the meetings to try to search for more creative ways of thinking and finding new ways of engaging in disarmament, instead of repeating well known positions. It has been stated by several persons involved in the process that the church can learn much from secular entities: e.g. the World Health Organisation has been pursuing a public health approach to analyse the exploration of new ways for action to prevent violence, a better allocation of limited resources and a calculation of the real cost of armed violence.

Need for an analytical framework

Much has been said about the need for a just peace theology, about the biblical vision of Shalom, the fact that already the Old Testament states that justice is a precondition for peace (rather than deterrence), etc. In the conclusion of this chapter there is reason to emphasise once again the need for more research and analysis for the churches. Minor attempts have been made to develop a more solid "in-house" tool for an analysis of when the production of arms is "legitimate" from a Christian perspective. So far three tracks have been identified for further studies:

a) applying the just war theory to arms production;

b) bringing to bear insights from medical ethics for the protection of life; and

c) using moral theology to scrutinise arguments based on "secular ethics".

50 www.un.org/en/documents/charter/index.shtml

There is need for an analytical framework based on those specific prospects, deals and agreements which can be scrutinised on the basis of Christian ethics and, if possible, according to the standpoint of other faiths. So far, this has not been systematically developed, but such an analytical tool could be built on the following guidelines:

a) Just war/justified arms production

The just war thinking identifies up to seven different criteria for the understanding of when there is "need" for a certain production or procurement of arms (just cause, right authority, right intention, reasonable hope for success, last resort, non-combatant immunity and proportionality). To what extent are these criteria useful when analysing the production and proliferation of military goods?

b) Medical ethics

Churches have an extensive commitment when it comes to evaluating conditions for safeguarding human lives in the context of medical ethics. In the same way churches could give valuable contributions when the same logic is applied to defend human life that is threatened by the accelerated global production of arms.

c) Secular ethics

Most countries that are producing and exporting arms have spent much time on elaborating criteria for considering the legitimacy of these exports. The different producers/exporters start from diverse points of departure. The arguments used when opposing specific deals, be they political, environmental, religious or others, also differ from country to country. International Humanitarian Law and Human Rights agreements are useful tools for engaging with these issues (see also chapter 3, discussion on the forthcoming Arms Trade Treaty).

6. Interfaith approaches to disarmament

In the last decades the dialogue for peace and reconciliation among people of different faiths has developed strongly. In some selected areas the dialogue has also moved beyond words only. There are inspiring examples, e.g. in the area of humanitarian assistance and relief work, where different faith-based organisations work side by side.

Within the Gothenburg Process the intention has been clear from the very beginning to include other faiths in the work for disarmament, striving for long term and structured commitment. In many ways the faith communities have the same ethical point of departure when it comes to defending life and preaching peaceful co-existence and reconciliation. The moral authority of the faith-based actors is a tool that could be used more to advocate disarmament and build trust and confidence among political leaders.

Areas in which faith communities could cooperate is e.g. by comparing the ethically based analysis on arms production and the use of force, by exercising the moral authority of the faith communities and faith leaders, and through strong public statements calling for global disarmament. Other areas could include information sharing and joint advocacy work. In order to promote this work, the scope of activities may be broader than has been described in the Gothenburg Process, but the important matter is to promote the cooperation step by step.

Faith communities are often in a position to play an important role, not least when it comes to Small Arms and Light Weapons (SALW) disarmament. Sometimes they are on the front lines of local efforts and at other times they can conduct high-level advocacy on the subject. Local faith communities are often very well situated to support joint interfaith efforts, e.g confidence building measures at a local level, joint agreement on the collection of surplus firearms etc. The range of possibilities is yet to be explored.

Another area in which faith based entities can work together is financial divestments in the arms industry. At Gothenburg I and II the New York based institution, the Interfaith Centre on Corporate Responsibility (ICCR), presented its work for disarmament. Consisting of close to 300 members, all faith-based, the ICCR monitors the military industry from the perspective of corporate responsibility and helps faith-based organisations to invest in a responsible way.

Another international actor that is interested in the disarmament dimension of the interfaith dialogue is the organisation Religions for Peace. It has presented its work at two of the global conferences. In connection with the 2008 UN biannual meeting of states on Action on Small Arms, the Life & Peace Institute and Religions for Peace co-hosted an interfaith seminar on the role of faith-based actors for disarmament. At another meeting hosted by Religions for Peace in London in November 2007 the Gothenburg Process was presented and discussed. In November 2009 some two hundred young people from all over the world met in Costa Rica to discuss youth, faith and disarmament.

At the 2008 UN meeting on small arms, several examples of how faith communities can contribute to small arms disarmament was discussed. Experiences and best practices in responding to violence from small arms were shared. In the Great Lakes region in Africa, faith-based organisations have a long history of promoting human rights and sustainable peace. Readily accepted and viewed as a source of spiritual well-being, they work hand in hand with governmental agencies to implement national action plans on reduction and control of the proliferation of illicit small arms and light weapons. They also assist the victims of gun violence through medical care and support of families.

These efforts have led to an appreciable awareness of the small arms problem and the need for religious groups to participate in advocacy. In countries affected by armed violence there is often more trust in religious institutions than in governments, armies or police. Faith-based actors can act as translators who explain research results or legislation in real terms that affect real people, and by cooperating with faith leaders spread educational messages.

7. Main challenges and concerns for the future

What have been the main weaknesses identified and what are the biggest challenges that the Gothenburg Process will have to face during the coming years? It is important to recognise the development that has taken place within two areas that in recent years have attracted much attention and which have come at the right time as far as the Gothenburg Process is concerned:

1. The time was ripe for a discussion on an Arms Trade Treaty (ATT). Now for the first time ever, there are signs that a great number of countries are interested in establishing universal standards for arms transfers. The process has been launched and a time schedule has been established. There is urgent need for more coordinated action within the churches regarding the ATT, to share knowledge, experiences and plans on how to support an inclusive and restrictive treaty.

2. The increased attention that is given to the suffering caused by the uncontrolled proliferation and use of firearms, or, as it is often known by the somewhat more technical term, SALW. Although the initial, "official" focus was on the illicit trade only, the way the problem is dealt with today has meant that the legal trade is also included. Due to the increase in a worldwide involvement against this growing problem, it is becoming clear, from the perspective of both grass roots organisations and governments and authorities, how to deal with these questions. As a result, one can see that the control is improving. Already at Gothenburg II it was decided that attention should be given to these two topics.

In the light of what has been achieved so far and trying to foresee what will happen in the coming years, the following aspects are discussed in more detail:

- The development of concepts
- Institutional capacity
- The development of a dialogical approach
- The involvement of "ordinary people"

The development of concepts

Besides the general intention to get the "churches to do more," there is another important component which has to do with the conviction that there are certain dimensions of the process that would constitute unique church and faith-based contributions to global disarmament. Over the years this has

been discussed quite a lot within the Gothenburg Process, which is partly recounted in the previous chapters. A serious shortcoming is that there is no updated comprehensive document of an ethical-theological nature that can give guidance for the churches when it comes to the legal production and trading of conventional arms. While this is also in principle the limit to what the ATT can cover, the churches have not developed such a document either within their own constituency or at an ecumenical level.

Compared with the work that the arms-manufacturing countries have invested in an intellectual and political analysis, describing the conditions for the production of military equipment worldwide, the churches need to strengthen the competence of their argumentation as to why the international trade with weapons must decrease. In developing "church expertise" the ambition is not that the churches need to know everything about explosives or any other weapon systems from a very technical point of view, but that specific church viewpoints be systematically built up, in order that they are taken seriously as significant and critical actors. The churches need to allocate more and different kinds of resources in order to engage with these issues.

It also has to be acknowledged that there are differences between different Christian traditions that, even when discussed over and over again, will not lead to a joint standpoint regarding the use of force and the subsequent question of having proper and appropriate weaponry. It is in this sense a matter of debate whether to describe the churches as being in the category "critical civil society," when analysing the different actors that are involved (see page 10).

Institution building and the development of capacity

The Gothenburg Process is vulnerable in the sense that, so far, it is too much dependent on rather few institutions and persons. There is need for a more solid structure and better planning between the encounters and conferences. There is also a lack of continuous financial resources. Encouragement for the work is given from all sides – from governments, politicians and churches – but there is a rather big risk that the effort will not endure; so, these institutional aspects need to be discussed. Contacts with many of the most important actors have been deepened. But also within the ecumenical family there is need for more confidence building measures, e.g. reaching out better to the Orthodox family and to the different Evangelical groups, especially in the USA.

Despite the churches being entities that, in comparison with other actors are relatively easy to involve in international work, it is also clear that much work is still implemented with only a national focus and many structures are still to be found on a national level only. The strength of the churches' commitment would be much greater if the ecumenical cooperation could take place on a more international level. Each country must organise the work according to its own situation, but the lack of more structured cooperation means that valuable opportunities for influencing are missed out.

The USA and the countries of the European Union are accountable for roughly two thirds of the global arms trade. Yet there is a request heard from both sides of the Atlantic that it is necessary to gain a market share from the other, because of the increasing competition from actors on the "other side of the Atlantic ocean". As the military industry demands more public support and resources, there is a strong need to increase the transatlantic cooperation between the American and European churches in the disarmament efforts.

Not only is the transatlantic dimension important, but also, as the Nobel Peace Laureate Dr. Oscar Arias emphasised at the first Gothenburg conference, it is necessary to take seriously the need to fortify the cooperation between the churches in the producing and recipient countries. While the first and the second global conference took place in Europe, the fact that the third meeting could take place in Africa, hosted by the main ecumenical structures on the continent, showed real progress. The commitment of Asian churches to engage in a "Chiang Mai process" as well as of the Latin American and Caribbean churches to do same in favour of a "Bogotá process" (see Appendix G and H) is promising.

The national and regional ecumenical councils have played an important role as joint structures when it comes to arranging activities, but they are generally speaking exposed to too heavy a workload. The need to have a stronger organisational basis for the work must be balanced by a common understanding that establishing yet another ecumenical structure that produces many statements but in the end has very limited impact is not desirable.

An inclusive dialogue? For what?

As has been described previously one of the characteristics in the effort to build confidence and trust has been an "inclusive" dialogue with the "producers, controllers, buyers and users" of arms. As has also been stated, this has been an opportunity for mutual learning and understanding. At the same time it is necessary to realise that we are dealing with institutions that

only slowly are subject to change, namely the military-industrial complex on the one side and the churches on the other. This is one of the reasons why a long-time commitment within the Gothenburg Process requires a lot of patience. Generally speaking the dialogue with the producers has been rather difficult to establish; this is even more so with the "users".

There is a risk in becoming too close to the industry: it is that of being used by those who advocate more arms transfers, i.e. the risk of being co-opted, or, even worse, being seen as a "useful idiot". An example: when the arms manufacturers perceive that doubtful politicians and decision-makers are questioning whether a specific deal should be allowed, "dialogue" with churches can be used as an argument by the industry to say that this has been discussed with many of those who might have concerns, including churches. This might be interpreted by the decisions-makers as if there is less to be worried about.

The dimension of corporate responsibility has been briefly discussed in previous chapters. There is much experience gained by some partners about how to influence a specific government position or a specific deal with a specific country. A challenge for the Gothenburg Process would be to capitalise better on these experiences and contribute in building bridges between different actors involved in developing faith-based positions on corporate responsibility. One dimension of this is also to develop a dialogue with the "Christian constituency"/church followers directly involved in the arms production.

A clear advantage is that the churches in this dialogue can play with their cards held open. There are no secret internal policy documents, no strategic considerations that the church related persons might not wish to share with anybody. There is a special strength in the possibility of being fully transparent and open regarding the aims of the work and how the goals are to be achieved.

A challenge for the coming years is to become more specific about what the dialogue aims to do and to establish limits and clear goals for what one wants to achieve. There are experiences of churches that, having maintained dialogue, have ended with "dialogue fatigue", and a feeling of not having achieved much.

Community Based Disarmament – demand/supply

A challenge that has been discussed at previous conferences is that there is a risk that the Gothenburg Process will create expertise at a top level but that

in the end this will not connect to the reality on the ground for the broad group of followers. The faith communities, being part of civil society, have a huge outreach and a substantial potential in influencing norms and behaviours of large groups of society. Working in close cooperation with civil society organisations and harnessing a culture of peace are common values shared by the churches. A strategic approach on how to involve large sections of the churches in the work is thus well in line with the general objectives of the Gothenburg Process.

One of the main contributions from the churches has been identified as the provision of support for what we can refer to as community based disarmament. The same logic can be applied in any socio-cultural setting, regardless of whether it is in the slums of any European metropolis, in the Latin American countryside or in a small town in the mid-west USA. If one looks at statistics, it is clear that firearms do not increase security. On the contrary, in societies with easy access to them and low control over their use, people feel more vulnerable and insecure.[51]

One important component is the grass-roots approach. The concept of community based disarmament has gained momentum in recent years, but so far it cannot be considered a concept that faith communities have widely accepted. In Africa a number of good initiatives have taken place, as well as in many countries in Latin America. Especially in Brazil, there is an increasing awareness of the devastating consequences of firearms. The reality has caused the churches to take a pro-active role, resulting in an impressive amount of firearms being collected and destroyed through their direct action. In voluntary, civilian, gun-collection programmes in 2004-2005, half a million weapons were destroyed. Church buildings have been the location for handing in the weapons, a fact that has been very important in the success of these programmes. The opportunity to surrender weapons in a place considered safe and secure, has encouraged more civilians to do so. Priests have played an active role in calling for this civilian "local" disarmament and their voices are trusted and respected by many affected people.

Also the link between civil society and the authorities when it comes to improved SALW control is not yet particularly well developed and even less so with churches. Churches could play an important role in this regard. Here the focus has often been only on the supply side, while the demand side has been largely neglected. The local parishes and congregations, being

51 www.controlarms.org

close to the communities affected in their daily life by armed violence, have a direct impact on the norms and values that are developed in the communities. A good example, then, of how churches have concretely influenced a community based disarmament comes from Brazil, in connection with the referendum that took place there in 2005.

Afterword

Does God want us to produce and trade arms?

Actually it is rather strange that we have to argue theologically why Christians and churches should resist arms production and the sale of arms, support disarmament and work untiringly to promote nonviolent means of solving conflicts and create a future of peace. Of course we are all conditioned by the history of which we are part and the context and culture in which we live. But still, why is it so difficult to break with traditional thinking and unfounded convictions? After the 4th century CE, when the church was increasingly accepted into the state-rooms of power, it became more important to argue for "just war" than for "just peace". But today, the world is different, the church is different, everything is different. But is our way of thinking different?

Before Emperor Constantine made the church a part of the circles of power, the followers of Christ were a powerless and nonviolent movement. The words of the powerless and nonviolent Jesus from Nazareth spoke more directly to the minds of his friends in the generations after him. These were words about the relationship between the tree and the fruit and the seed and the harvest (Matthew 7:16-18). We cannot expect good fruits from bad trees or harvest what we have not sown. If we want love, peace and joy we must sow love, peace and joy. We cannot sow violence and expect to harvest peace. To follow Christ means to act according to the will of God, not to give the correct verbal confession (Matthew 7:21). It means to love your enemy and turn the other cheek to the one who slaps you in your face (Matthew 5:39-45). It means to take up one's cross and leave self behind (Mark 8:34), not to be a crusader to conquer God's enemies or the church's foes in the name of God. "Blessed are the peacemakers" (Matthew 5:9), but how do we make peace? As cross-bearers or as crusaders? As pre-Constantine Christians, Constantine or post-Constantine Christians?

Any theology of creation includes the understanding of creation as a gift to be accepted in a responsible way. The question of responsibility challenges the ways in which we prioritise and share our common resources. Then we must face the fact that today the gravest challenge of humankind is the development, production and sale of arms and weapons. Any responsible theological reflection must deal with this fact, either defend it or crit-

icise it. If theology after such reflection becomes critical, then the theological consequences must be a strong support for all disarmament efforts, for the halt of military expenditure and arms production and for a redistribution of resources. If military power is a lesser reality than climate change, poverty and human rights for the churches of the world, then there is a lot to be done in the respective countries to make their national budgets reflect this conviction.

The question of the prioritising of common resources is also related to the question of the effectiveness of prioritising means in achieving goals. If our political goals are peace, global cooperation and national security, do increased military power and the violent execution of its destructive capacity really contribute to the achievement of these goals? If not, why do we not question its role, cost and place in our societies? All other areas in society are scrutinised from the perspective of effectiveness and questioned if its effectiveness is low. Why does not the same procedure apply to this area? Why are the churches so silent? Is there any theological foundation for this silence and passivity? I think that there is a strong theological support for the opposite, for the questioning of the whole scandalous set-up of a catastrophic prioritising and a disastrous inefficiency.

To live consciously in today's world means to realise the close connection between the economy and arms' production and the arms' trade. We must unmask the romantic idea that our nation produces the kind of weapons we need in order to defend our country and its citizens. Arms are not primarily produced to keep nations safe but to increase wealth and affluence. Multinational corporations have replaced national production, and the only valid aims and strategies for multinational corporations are profit and gain. If demands are diminishing, according to the philosophy of this area of life, you have to create new demands and imagined needs in order to keep up production and sales. A theology relevant in this field must be aware of these realities, for the sake of humanity and the planet.

A theology that is not primarily designed to support Christian nation-building or church imperial extension but to explore ways of life that reflect following Christ in the world of today must focus on trust-building, development of a culture of peace, nonviolent conflict transformation and courageous vulnerability. Such a theology will find strong foundations in the life of Jesus Christ, his preaching and priorities, and a nonviolent interpretation of his death on the cross. Such an interpretation is not primarily cen-

tred around how to change the mind of God but on how God's unchanging love can change our lives, priorities and ways of thinking.

Unquestionably there have been many ways in history of interpreting the cross of Jesus and the reconciliation he has effected and most of them have been centred on violence and a price to be paid. Human experience of failing to achieve nonviolent goals by using violent means has opened up to other interpretations which can be directly related to human experience and political choices for the future of all humankind. A necessary extension of this holistic theological world view must be that it also includes all non-human life, all there is on this planet together with us humans. As we are all related, dependent and vulnerable, we have to encounter one another in the same spirit.

Lund, November 2009

KG Hammar
Archbishop emeritus
Chairperson of the Swedish ecumenical coalition for the Gothenburg Process

Appendix A

Main events 2001-2009

The Gothenburg Process (GP) is a coalition of people from different faiths who are concerned about the growing trade and production of military goods. There is also a long standing history of churches in favour of disarmament and international cooperation, which has been useful when building the network. While it is correct to say that the name "Gothenburg Process" was coined in connection with the second meeting, in 2004, the first meeting in 2001 was the starting point. A committed cooperation between Swedish and South African churches was also an important foundation for getting the work within the GP started. The Ecumenical Centre in Sweden and SweFOR in particular have been a kind of hub for the administrative part of the work for which they must be commended.

The settings for all the meetings within the GP have been similar. The number of participants has been limited, in order to create an ambience of honest and straightforward discussions. Another characteristic is that the different perspectives on the production and trading of arms should be represented (i.e. producers, consumers, controllers, researchers and churches). The intention is to promote dialogue and a better understanding among all participants of the complexity of the issues, avoiding simplistic polemics. At the same time the encounter should provide the church-related disarmament endeavours with useful insights, networks and tools. Concretely this has meant, as commented on earlier, that the so called Chatham House rules[52] have been applied to the discussions. The content of the final reports from the conferences have been published with the approval of all the participants. Below is a brief summary of some of the main events that have taken place and a few words about the years ahead.

Gothenburg I *(see Appendix C)*

The first meeting was held in connection with the EU summit in June 2001, which concluded the Swedish presidency of the European Union. Some 30 persons met in a monastery in the suburbs of Gothenburg for a three day conference. In the final document four recommendations were presented from the organisers to the participants. Important topics that were dealt

52 www.chathamhouse.org.uk/about/chathamhouserule/

with were the EU Code of Conduct, the forthcoming first UN meeting on Small Arms and a call for the churches to continue to engage in dialogue with the industry. Attention was given first to what has developed into an ATT discussion.

Seminar with CEC and COMECE

As a follow up to one of the recommendations from the first conference, a seminar in Brussels was arranged, together with the Commission of European Churches (CEC, representing the WCC-related churches in Europe) and COMECE (representing the Catholic Bishops Conferences of the EU). On this occasion, among other things, the Gothenburg Process report on the EU Code of Conduct was discussed (see chapter 3).

Activities between Gothenburg I and II

A number of meetings took place between the first and the second meeting. An ecumenical delegation visited the US and met with a number of people in both Washington and New York, inter alia they included representatives of the US defense industry. Also the UN Under Secretary for disarmament affairs was briefed about the work. Additional study visits were carried out to Brussels and Germany, including a meeting with a group of experts from the German churches (see below). A special case, receiving much attention, including visits of several ecumenical delegations, was the Gripen affair in South Africa, accounted for in chapter 4 (see also appendix F).

Gothenburg II *(see Appendix D)*

The second conference took place in May 2004, with about two thirds of the participants from the first, continuing the process. Here the name for the whole process was established. Again, the debate about the theological dimension was very interesting. The head of the Swedish jetfighter consortium had accepted the invitation and described his view on the South African arms deal (see chapter 4). Attention was given to the view of civil society organisations and churches in recipient countries in the Global South, with representatives from Africa, Asia and Latin America participating. In the concluding statement the Swedish supporters of the GP were asked to continue and strengthen the joint process and to arrange a follow up meeting, preferably in Africa.

Activities between Gothenburg II and III

An important event was a seminar in Washington in February 2006, with representatives from American churches and church related organisations involved in disarmament matters. Another seminar with EU focus was carried out in Brussels in June 2005. Reports from these seminars are available. Additional visits to Washington and New York took place, e.g. in connection with the 2006 small arms meeting in the UN.

Gothenburg III *(see Appendix E)*

At the Gothenburg III conference in Nairobi, it was obvious that interest in the matters discussed at both Gothenburg I and II had increased considerably since the last global meeting. The number of NGOs, government and other initiatives, working for a better global control of both the production and proliferation of military equipment had grown, and it had become easier to find partners. The Nairobi meeting was indeed very successful and laid a good foundation for the coming years. Especially important was the strong participation of African faith leaders, providing the participants with important insights on how faith communities can promote disarmament at all levels, at the community level as well as in the development of an advocacy agenda in the area of procurements and military doctrines directed to decision-makers.

The need for a long term involvement in order to achieve sustainable results was becoming increasingly obvious. In the discussion on strategic priorities for the coming years the ATT was a clear topic along with church contributions to SALW disarmament. The fortifying of the doctrinal basis for the involvement of faith communities as well as their systematic involvement in the monitoring of the global production and proliferation of arms were also considered fundamental.

Seminar in Chiang Mai (see Appendix G)

The Christian Conference of Asia organised a regional consultation in February 2008. Some 20 participants discussed the arms flow in Asia and identified different topics to follow up. A first commitment to a "Chiang Mai Process" was made.

Latin American conference on Arms Trade, May 2009 (see Appendix H)

In May 2009 a first Latin American ecumenical encounter took place in Bogotá, Colombia, co-hosted by the Catholic Bishops Conferences of the

region (CELAM) and the Latin American Council of Churches (CLAI). A joint declaration was adopted, endorsed also by the interfaith organisation Religions for Peace, and a strong commitment to the Bogotá Process was expressed. Compared with previous regional consultations this was the most powerful commitment yet, expressed by churches and ecumenical organisations.

Forthcoming events

During the Swedish presidency of the European Union, in the second half of 2009, the Christian Council of Sweden has declared that the Arms Trade is one of the most urgent areas for world political concern, and a number of activities related to this problem are taking place. The next larger Gothenburg conference is scheduled for the second half of 2010 in the UK. In 2011 the ecumenical Decade to Overcome Violence will be concluded by a meeting in Jamaica. The Gothenburg Process will hopefully be a source of inspiration for the churches worldwide to engage in the goals set up. A first initial planning for a fifth Gothenburg meeting has been initiated for 2013.

Appendix B

An overview of actors

This appendix does not claim to cover everything related to what churches and ecumenical organisations have done or are doing regarding arms trade matters, but rather presents an (incomplete) list of organisations with which the Gothenburg Process has maintained contact over the years.

Global level

- The World Council of Churches (WCC) has attended all the Gothenburg conferences and given very valuable and important contributions, based on their vast experience and strong commitment to global disarmament matters.
- Within the Gothenburg process contact has been maintained with three entities belonging to the Holy See/the Vatican:

  a) The Secretariat of State on issues related to the UN related processes, both in Rome but also in New York and Geneva.

  b) The Pontifical Commission on Justice and Peace that has been supportive of the Gothenburg Process.

  c) Caritas International has done some work related to small arms and on arms trade, and several national Caritas movements have been involved in concrete projects.
- Religions for Peace, the leading interfaith organisation in matters related to peace and disarmament, see also chapter 6.
- Pax Christi has been an active participant at the Gothenburg conferences and is continuing to do a job to stay updated on mainly Catholic disarmament initiatives.
- The Ecumenical Network on Small Arms, a network mainly administered by the WCC.
- The Life & Peace Institute has participated in the conferences and has over the years published a number of important documents on church and disarmament.
- The Christian Conference on Approaches to Disarmament and Demilitarisation has invited key persons from the Gothenburg Process to present the work.

Regional level

- The All African Conference of Churches co-hosted the Gothenburg III meeting in Nairobi.
- FECCLAHA, the regional ecumenical forum for the Great Lakes and the Horn of Africa, maintains a strong interest in the small arms issue.
- The Catholic Bishops' Conference of the region (CELAM) was a co-sponsor of the Bogotá meeting in May 2009.
- The Latin American Council of Churches (CLAI) was also a co-sponsor of the Bogotá meeting in May 2009.
- The Christian Conference for Asia (CCA) co-hosted the Asia event in February 2008 and has committed itself to supporting a Chiang Mai Process in the spirit of the Gothenburg Process.
- CEC has been involved in the production of the joint report on the EU Code of Conduct. Together with the CEC Commission on Church and Society two seminars have been carried out in Brussels. A seminar was held at the CEC assembly in July 2009.
- COMECE has been involved in the same matters as CEC.
- The Quaker Council on European Affairs, a Brussels based Christian pacifist institution, is deeply involved in arms control matters.
- Servicio Paz y Justicia, a Latin American peace organisation, has been participating at the GP meetings

National level

Bangladesh

Representatives from churches were present at the Asia consultation.

Canada

Project Ploughshares is an ecumenical project with a high degree of involvement in international disarmament from a Christian perspective.

France

Secours Catholique/Caritas France is one of the church related development agencies involved in the campaign for an ATT.

Germany

Die Gemeinsame Konferenz Kirche und Entwicklung (Joint Conference on Church and Development), a joint Protestant-Catholic structure, has a standing committee monitoring the German arms export. Since 1997 a yearly report has been published, available on their website. Representatives of the German churches have attended all the three global meetings and have contributed both financially and with valuable evaluations.

India

Same as Bangladesh, representatives present at the Chiang Mai meeting.

Malaysia

Same as Bangladesh and India.

Philippines

The Philippine section of Pax Christi has been very active at several of the meetings and has done a great job especially with regard to SALW.

South Africa

The South African Council of Churches played an important role in the opposition against the post-apartheid arms deal. This is described more in detail in chapter 4.

The Beyers Naudé Centre for Public Theology at the University of Stellenbosch has participated at several of the meetings arranged by the GP and has contributed to the ethical-theological discussions.

Sweden

- The Swedish "Gothenburg coalition" consists of the Christian Council of Sweden, the Swedish Mission Council, the Swedish Fellowship of Reconciliation and the Life & Peace Institute. A standing committee, convoked by the Christian Council of Sweden, meets regularly. The Swedish Fellowship of Reconciliation has had responsibility for administering the financial aspects of the Gothenburg Process
- The Church of Sweden, the majority church of Sweden, has been supportive of the GP and has participated in several of the meetings, both on a national and international level.
- Diakonia, an important ecumenical partner, was instrumental in the advocacy work against the arms deal with South Africa.

Switzerland

Contacts have been established with churches in Switzerland and articles have been published in Swiss church media organs about the GP as a result of the participation of Swiss representatives at the Nairobi meeting.

Thailand

The CCA office in Chiang Mai co-hosted the regional consultation.

UK

- The main ecumenical structure Churches Together in Britain and Ireland has been kept informed about the activities within the GP.
- The Anglican Church has participated occasionally at the GP meetings.
- The Catholic Church has a very active involvement through Bishop William Kenney, currently the international chairperson of the GP.

USA

- The Interfaith Centre on Corporate Responsibility (ICCR) has participated at some of the Gothenburg meetings with important contributions from their work. The arms industry is one of the areas that ICCR is keeping an eye on.
- The Friends Committee on National Legislation, the Quaker advocacy organisation in the US, is deeply involved in arms control matters.
- The National Conference of the Churches of Christ (NCCC) in the US has contributed constructively to the GP since its inception. Some of the presentations of the representatives from the NCCC can be read on the webpage of the GP.
- The Catholic Bishops Conference, with which the GP has maintained contact, not least in order to understand better the positioning of the American churches with regard to "war policies" during the Bush administration.

Non-faith based actors

- Fundación Arias, the foundation of the Nobel Peace Prize Laureate Dr. Oscar Arias, has contributed with important input regarding the ATT and has been represented at two of the three global meetings within the GP.

- Viva Rio is a Brazilian NGO with major outreach and large scale disarmament work, not least among Brazilian churches.
- The London-based NGO, Saferworld, was instrumental in the development of the EU Code of Conduct and has participated in both global and regional GP encounters.
- Amnesty International is one of the prime representatives of the civil society position with regard to the ATT.
- The Swedish Peace and Arbitration Society, the main civil society voice in Swedish public debate on the arms exports, remains in close collaboration with the GP.
- The Stockholm Peace Research Institute has given technical support and has been present at the global meetings.

Appendix C

Final document from Gothenburg I

Ecumenical Conference on Arms Trade, 15-17 June 2001, Gothenburg, Sweden

Conclusions and recommendations

Metanoia is conversion – a turning away from the forces of death to the promise of abundant life (John 10:10)

An ecumenical conference on the arms trade was hosted in Gothenburg on 15-17 June 2001 by the Christian Council of Sweden and the Swedish Fellowship of Reconciliation. As organisers, we drew the following conclusions and recommendations for further consideration by the churches and church organisations in Europe and world-wide.

Conclusions

The production and trading of military equipment is a profound concern for the churches. The development of an increasingly global trade in and transfer of arms, fuelling violent conflict and creating a culture that is against life, cannot be in accordance with the teaching of Christ.

We believe that peace is possible. As Christians we can never give up the vision of a world without arms where conflicts between individuals, in and between societies, can be resolved without violence and where the common good of God's creation can be shared by all the children of God.

At the same time we understand the complexity of the issue and recognise that we will only achieve this vision through a step-by-step approach, in co-operation with all the actors involved. The conference was attended by bishops, ministers and lay people from the churches in Europe, representatives of the Holy See and the World Council of Churches, as well as representatives of the defence industry, arms control authorities and specialist non-governmental organisations.

The structure of the defence industry in Europe – as around the world – is changing and becoming more internationalised. In this context, we see two key challenges for the churches:

- the need for an ethically responsible arms export policy, which is effective at the European and international level;

- the need for greater transparency in the arms trade in order to ensure that government and industry can be held accountable.

The control of the arms trade is an issue of human development. It is not enough to impose supply-side restrictions on arms exports. We must also confront and do everything possible to reduce the demand for arms across the world. Arms control must go hand-in-hand with wider conflict prevention efforts, poverty-reduction strategies and good governance.

Recommendations

1 Our first recommendation is that the churches should re-commit themselves to raising understanding both within their communities and in the wider society of the ethical challenges posed by the trade in arms.

2 In order to keep both government and industry accountable, we further recommend that the churches intensify their co-operation on this issue at the European level, building on the existing ecumenical expert groups in countries such as Germany and Sweden and the European church structures[53] based in Brussels.

3 We recommend that the churches engage in an intensive dialogue with industry and government, seeking new opportunities to meet and more creative and constructive ways to exchange information and explain our positions to one another.

4 The *United Nations Conference on the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects* in New York on 9-20 July 2001 offers an immediate opportunity for the churches to challenge governments to tackle the proliferation, accumulation and misuse of small arms and to address their debilitating social, economic, political and humanitarian impact. We recommend that the churches engage actively in awareness-raising and practical efforts to stop the proliferation of small arms as an essential contribution to building a culture of peace.

The Christian Council of Sweden and the Swedish Fellowship of Reconciliation will present these recommendations to the churches and church organisations represented at this meeting, in particular the Church and So-

53 The Church and Society Commission of the Conference of European Churches (CEC) and the Commission of the Bishops' Conferences of the European Community (COMECE)

ciety Commission of CEC, the Commission of the Bishops' Conferences of the European Community, the World Council of Churches and the Holy See, with a view to developing an action programme on the arms trade for the churches in Europe.

Gothenburg, 17 June 2001

Lennart Molin
Christian Council of Sweden

Peter Brune
Swedish Fellowship of Reconciliation

Appendix D

Final document from Gothenburg II

Conclusions and Recommendations

"I call heaven and earth to witness against you this day, that I have set before you life and death, blessing and curse; therefore choose life, that you and your descendents may live" (Deut. 30:19).

On 20-23 May 2003 the Christian Council of Sweden, the Swedish Mission Council and the Swedish Fellowship of Reconciliation organised an ecumenical conference on the arms trade in Gothenburg, Sweden.

This conference brought together a diverse range of people from around the world and from different professional backgrounds. This conference was a successor to the first ecumenical conference on the arms trade held in Gothenburg 15-17 June 2001.

Summary of recommendations from Gothenburg I

The churches should re-commit themselves to raising understanding both within their communities and in the wider society of the ethical challenges posed by the trade in arms. In order to keep both government and industry accountable, the churches should intensify their co-operation on this issue. The churches should engage in an intensive dialogue with industry and government, seeking new opportunities to meet and more creative and constructive ways to exchange information and explain our positions to one another.

The final recommendation was adopted in relationship to the then upcoming first UN conference on small arms and light weapons in July 2001, stating that the churches should engage actively in awareness raising and practical efforts to stop the proliferation of small arms as an essential contribution to building a culture of peace.

Implementation of recommendations

The participants of Gothenburg II took note of the very positive development since Gothenburg I. The government authorities in many countries as well as the producers of weapons have become more aware of the churches' interest in the ethical dimensions of arms trade, and a new climate of discussion has been created. The co-operation at the European level has

been strengthened. The Joint Report on the Review Process of the European Code of Conduct is an example of that, with active participation from national expert groups. Furthermore, the dialogue with industry and government has been intensified. In 2003, for example, some of the participants of Gothenburg I met with representatives of arms producers in the United States. Also, the fourth recommendation was implemented, through enhanced church participation in the UN process on Small Arms. However, it is important to note that as organisers, we are not only looking for immediate change, but rather trying to work solidly for lasting results.

Conclusions from Gothenburg II

The Conference noted that the defense industry has become increasingly international and integrated. Developing an ethically responsible policy on export control and nonproliferation has become more complicated.

Churches need to respond to this new reality from a theological imperative by encouraging moral and ethical leadership to public policy debates. Recognising the increasing global inter-dependency and the fact that security is about ensuring the global common good, we affirm that the kind of peace for which churches pray cannot be achieved by militarisation and militarism. The excessive proliferation of arms puts people at risk by increasing insecurity, vulnerability and fear. Recognising our common vulnerability as human beings we affirm the need to create and strengthen relationships of mutual trust in order to achieve true and sustainable security. Human security necessitates freeing people from pervasive threats to their lives, safety and rights.

As Christians we therefore remain committed to the belief that peace with justice is possible.

Recommendations

We affirm and reiterate the recommendations of Gothenburg I and the process that has led to Gothenburg II. We recognise that in continuing the "Gothenburg Process" further efforts need to be made in exploring and articulating the ethical and theological foundations underpinning the churches' engagement in the issue of production and trading in arms. This would also assist in the development of educational tools for use within our churches so as to raise public awareness.

Whilst recognising the expertise provided by existing national ecumenical groups working on the arms trade, we encourage the establishment

of additional ecumenical bodies in differing national contexts. A greater number of such meeting places would strengthen the monitoring of the behaviour of state and non-state actors in the area of arms trade. It would further strengthen the creation, implementation and revision of codes of conduct and other mechanisms of control and restriction, as well as the development of early warning systems.

We affirm the need for continued dialogue with different actors, including users and producers of weapons. There is also a need for increased exchange and cooperation in these issues with partners from the global South and among countries on either side of the Atlantic. It is only through such an inclusive dialogue that it is possible to develop a comprehensive security that is compatible with sustainable development.

Building on the Gothenburg I recommendation with regard to small arms and light weapons, we commit ourselves to further strengthening the Ecumenical Network on Small Arms (ENSA). We have gathered together as Christians to explore these matters. In order for a global code of conduct to be fully reflective of common norms of justice, reconciliation and peace, this discussion must be expanded to include representatives of the differing faith communities so that the common good of all may find a common idiom based on shared religious principles.

The Christian Council of Sweden, the Swedish Mission Council and the Swedish Fellowship of Reconciliation will present these recommendations to the churches and church organisations, represented at this meeting with a view to developing an action programmed on the arms trade.

Sundbyberg, 2 June, 2004

Göran Sturve
Secretary General
Swedish Mission Council

Sven-Bernhard Fast
Secretary General
Christian Council of Sweden

Anna Åkerlund
Secretary General
Swedish Fellowship of Reconciliation

Appendix E

Executive summary, workshop on Ecumenical Action for Disarmament/Gothenburg III

Desmond Tutu Ecumenical Centre, Nairobi, Kenya, November 2007

Introduction

Summarised below are some of the discussions at the second part of the International Ecumenical Conference on Arms Transfers that dealt with experiences of faith-based responses to arms proliferation.

There are many good examples of faith-based organisations' response to the growing production and proliferation of conventional arms. In all countries represented in this conference we have heard the important voices of faith-based organisations questioning the increasing amount of weapons flooding different parts of the world.

Examples of these commitments: In Germany churches produce a report on German arms transfers every year. In South Africa churches protested against the enormous investments in arms in the post-apartheid restructuring of the armed forces (e.g. jet fighters and submarines) a few years ago. British bishops have made early statements in favour of the Arms Trade Treaty, and churches in Mozambique have proven instrumental in small arms disarmament.

These examples serve as sources of inspiration. Hopefully at the forthcoming events within the Gothenburg Process it will be possible to share many more and thus build a stronger faith-based network for disarmament.

Which methods can faith-based organisations use?

Advocacy

Many participants in the workshop agreed that dialogue with governments, defence industry, and military is an important element in acting for a change. But dialogue alone is not sufficient. Monitoring of the activities of the different actors is another important component.

In order to have successful monitoring, good knowledge is needed. To enter into dialogue with governments requires a good grasp of the facts.

At the same time one should not be too afraid and wait too long to take action.

Work on community level

In Mozambique, Brazil and many other places around the world it has been shown that people can have more trust in churches and faith-based organisations than in the official or public structures (e.g. police), when it comes to local disarmament and confidence building or, more concretely, when it comes to handing in their firearms. In relation to this, churches and faith-based organisations may have a substantial role in DDR-processes (Disarmament, Demobilisation and Reintegration of ex-combatants). These organisations often have more of a long-term commitment and a community focus that is highly important. From these experiences it is also natural that faith-based organisations work with the "demand side" of arms, i.e. developing methods for the prevention of the armed violence through awareness raising and transformation of attitudes and behaviours (rather than only focusing on the supply side).

Role model in society

At the conference concrete examples were discussed where faith-based organisations have acted as role models in society and have inspired other actors and sectors to act more responsibly and ethically in situations where there is a high level of armed violence in the community. Other examples of how faith-based organisations can influence is through investing in an ethically responsible way, which in many cases may influence other actors. Faith-based organisations may also give their support in favour of global campaigns, to strengthen the credibility of these campaigns, through the moral authority that people connect with the faith communities and faith leaders.

Who can faith-based organisations work with?

Faith-based organisations are many times faced with limited resources, which makes it more difficult to set aside staff that could build up extensive knowledge on specific aspects of arms production and arms transfers. It is therefore important to build networks with experts, researchers and specialised NGOs. On the other hand bishops and other religious leaders/authorities could open doors into the room of decision makers.

It is also important to work with church representatives in other regions. An experience from Colombia showed that providing information to bishops in North America and Europe proved to be a powerful tool in achieving an international dialogue about the situation in the country. There is also a need to look beyond the own church and the own church constituency.

Future ecumenical action on arms control

From the discussions on the experiences of ecumenical action on arms control and from the presentations in the first part of the conference, it was agreed that the work should be further developed in three clusters:

a) Theological and ethical reflection

b) Arms Trade Treaty – ATT

c) Ecumenical action on small arms

The participants committed themselves to working towards the enhanced participation of their own church or faith community for the achievement of these goals. In order to operationalise these goals, the following objectives and strategies were agreed on:

a) Theological and ethical reflections

Objectives:

- Overall objective: develop the faith-based reflection regarding how to reduce production and transfer of arms
- Facilitate an ethical impact on public policy/opinion on the deadly consequences of the arms race
- Reflecting on the meaning of Just Peace in relation to the arms trade and production.

Strategies:

- To produce a theological reflection from the various Christian traditions, involving academia, practitioners and victims and survivors of violent conflicts
- Popularisation of this reflection, for broader dissemination
- Identify and make use of proper channels to influence the process leading up to an ecumenical declaration of a Just Peace.

b) Support of the Arms Trade Treaty, ATT

Objectives:

- Overall objective: That a global instrument for arms transfers is adopted, and that it sets clear minimum regulations to be fulfilled before approving international transfers

- Adding force to the campaign towards an ATT, by involving the faith-based communities
- Give additional credibility to the campaign by the support from churches and faith-based organisations.

Strategies:

- Coordination with the ATT steering committee to gain knowledge and updated campaign information, in order to coordinate action
- Appoint focal points for ATT within religious groups, and creating a network
- Harnessing the network through different means, e.g. by a questionnaire and a mapping exercise
- Prepare a church statement on the ATT that churches can sign and use as a platform for common action
- Awareness building – start from the top, commitment from religious leaders. Widen also to inter-religious workshop with religious leaders
- Promote the ATT in different ecumenical and religious gatherings
- Provide grassroots faith-based perspectives to the ATT advocacy

c) ENSA – Ecumenical Network on Small Arms

Objective:

- Strengthen the ENSA network within IANSA and the different churches

Strategies:

- Convene an ecumenical church leaders forum on small arms and light weapons (SALW)
- Contribute a grassroots faith-based perspective on the thematic focus on the UN Programme of Action and other agreements and instruments for SALW disarmament
- Do awareness education on small arms and light weapons and identify champions within faith-based organisations
- Connect with faith-based resource agencies for ENSA support
- Advocacy and lobby national governments on SALW by churches leadership

Appendix F

Joint Declaration, the Christian Councils of South Africa and Sweden

On 24 November 1999, the South African Council of Churches, the Christian Council of Sweden, the Coalition for Defence Alternative, and the Swedish Fellowship of Reconciliation convened a seminar on Defence Expenditure and Poverty Alleviation as part of the "Civil Society Encounter" held in conjunction with the state visit of the Swedish Prime Minister, Göran Persson. The meeting was addressed by the Rt. Rev. David Beetge, Anglican Bishop of the Highveld, Rev. Bo Forsberg, Director of Diakonia (Sweden), the Hon. Nozizwe Madlala-Routledge, the South African Deputy Minister of Defence, and Mr. Roger Hällhag, International Policy Advisor to the Prime Minister of Sweden.

The conveners thank the seminar presenters and participants for their commitment to open debate on defence and development issues. The South African participants also thank the Swedish government and people for their assistance in the struggle against apartheid and for their continuing support for transformation and development in South Africa.

In light of the information presented at the seminar, the four convening organisations ***acknowledge*** that:

- In a situation where the majority of the population live below the poverty datum line, poverty constitutes the most significant threat to South Africa's security and democratic government;
- South Africa's Constitution, in terms of the Bill of Rights and section 198(a), gives priority to human security over traditional notions of military security;
- There is no discernible military threat to South Africa to warrant expenditure of R30 billion on new arms, including BAe/Saab JAS-39 Gripen fighter aircraft;
- As a percentage of GDP, defence spending has declined substantially from pre-1995 levels to less than 1,5% today;
- Although expenditure on the current arms procurement package will be spread over eight or more years, it will necessitate a 14,9%

average annual increase in the defence budget over the next three years – more than double the average annual increase planned for any other sector;

- The European Union's Code of Conduct on Arms Exports (Criterion Eight) requires consideration of socio-economic conditions in the recipient country;
- The proposed arms procurement package includes industrial participation, trade and investment agreements (offsets) valued at R110 billion;
- The South African government claims that the offset arrangements will generate 65,000 new jobs;
- International research exposes the malpractice of offsets relating to military expenditure as a scheme to provide political legitimisation for the large outlays by allowing policy-makers to point to ultimately non-existent economic benefits;
- Northern industrialised countries prohibit the use of offsets in agreements among themselves on the grounds that they distort markets and encourage corruption;
- Notwithstanding South Africa's desperate need for jobs, the moral implications and the sustainability of job creation initiatives must be taken into account;
- The armaments industry is capital-intensive rather than labour intensive and is therefore a poor creator of jobs, particularly at less skilled levels;
- The armaments industry is invariably heavily subsidised, diverting public resources away from socio-economic upliftment;
- The armaments industry's record of corruption gives cause for alarm;
- South Africa's rearmament may trigger an arms race in the subcontinent and elsewhere;
- Churches and many civil society organisations in Sweden and South Africa have consistently called for the abandonment of the arms sale and the redirection of these funds into sustainable social investment to enhance human security.

Further, ***we recognise*** that, in spite of the persistent calls for a reconsideration of the arms deal, the South African government and industry representatives from Sweden, Britain, Germany and Italy met in Pretoria on 3 December 1999 to finalise the deal.

Therefore, we call upon:

1 The *South African government* to demonstrate its commitment to fighting poverty and corruption by:

   a. Publishing complete details of the offset agreements associated with the arms procurement package;

   b. Establishing a broadly representative committee (including civil society representatives) to assess the likely impact of the offset agreements, to analyse their potential for reducing poverty and unemployment, and to consider alternative options for deploying these funds to promote genuine human security through socio-economic development;

   c. Initiating an independent judicial inquiry into the allegations of corruption which have been made in connection with the arms procurement deal;

   d Declaring a moratorium on implementation of the deal until both the commission of inquiry and the review committee have completed and published their reports and the public have had an opportunity to study and debate their conclusions;

   e. Reconsidering its arms procurement plans in light of these reports.

2 The *South African government* to promote compliance with the arms export criteria of the National Conventional Arms Control Committee by entrenching these conditions in law.

3 The *South African government* to work closely with church, community, and other civil society organisations to develop and implement creative plans for the conversion of military bases and defence industries to productive civilian use.

4 The *Swedish government* and *Saab* to cooperate fully in these inquiries, to suspend the sale of arms to South Africa until the review process is

complete, and to urge the *British, German, and Italian governments and suppliers* to take similar action.

5 *Churches and NGOs in Sweden and South Africa* to continue to challenge their respective governments to accelerate demilitarisation, to abandon arms production, to devote public resources to the reduction of poverty, and to resolve conflicts without violence.

9 December 1999

South African Council of Churches

Christian Council of Sweden

Coalition for Defence Alternatives (South Africa)

Fellowship of Reconciliation (Sweden)

Appendix G

Declaration adopted at the "Gothenburg consultation" for Asia

24-26 February 2008

Responding to the invitation from the Christian Conference of Asia, we, the participants of this Conference, including pastors, bishops, activists, researchers and policy makers, gathered in Chiang Mai, Thailand. Representing seven countries (Bangladesh, Malaysia, India, Indonesia, Philippines, Sweden and Thailand) we gathered as people of faith, predominantly from the Christian faith tradition, to listen, understand and respond to the reality of arms trade, and its impact for the peoples of Asia.

Inspired by the Gothenburg Process, reflecting on the issue of conventional arms from a faith perspective, we share a common concern that the proliferation of arms is becoming a daily threat to the sanctity of human life. More than 1,300 persons die each day, only out of shots from small arms and light weapons. The poorly regulated and illicit transfers and misuse of conventional arms fuel conflict, cause death and serious human rights violations and grave breaches of international humanitarian law, destabilising countries and regions and undermining sustainable development.

We anguish over the fact that the production and trade of arms is using a considerable share of the financial, human and technological resources that societies have at their disposal. Sustainable futures for the peoples of the world are threatened if we continue to spend about 1,035 billion dollars annually on military expenditure! With only 10% of this amount it would be possible to halve the number of people that suffer from hunger and reduce the infant mortality by two thirds. These are only two examples of involvement towards achieving the millennium development goals.

As people of faith we draw inspiration, both from our scriptures and our respective faith journeys. We grapple with the disconnection between the radical call of our scriptures to affirm life and inclusive communities and our ways of living in fear, co-option and compromise. We remind ourselves that as people of faith we are called to be prophetic both in our message and life style. As in every prophetic tradition we are called to "denounce" structures, systems and individuals that dehumanise and destroy God's creation.

Simultaneously we are called to "announce" the good news which includes a world where there is total universal disarmament and just peace reigns (Isaiah 11:6-9); and "Surely Allah enjoins the doing of justice and the doing of good (to others) and the giving to the kindred, and He forbids indecency and evil, and rebellion; He admonishes you that you may be mindful" (from Surah An Nahl 16:90).

We affirm with the UN the understanding of human security, which involves freedom from fear, harm and want. We believe and proclaim that challenging the forces of militarisation and arms trade is essential in our process of reclaiming humanity and indeed the earth for all God's people.

Churches and faith-based organisations therefore need to respond to the realities of arms trade.

As a first step: One way of doing this is to join forces with other civil society organisations and campaigns. After years of campaigning from civil society, it is now for the first time ever, possible that the UN will adopt a universal Arms Trade Treaty. This treaty would establish legally binding universal standards for arms trade.

We, representatives of churches, faith-based organisations and NGOs, gathered at this event and declare the following:

- We commit ourselves to further disseminate information and knowledge on the impact of increasing arms trade in Asia.
- We will be in solidarity with other civil society organisations and governments that promote a legally binding and effective Arms Trade Treaty.
- We urge our churches, Christian councils and faith-based organisations to find ways of supporting the creation of a legally binding and effective Arms Trade Treaty which will make a difference in the lives of the people and the earth.
- We recommend that the churches and faith-based organisations initiate/sustain an ongoing ministry of peace and reconciliation.

We therefore move to organise a Chiang Mai process, inspired by the Gothenburg process, addressing the complex issues of conventional and small arms proliferation in Asia. Towards this end we have formed a Steering Committee to be convened by the Executive Secretary for Justice, International Affairs, Development and Service of the Christian Conference of Asia.

Appendix H

Declaration adopted at the Bogotá meeting for Latin America

Assembled by the Latin American Council of Churches (CLAI) and the Latin American Bishops Conference (CELAM), with support from the Gothenburg Process, the Ecumenical Conference of Latin American and the Caribbean was convened on 26 to 28 May 2009 in Bogotá, Colombia. Representatives from different churches in South America, North America, Europe and the Philippines, and from the World Conference of Religions for Peace, gathered together in this regional meeting on the arms trade hosted by the Bishops Conference of Colombia.

We reflected on the consequences of the arms trade, the misuse and proliferation of arms, and the resulting loss of human lives, the increase of crime and the undermining of development. We also reflected on the efforts taken in the world and in our region to establish clear norms that would permit a greater control of the use of arms as well as their legal and illegal trade.

We, the representatives of the Latin America Council of Churches, the Latin American Bishops Conference and the World Conference of Religions for Peace, commit ourselves to motivating our organisations in order to deepen our commitment for peace and our stand against all forms of violence. At the same time, we elevate the level of consciousness in our communities on the dangers presented by the use of arms, especially by civilians, on human life and development.

We commit to the creation of a platform that will allow for the continuation of the process initiated in this meeting – the Bogotá Process – and that is in line with the international Gothenburg Process, which aims at the creation of strict norms on the use and trade of arms on behalf of our governments. Internationally, we seek to support the efforts toward the signing of an Arms Trade Treaty within the framework of the United Nations.

Our commitment is to life, to the development of our communities and to overcoming all forms of violence.

We commit to assist the victims of armed violence in the search for recognition of their rights. We pray to the Lord of life so that violence and bloodshed caused by arms will cease.

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Archbishop emeritus **KG Hammar**, archbishop of Sweden 1997-2006. Currently KG Hammar is visiting professor at the Centre for Theology and Religious Studies at Lund University. In 2008 he assumed the position as chairperson of the Swedish ecumenical coalition for the Gothenburg Process, replacing Bishop William Kenney in this position.

Peter Brune is currently working as Senior Advisor in a joint UNDP/SICA programme on Small Arms Control in Central America. Mr. Brune worked for the Swedish Fellowship of Reconciliation during 1995-2004, of which seven years as Secretary General. Between 2004 and 2008 he was the Executive Director of the Life & Peace Institute. He is a member of the Gothenburg Process steering committee.

LPI Publications

Since its inception, Life & Peace Institute (LPI) has produced close to one hundred publications. LPI's work in research and conflict transformation has resulted in different kinds of reports and papers:

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The Gothenburg Process

Faith based advocacy for disarmament

Peter Brune

Every gun that is made, every warship launched, every rocket fired signifies, in the final sense, a theft from those who hunger and are not fed, those who are cold and not clothed.

Dwight D. Eisenhower, US President 1953-61

In 2001, three Swedish ecumenical institutions, the Christian Council of Sweden, the Swedish Mission Council and the Swedish Fellowship of Reconciliation, started a joint project to highlight the growing church concern regarding the increasing trade in arms worldwide. The Life & Peace Institute later joined the initiative.

So far three global meetings have been arranged, the first two in the city of Gothenburg, Sweden, which is why the initiative is called the Gothenburg Process. The intention with this book is to present an overview of first decade of the Gothenburg Process, what has been done so far, why and how.

The two main aspects of the Gothenburg Process are:

– The focus is on the licit transfer of conventional arms.

– The aim is to include all the different actors involved, that is, also the military industry and those who buy and might use the weapons.

Within the Gothenburg Process a step by step approach is applied, in order to reach a lasting change. It is necessary to understand the complexity of global trade in and transfer of military equipment. But the potential impact might be huge, if the churches and faith communities in general really start to realise that it is time "to do more".

The Life & Peace Institute (LPI) is an international and ecumenical centre that supports and promotes nonviolent approaches to conflict transformation. This is done through a combination of research and action that entails the strengthening of existing local capacities and enhancing preconditions for building peace.

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