

Workshop 4: Stop war preparations and military expansion! Defend peace and people's living!

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Dear friends, olds friends and new friends!

When I during the 1980's visited Moscow, I came to an institution for international relations, and the boss greeted me with the word: "I understand you are on the peace side". I liked that introduction.

There are certainly a peace side and a war side in the world, and especially during the last couple of years the war side has gained progress and power.

That is the issue we are dealing with at this workshop – how to stop war preparation and military expansion. How to defend peace and peoples living.

I will base my presentation on three example:

MY FIRST EXAMPLE:

When war and war preparation is dominating in the media reports, and in the political preparations, there are also a growing movement to stop what is ongoing.

We are all thinking those days about the terrible war in Gaza and against the Palestinian people's right to survive and live – and all over the world there are protests and solidarity manifestations going on, to an extent that we have not seen for many years.

What is going on in Gaza is a genocide, it is war crime – and a mass movement is taking to the streets everywhere.

Israel will be stopped by the public opinion all over the world. And Israel will be brought to justice, the case at the international court in the Hague will be strong.

The peace side, the public opinion, all people protesting in the street will bring justice to the Palestinian people and punishment to the leadership in Israel.

In its brutality the war in Gaza is comparable to the brutality of the use of atomic weapons in Hiroshima 6th of August and in Nagasaki the 9th of Augusti.

The war crime committed in Hiroshima and Nagasaki has not been settled in court, but the hibakusha and Nihon Hidankyo has been recognized by the public opinion, and now by the Nobel Peace prize committee in Oslo. **I was there ...**

– we must celebrate the nobel peace prize as a victory for the good, a victory for the "peace side".

The responsible for the war crimes in Gaza will be punished.

The UN-rapporteur Fransesca Albanese is our hero, and she will not be stopped.

A lot of Jewish people are outspoken – with the slogan "not in my name".

So the responsible politicians in Israel will be sentenced of war crime.

Will also Donald Trump be included? After all it was him who introduced the idea of bringing all people away from Gaza and rebuild it as a hotel riviera **(a las ve-gaza)**

– bringing all the people from Gaza away, dead or alive, is what is now ongoing.

My point number one, the peace side is gaining support, and we will be able one day to place war and war preparation to history, because people has power and peoples power is peace power. The time for war to go has come!

SECOND EXAMPLE:

My second example is about foreign military bases, and especially the surrounding of Russia and China by USA/Nato bases. This is war preparation.

There are currently 1247 foreign military bases in the world, that are military bases that one country holds outside its own borders.

Of this 1.247 military bases 877 of them, by latest count, are U.S. bases outside of the United States.

Eighteen other nations, combined, have 370 bases outside their borders.

There is a significant difference between the US bases and the bases other countries hold outside their own borders.

The nation with the second-most foreign bases, Türkiye, has them all near Türkiye, with the exception of one base in Somalia, and the majority of them in Syria and Iraq where Türkiye has been waging wars.

Türkiye and the U.S. are allied members of NATO and weapons traders, and the United States maintains a military presence at nine bases within Türkiye, at one of which it keeps nuclear weapons.

The only other nation on Earth with even a tenth as many foreign military bases as the United States is the United States' very closest military ally, the United Kingdom, some of whose bases are joint U.S.-UK operations.

The combined foreign military bases of the top three nations on the list, are all NATO members, total 1,127.

The fourth nation on the list, is NATO's most important reason for its existence, Russia has 29 foreign military bases.

These are all found in 10 countries, all of which are near Russia, apart from one base in Sudan. *All this is war preparations.*

But there is an increased reaction against these war preparation from grass root peace movements, and from the local people living close to the bases.

The last increase in military bases are in Scandinavia and in the Baltic states, there are totally 47 new American bases the last couple of years.

The grass root peace activities against the new US-bases in Sweden at a total number of 17 has been fantastic, and rather good also in Norway and Denmark.

I have myself hold over 20 lectures all over Sweden in half a year. People turned up at those meetings in good number.

We did not manage to stop the contract between US and Sweden, because it was signed before the issue was brought public.

But in every speech I did, I was able to include information about the American base in Okinawa and all the problems that has been monitored in Okinawa.

The U.S. has also opened new bases in Western Asia, Somalia, South Africa, Panama, Puerto Rico, and Peru, and significantly in the parts of the world southeast of China: Taiwan, the Philippines, Guam, the Northern Marianas, Papua New Guinea, and Australia.

We are now in Sweden building up a network of activists in the cities and villages close to the 17 bases. The first plowshare-action has been done

- a planting of berry bushes inside the military base in Halmstad on the west coast of Sweden

- to show symbolically that the land could be used for good purposes, instead of death and destruction.

People have built popular movements to prevent planned bases and to close existing bases at many locations around the world, and increasingly they are in touch with each other.

On February 23, 2025, individuals and organizations around the world took coordinated action to call for the closure of all military bases as part of the Global Day of Action to Close Bases.

In over 60 locations people protested the foreign bases of various countries, including the United States, the UK, and Russia.

In some places, bases have been prevented or closed.

In 2024, after years of struggle, supported by World BEYOND War and others, the Save Sinjajevina campaign met with the Prime Minister of Montenegro and gained his promise that there would be no military training ground built at Sinjajevina in Montenegro.

This was to have been a massive and destructive project for the benefit of NATO and the U.S. military.

In 2006, people in the Czech Republic learned of plans to create U.S. bases in their country.

They organized and prevented those bases from being built.

In 2007 localities in the Czech Republic held referenda that matched national opinion polls and demonstrations; their opposition moved their government to refuse to host a U.S. base.

In Colombia, a popular movement has prevented construction of a base for use by the U.S. military on Providencia Island, and a new movement to prevent such a base on Gorgona Island is drawing on the lessons from that success.

My conclusion:

We have seen an increase of militarization during the last couple of years, and the increase of number of bases all over the world with Nato and US in the lead surrounding Russia and China with military bases, that is one example of militarization.

People are getting more and more aware of the situation, and resistance is increasing.

I want you to note two things in the resistance against foreign military bases:

- 1. It is easy to get inspiration from one country to another, to do common action, to tell each other stories. This cooperation has already started, and will expand**
- 2. It is also easy to build coalitions between local people living close to the bases and the peace movement activists.**
In Sweden with 17 new bases we are saying that the day we see American Soldiers walk in the street of Sweden, that is also the day when local people will mobilize and understand the consequences of letting the world's strongest military force act on your own backyard!

MY THIRD EXAMPLE OF WAR PREPARATION AND MILITARISATION

is the increase of military budgets that USA has inspired so many countries to do. When the Nato-states at its latest meeting in the beginning of the summer took the principle decision to set 5 percent of the Gross National Product (GNP) for military defense

– there was only one country that said it already had taken that decision on national level, and that was Sweden, my country. I am not proud, I am ashamed.

The decision made by the government was sponsored by all parties in the Swedish parliament – including the Green party and the Left party – the Left party in Sweden has in a few year developed to be very militaristic – even more militaristic than our very conservative prime ministers very conservative government party.

5 % of Sweden's GNP means 20 percent of the national budget.

It is huge amounts, as it will be in every country that will follow the masters voice.

How will it be financed? Sweden plans to borrow the money – which is new,

Swedish politicians from left to right have been united in a policy which means to be very careful to borrow money for covering national investments.

We have bad roads in big parts of Sweden – but the government has refused to borrow money for the roads.

We have miserable railways – but the government has refused to borrow money for the railways.

But for military means – it is different.

But already now the welfare system of Sweden is crackling.

The schools have less resources, and the classes are made bigger. The elderly care system is alarming of too small resources.

People working in the welfare system are protesting – they cannot do the good work they want.

And the health care system is in desperate need of more money. Money that does not exist.

I hear similar reports from other countries in Europe, and maybe there are more examples that we can get during this workshop.

We know since long that the problems in these fields are huge in USA.

My third conclusion:

The slogan about “welfare instead of warfare” will be very effective in the future.

The fight against militarism, will be also a fight for welfare, it will be a fight for conversion to a **sustainable environmental politic**.

These are arguments and slogans that will bring new possibilities and new groups to the peace movements.

Finally:

We can stop war preparation and military expansion.

We can defend peace and peoples living.

In fact – we have better arguments and a better situation now than we have had for very long time.