



# **Preparing for Peace Presentation New Zealand/Australia/Tasmania/Thailand**

Presented by

**Daphne Sanders**

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This is the combined and comprehensive paper that was prepared by Daphne Sanders as a basis for all the talks and presentation she made on the 'big tour'



## **The Preparing for Peace Project**

In 2000, Westmorland General Meeting of the Religious Society of Friends (Quakers) in Britain, began a PEACE initiative, called Preparing for Peace, to explore these questions with international experts and witnesses. This is one of the papers.

The themes were:

- Can we demonstrate that war is obsolete?
- Is war successful in achieving its objectives?
- Can war be controlled or contained?
- What are the costs of war?
- What are the causes of war?
- Can the world move forward to another way?



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It falls to me to give an overall outline of the case to support our advocacy that we should be preparing for peace not war. First, however, I will say something about my own perspective, and obey a personal imperative to justify why I am standing here before you today.

My working life has been spent in social work, much of it in child protection. Over decades, with colleagues, we witnessed and responded to the hurts suffered by children from anxiety, deprivation, humiliation and violence. We saw the impact at every stage of the life cycle. We often used substantial resources and expertise to bring about healing. A question nagged away in my brain for years: if this is how British children respond to traumatic experience, quite often in contexts which also contained positive features, what is the effect on children subject to the terror, injury, bereavements, and deprivations of war? Surely it is severe; surely the society is ultimately affected by this? Is there not something very peculiar about a society deploying substantial resources to heal the hurts of a few tens of thousands of children each year, when it manufactures weapons- and we British are the second highest exporter of arms in the world- and spends £30.1b a year (2005-06) on so-called defence, resources used to wage war and inflict suffering on whole populations of children, as well as adults of course, who will bear that legacy for the rest of their lives?

Now we are accumulating the evidence of this harm. Just one example. In May 2005 it was reported that the babies of pregnant women at or near the World Trade Centre on Sept 11<sup>th</sup> have registered hormonal differences suggestive of post traumatic stress disorder and predictive of stress problems in adult life. I give this example in full awareness of the irony, in terms of comparable impacts on Afghanistan or Iraq.

For me there is no difference between injuring a British baby and injuring an Iraqi baby. Both are wholly unacceptable.

Secondly, I am a child of the 60's, insofar as that is the decade in which I came to political awareness. The single most influential and radical idea which I have encountered and which has guided me is summed up by the phrase articulated by the feminist Kate Millett; 'the personal is political'. In other words the society we construct reflects the conduct of the individuals within it: a just society and a society with significant levels of interpersonal exploitation or abuse are mutually exclusive. In a similar way I am convinced that the building blocks of international relationships are constructed from the qualities that are effective interpersonally and socially: warmth, trust, respect, care of the vulnerable, intelligent problem-solving, and the modelling of good behaviour, setting a good example in other words.

I believe the issue of modelling to be critical at present. The abuses which have been committed by the US and its allies in the name of a 'war on terror' are a form of tacit permission to other nations to do likewise. The Russians in Chechnya, for example, have acted accordingly. The possession of nuclear weapons is a similar case in point.

Thirdly, I am talking about international politics but I am not an expert. Or maybe it is closer to the truth to say that we are all experts in international politics if we choose to inform ourselves and have an opinion. According to the former British diplomat, Carne Ross, the US and UK special envoys to Afghanistan in the run-up to the war, had each read 2 books on the country, and they were the same books, they had never before visited the country and they did not speak the language. If this is a benchmark for expertise then arguably each of us has a capacity to contribute.

There are, however, true experts in specific fields and our project, Preparing for Peace, uses their knowledge and ideas to explore the rationality, or otherwise, of war. In 2005 we published our book, PFP: 'by asking the experts to analyse war', based upon 12 public lectures and 12 gifted papers, all by experts in their fields. All lectures and papers are published in full on our web-site:

**[www.preparingforpeace.org](http://www.preparingforpeace.org)**

Using this material we make the case that war is a redundant and obsolete institution, surplus to requirements, an antiquated institution, not functional in the modern world. Our case for the irrationality of war has 4 components. In listing them, I will mention some of the things the experts said. I shall say a little more about a couple of the themes identified in our book. Then talk about the alternatives to war.

Number one, as Brian Walker has already said it fails to meet its objectives.

Number two, war can no longer be contained, technologically, politically or legally.

For example, the impact of a nuclear bomb, testing of nuclear weapons, or even conventional attacks on technologically vulnerable installations such as chemical factories are experienced over great distances of both space and time. They are not containable.

Politically, the instantaneous communication of the realities of war, from the perspective of all combatants, via our TV screens, has rendered containment problematic for political leaders. In July 2001 one of our speakers, General Sir Hugh Beach, was remarkably prescient when he said  
*'How likely is it that, as the price of success mounts, the political constituency, nurtured on television, will lose patience and enforce a humiliating withdrawal, leaving things worse than if force had never been used?'*  
Is it not this which is happening before our eyes in Iraq?

Brian Walker has explained how the attempt at ethical containment using the Just War concept has broken down. Interestingly British media commentary on the recent war in Lebanon referred to a breach of the Just War principle of proportionality of response. I like to think this reflects an increase in informed criticism of war-making.

In the legal context, Judge Richard Goldstone pointed out that the Pinochet case has shown that leaders accused of breaking international law cannot assume there is a time limit to the threat of prosecution or legal action under domestic or international law. Sir Hugh Beach stated that the threat of prosecution by the International Criminal Court played a part in bringing Milosevic to the negotiating table.

Perhaps the most interesting development is the emerging incompatibility between legal systems incorporating human rights and war-making. There is a case example currently before the court in Britain. The sequence of events was as follows:

- In 2003 a hotel receptionist was killed in Basra by British troops.
- In Dec 2004 a British court ruled in an application made by his family, that the Human Rights Act 1998 did apply in a Basra prison.
- In March 2005 lawyers were planning to take the British attorney-general to court over failure to bring the perpetrators to justice.
- In Sept 2006 Lt Col. Jorge Mendorca and 6 others appeared before a court martial in England. One is pleading guilty to a war crime, the first time in history for a British serving soldier.

Another example: an Oxford coroner investigating the killing of 2 British troops in Basra, has said that senior officers' failure to plan the assignment adequately was a contributory factor in their deaths. In February this year, this same coroner (Andrew Walker) investigating the death of Lance Corporal Mattie Hull, by 'friendly fire' from US fighter planes in Iraq insisted that the flight video of the incident be played in court, in face of initial denial of its existence, and then US insistence that it would contravene military law.

We are seeing the law holding the military to account in unprecedented ways. Many actions in war can no longer be contained and consigned to a category where they are beyond the reach of civilian law.

The third of our components is the consequence of war. We define three types of consequence: environmental, economic and human. Professor John Cairns Jnr., an American scientist gave a succinct example of environmental consequences: the UN is involved in processing more than US \$70 billion in claims for environmental damages during the invasion of Kuwait in the first Gulf War.

An example of economic consequence is the 44% of industrial production destroyed in Serbia by bombing in the Kosovan War. More telling still is the figure for global military expenditure for 2005: \$1118b. PWC has calculated that it would cost about \$2000b to stave off the threat of global warming. Such sums would also rapidly achieve the Millennium Development Goals.

Finally the human consequences: 160m people were killed in the wars of the 20C. A current consequence: according to professor Stephen Castles some 24 million people are displaced within their own countries, and a further 18 million are displaced across their national borders, as a result of conflict.

From this evidence we conclude that war is not compatible with human security.

This notion of human security has many facets. In Western Europe we have enjoyed 60 years of largely peaceful coexistence. Our primary identities are as consumers, beneficiaries of the welfare state, citizens with rights; we are risk averse: some would say we have an obsession with health and safety. It is a way of life shared by many others on the globe and aspired to by many more. Acts of war cut through it, destroy it. We do not want that for ourselves and in increasing numbers we do not wish to impose it on other people.

In particular there is growing reluctance to jeopardise this life by serving in the military. Soldiers join up knowing they might have to die in war. They are finding that it is much more likely that they will return home from war, but spend the rest of their lives mentally disturbed by post-traumatic stress disorder. These are some of the figures which have been reported:

In Britain in 1987 1/8 ex-Falklands officers had war-related psychiatric conditions.

Again in Britain, following the 1<sup>st</sup> Gulf War, there were 107 suicides compared with 24 deaths in combat.

In the UK Gulf Veterans & Assessment Programme, 13% of the first 3000 patients were diagnosed with PTSD (post traumatic stress disorder)

It was reported in 2006 that 1/3 US troops returning from Iraq & Afghanistan suffer mental health problems.

Essentially our servicemen and women cannot live with the memories of what they have done or seen.

To put all this in perspective I should add that a 2006 UN report said 1/3 of the population of Afghanistan suffer from anxiety, depression, or PTSD.

So what are the alternatives to war? How do we resolve or transform conflict? How do we contain violence? Joseph Rotblatt said that peace was indivisible and so is the programme which we are advocating to prepare for peace. In our book we identify the direct and indirect threats to peace and put forward 8 policies to address them. At one end of the spectrum they address the economic and environmental conditions which lead to conflict, and at the other the response to violent conflict. Rather than list them all here I propose to focus on the green shoots of progress, some of the indications that we are learning about peaceful coexistence.

Scilla Elworthy, founder of the Oxford Research Group and Peace Direct, has pointed out that there are now plenty of reliable indicators which can alert us to conflict brewing: denial of rights – to vote, speak language, practice religion - theft or diversion of resources, occupation of territory, oppression/ brutalization of a minority, arms build-up, break-down of the rule of law, militias out of control, increasing power of warlords, terror attacks etc.

Similarly she lists the measures which can be taken to address these issues before conflict erupts: protection of human rights; promotion of democracy; support to indigenous dispute resolution; stakeholder dialogue; election monitoring; community mediation; bridge-building; confidence-building and security measures; civilian peace monitoring; violence containment; military and economic technical assistance; arms embargoes; economic sanctions; peace-keeping; reconciliation measures; restorative justice and humanitarian diplomacy.

The EU has utilized this knowledge to introduce a policy of conflict assessment on each nation it does business with. Brian Walker has already told you about the 2005 Human Security Report which shows the UN played an important role in spearheading a huge upsurge in international conflict prevention, peace-keeping and peace-building activities.

The UN requires reform in order to be more effective, however. It is worth noting that the top 5 countries profiting from the arms trade are the 5 permanent members of the

Security Council (the USA, UK, France, Russia, and China). Is not this a vested interest in preparation for war by those responsible for policing our planet? We have advocated a reformed Security Council made up of representatives of the supra-national regional bodies, such as the African Union, ASEAN (Association of South-East Asian Nations) and the EU. It was encouraging to hear that our 'PM in waiting', Gordon Brown, made a speech in January saying that the UN and other key agencies like the IMF required reform in recognition of the way the world has changed in the past half century.

Bodies such as the EU have a good track record in maintaining peace among their members and advancing prosperity. ASEAN has also enjoyed successes in this respect. The African Union is seen as key to addressing the terrible conflicts on that continent. In 2004 12 nations formed the South American Community of Nations (CSN), which they plan to model on the EU. Dr Chris Williams and Yun-Joo Lee, in their paper, offer some interesting ideas on how participation in these bodies has a beneficial effect on leaders, as they have to explain themselves to their peers.

The 2005 UN summit agreed a responsibility to protect populations from genocide, war crimes, ethnic cleansing and crimes against humanity. A debate is taking place about how this responsibility is implemented. Iraq has given so-called humanitarian intervention a bad name. The extent to which force should be used in these cases poses a major challenge to pacifists. It is possible to draw a distinction between the force used by a police service which is to uphold the rule of law and achieve a return to status quo, and the force of the military which is designed for aggressive employment, and to bring about change. Brian Walker has already drawn the distinction between force and violence. The same UN summit agreed a standing police capacity as an input to UN peacekeeping missions.

(It was good to read about the QPSANZ (Quaker Peace Service in Aoteroa, New Zealand) Indonesia Police Project which provided training in non-violent conflict resolution)

In September 2006 it was announced that 120 countries support UN Arms Trade Treaty proposals and a group of experts is to be set up to examine how to draw up a legally binding instrument.

Meanwhile we are facing breaches in nuclear weapons treaties, the stark threat of global warming, and continuing resistance by rich countries to create a fair global trading environment.

(British media have carried reports of continuing drought in Australia, and the threat posed to agriculture)

(We pay tribute to the non-nuclear stance which the people of New Zealand have maintained, in spite of continuing pressure to retract it)

Our starting point has to be that we are now citizens of one world community and that we should have a shared vision of a peaceful and just future. We are saying that we can prepare for peace, it is more than a utopian dream, the tools to create it are in our hands. The question is whether we have the will. I warm to Jonathan Schell's words: 'Cooperative power is toxic to territorial empires'. But cooperative power does not absolve us from needing leaders.

We need new kinds of leaders: leaders who may be from any country, leaders who understand that we inhabit one world community, leaders who understand that the biggest problems we face have global reach, leaders who, therefore, have a similar agenda to our own. In this way we forge our escape from the disenfranchisement which arises from having an agenda for peace while living within a sovereign state defined by its contract to "defend" its citizens, and we move towards forging a new global politics in which we act as citizens of one world. We have found ourselves at the start of the 21<sup>st</sup> century as part of a global community: now let us act consciously as the citizens of that community.

I am a Quaker and I would like to finish by quoting Henri Nouwen, the Dutch Jesuit priest as I agree with what he has to say about the manner in which we work for a peaceful world:

'Thus the 'No' to death can be fruitful only when spoken and acted out in the context of a humble, compassionate, and joyful 'Yes' to life. Resistance becomes a truly spiritual task when the 'No' to death and the 'Yes' to life are never separated.'

Daphne Sanders  
Westmorland General Meeting  
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## **Westmorland General Meeting**

Westmorland General Meeting is a Meeting for Worship and Business of the Religious Society of Friends (Quakers), comprising Friends from the Swarthmoor, Kendal and Sedbergh, Lancaster and Preston areas in the north-west corner of England. George Fox, founder of the Society, made his first visit to these towns, villages and dales in 1652, and the region continues to be known among Friends as the birthplace of Quakerism.

Quakers seek "that of God" in everyone, worshipping together in silence without doctrine or creed. For three hundred and fifty years Friends' Peace Testimony has been at the centre of a corporate witness against war and violence, through conscientious objection, conflict resolution, service in the Friends' Ambulance Unit or alternative paths of conscience. In the 21<sup>st</sup> Century we face fundamental changes to the 'engines of war', and new social and international challenges in a changing world, yet the Peace Testimony of 17<sup>th</sup> Century Friends still bears powerful witness.

In 1660 Friends declared:

**All bloody principles and practices we do utterly deny, with all outward wars, and strife, and fightings with outward weapons, for any end, or under any pretence whatsoever, and this is our testimony to the whole world.**

Today the Society's book of 'Advices and Queries' advises members:

**We are called to live 'in the virtue of that life and power that takes away the occasion of wars'. Do you faithfully maintain our testimony that war and the preparation for war are inconsistent with the spirit of Christ? Search out whatever in your own way of life may contain the seeds of war. Stand firm in our testimony, even when others commit or prepare to commit acts of violence, yet always remember that they too are children of God.**

