

# Waging War for Peace and Security! Whose Peace? Whose Security?

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## Introduction

Most recently the Okinawa Mayor visited Washington and pleaded with the State Department authorities to stop renewed intense military training sessions on the island. Many Okinawans are leaving the island to the mainland in fear of war. Despite ongoing protest against the military build-up on the island the preparation for the war against China continues. Last year South Korean civil society groups joined by the US peace activists made a similar visit and pleaded with the US authorities to lift the sanctions on humanitarian aid to North Korea, in particular on vaccinations. But the sanctions continue putting North Koreans into starvation and the joint ROK and USA military training sessions continue. Instead humanitarian aid, US nuclear submarines will be sent the Korean peninsula as part of Biden-Yoon Washington Declaration. DPRK builds up its nuclear arsenal and issue threats of retaliation. The DPRK's appeal made to the UN to stop the ROK-USA military training sessions, which is the main reason behind its threats of retaliation, are ignored. Just before

Nancy Pelosi's visit to Taiwan, Thomas Friedman, a *New York Times* Columnist gave a stark warning saying that the visit is 'utterly reckless, dangerous and irresponsible.'<sup>1</sup> Yet the Speaker of US House of Representatives went ahead generating serious tensions between China and Taiwan. Today Taiwanese fear a war situation like in Ukraine would come upon them. Returning from a visit to Beijing the French President Emanuel said that Europe should not go with the American rhythm (war drive) and Chinese overreaction. This means not to support any preparation for war between China-Taiwan which in fact is result of China-US conflict. Many Western leaders were not happy with Macron. Just before the Russian-Ukrainian war started in February 2022, Macron, travelled both to Kyiv and Moscow and negotiated a peace deal, but London and Washington heavily backed Kyiv escalating the conflict to a high intensity war. During the war there were different peace plans that were unfolding, but were blocked by the same powers. Most recently China presented its peace plan which was rebuked by the same powers. Brazil has called for negotiations between the two countries rather than arming Ukraine. The war has claimed thousands of lives and displaced millions of people and it continues further. In 2015, a joint nuclear deal was reached between Iran, and permanent five members of the UN Security, EU and Germany. In 2018, the USA unilaterally withdrew from the deal. In 2011, there was a six point Syrian peace plan coordinated by the Arab League and the UN which gained support of the Syrian government and the Opposition, but constant support given to the Free Syrian Army by London and Washington aborted this plan. Russia came to the support of the Syrian government. Millions of Syrians

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1 David Smith, Pelosi's 'reckless' Taiwan visit deepens US-China rupture—why did she go?  
<https://www.theguardian.com/us-news/2022/aug/07/nancy-pelosi-taiwan-china-visit-military>(accessed: 25 March 2023)

have fled the country. In 2011, Venezuelan President Hugo Chavez, with the support of many Arab, African and Latin American countries proposed a peace plan between the Libyan government and the rebel groups, but the USA and its NATO allies carried out a full scale war in Libya, giving aircover to the rebel groups on the ground which were led by Al-Qaida. Today, Libya is one of the most politically unstable countries where thousands of people flee and some perish in the seas in their desperate journeys to find a better home in Europe. In 2006, in Sri Lanka, when there was a ceasefire agreement between the Sri Lankan government and the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam(LTTE), the LTTE was banned by the EU under the pressure from London and Washington. Six EU countries opposed the ban, but they were put under pressure to support the ban. The head of the ceasefire monitoring mission, Swedish General Ulf Hendrickson asked the EU not to ban LTTE saying that it would lead to a full scale war, but the ban was imposed.<sup>2</sup> The war killed at least 70,000 Tamils by 2009. The island became heavily militarised and later entered into deep economic recession. In 2003, European countries led by Germany and France opposed the invasion of Iraq, but the UK and USA carried out its war against Iraq destroying its entire social fabric. Iraq which had one of the best social welfare systems has become a country that is affected by extreme poverty. The list of preparation for war and on-going wars is long. Therefore I stop only by giving these major examples. There is a peculiar pattern behind all these and many more similar situations. There is an argument that is put forward in justifying war and preparation for war. The war is for peace and security. Let's call this the War Paradigm. Those who oppose war propose political negotiations in achieving peace and

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2 Permanent Peoples' Tribunal, *Peoples' Tribunal on Sri Lanka*(Bremen: Permanent Peoples' Tribunal and International Human Rights Association, 2013).

security. Let's call this Peace Paradigm. The two paradigms uphold two kinds of peace; Victor's Peace by Military Power or Negotiated Peace by Consensus. I want to show that these are the two global forces at work today. The local is determined by these global/geopolitical forces. The main question behind these forces is Whose Peace? Whose Security?

Yes, there is a promise of peace by the War Paradigm, but it keeps the world in a permanent state of war while promising peace. The security is guaranteed by militarised peace

## War Paradigm and Global Militarization

In fact, all most all who live in fear of war, like those in East Asia and who die, suffer and are displaced in the war zones in the world are local people. They are the direct victims. They seem to be victims of local actors, but in fact, they are the victims of the War Paradigm that is globally orchestrated. Millions perish in wars. Many are maimed and raped. The people who are caught up in these wars are forced to flee their beloved homelands. The political borders of the countries who lead the war have been tightened. For strategic reasons, battle lines have been drawn on the ever-changing waves of the seas to secure the boundaries. Islands have been turned into strategic assets. Their peoples have been terrorized and forcibly evacuated. When the war drive cannot be sustained through land and seas, it is extended to the skies, through aerial bombing, drones, and satellites<sup>3</sup> and then to the outer space.<sup>4</sup> The media tries to project these wars as internal

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3 Thomas Hippler, *Governing from the Skies: A Global History of Aerial Bombing* (London/New York: Verso, 2017).

4 TN Tripathi, 'Weaponization and Militarization of Space,'

strife or as butchery intrinsic to the ‘underdeveloped’ world or as terrorism or as resulting from the inflexibility of the parties in conflict. In fact, all the victims are victims of the War Paradigm. What exactly is the War Paradigm? Why is there a need for it? Who leads it? How is it justified when millions perish?

The War Paradigm is based on *Securitisisation* of lives, land, seas and skies through *militarisation* over and *against all the other human concerns*; food, medicine, housing, recreation, democracy, human rights, business, protection of nature, etc. Dorothee Soelle, the prominent German peace activist states. “The military-political doctrine of national security has replaced the older political values and convictions of democracy, freedom of the press, and human rights; instead, ‘national security’ has become the foundation of policy. A threat to national security is the greatest risk, and its betrayal is a capital crime.”<sup>5</sup> Why is it needed? It is needed to make those who lead the war invulnerable. To borrow a military term, it means closing the Window of Vulnerability. It must be closed to shield the one who leads the war from any enemy attack. Who leads it? Are there many who lead? No. There is a leadership in global militarization. The War Paradigm is not simply constituted of an industrial-military complex, but also by a supremacist claim to dominance and a belief system. Max Weber defines the modern state as the monopoly of violence compared with the disparate armed political units of the pre-modern era. This monopoly of violence takes a global scale under the modern empire building project which has never existed in human history. **The War Paradigm emerged as part of that empire building project.**

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<https://indianarmy.nic.in/WriteReadData/Documents/Weaponisation.pdf> (accessed: 25 March 2023).

5 Dorothee Soelle, *The Window of Vulnerability: A Political Spirituality* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1990), 109.

It results from imperial ambitions to dominate the world and bring it under one imperial rule. Global militarization is fundamentally a power projection of the empire. It is only by monopolising violence on a global scale that a modern empire can be built. It is this global militarization that makes a particular state superior to the others in the international system of states. The others are forced to join the War Paradigm mostly for their survival. It is necessary to have a historical perspective to understand the character of the modern empire-building project. It must be understood as a structure in international politics that is imposed on the world.

The imperial world order, in which we live today, is mainly a result of the post-World War II politics. After World War II, the USA, in alliance with the UK, has been the main driver of this empire, which was countered by the USSR. After the Cold War, it is the USA that has emerged as the predominant imperial power, the only superpower, reinforcing militarization as its key feature and maintaining around 800 small- and large-scale military bases across the globe(Vine 2015, 4). With the sale, development and deployment of advanced weaponry, entire economies have been formed on the basis of investments in warfare. This is the hardware of the empire. Therefore, the end of the Cold War—allegedly marking the dawn of a New World Order—proves to be nothing more than another name for a single empire, furthering the militarization of the globe as never before in our history, while causing deep polarisations between nations, and ethnic and religious communities across the world. Communist-phobia has been replaced with Islamophobia as well as with Sinophobia and Russophobia. China has emerged as an economic powerhouse competing with the USA, while individual states and regions have been drawn into these new battle lines: in Africa, Asia, the Caribbean and the Pacific Islands, the Middle East, and Latin America.

The USA, as a military empire, today attempts to reduce the number of

its own soldiers on the ground. Instead, the security forces of its allied states fight imperial wars in the name of the national security of their own states, with this security often aligned to a majority ethno-religious identity, which in turn often overlaps with fundamentalist versions of religion. The empire and its allies project themselves to be all-powerful. “We have seen that a will which takes itself to be all-powerful, or which aspires to that condition, tends to wreak an exceptional amount of chaos and misery” (Eagleton 2005, 118). Hiroshima, Nagasaki and Iraq are the most telling examples of this imperial power of our modern times. Without making it appear all powerful an empire cannot claim to be an empire. This powerfulness is achieved not simply by economic means, but by military means. China’s economic expansion has been confronted by the USA by forming QUAD and AUKUS. President Barack Obama’s speech in the Australian Parliament in 2011 officially declared the US Pivot towards Asia leading to further entrenchment of Asia-Pacific in the War Paradigm by which peaceful resolutions of the conflict are aborted. The Pivot to Asia is a power-projection of the military empire. Whose peace? Whose security? It is a kind of peace, or an international order that is achieved under one dominant power where there is no equality in international relationships. Here security means the security of that power.

## War Paradigm and Militarism

Often the terms militarization and militarism are used interchangeably, but there is very necessary distinction between these two terms. Militarization is the hardware of war. Militarism is the software that legitimizes or even justifies the war as an ideology in different ways. The empire cannot

maintain its physical structures of militarization without making hearts and minds conform to its ideology. This it achieves through a belief system in security, a new creed that idolizes such structures, and which forms the software of the empire. Judith Butler notes: “After all, there are conditions under which war is waged, and we have to know them if we are to oppose war. Indeed, the opposition to war has to take place, in part, through remaking the conditions of its possibility and probability. Similarly, if war is to be opposed, we have to understand how popular assent to war is cultivated and maintained, in other words, how war waging acts upon the senses so that war is thought to be an inevitability, something good, or even a source of moral satisfaction.”<sup>6</sup> What are the ways in which War Paradigm is justified?

The Global War on Terror and National Security have become new creeds that are being recited in the name of imperial peace. Often the language of this belief system is a modern secular one, but it is also supported and justified by a religious language that mobilizes societies. Militarism is an ideological force that makes societies believe that securitisation through militarisation is the only way to ‘peace’. Laws are introduced to that effect. Law and determination of truth are separated from one another. It is not necessary to know the truth. Apply the law. It is not only that, but victims are also categorized as worthy and unworthy victims. Lives are classified as grievable or ungrievable. “Ungrievable lives are those that cannot be lost, and cannot be destroyed, they are ontologically, and from the start, already lost and destroyed, which means that when they are destroyed in war, nothing is destroyed.”<sup>7</sup> The War Paradigm is also justified often in the name of peace,

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<sup>6</sup> See *Frames of War: When Is Life Grievable?* (London/New York: Verso, 2016), ix.

<sup>7</sup> Judith Butler, *Frames of War: When Is Life Grievable?* (London/New York, Verso, 2016), xix.



democracy, human rights, development, women's freedom, stopping the nuclear threat. In that sense, peace is militarised(Sri Lanka). Human rights are militarised(Korean peninsula). Humanitarian aid is militarised(Syria). Democracy is militarised(Iraq, Libya). The US President Joe Biden stated that donation of Covid vaccinations to USA's allies is an 'arsenal of democracy.' Whose peace? Whose security?

Even though the empire claims that militarization is for peace, it is in a constant state of war due to its inherent logic of expansion and control, and so thwarts any peaceful negotiations to resolve conflicts while criminalizing and destroying progressive social and political movements in the name of security. Ideas of democracy and human rights, too, have been militarized and have become tools for the empire to propagate its insidious agenda(Bo-hyuk 2014). Invasions are justified in the name of restoring democracy and in ushering in global security and peace(e.g., Afghanistan, Iraq, Libya, Kashmir, Syria, Tamil Eelam, or Yemen), and they are being proposed for those states that do not obey the imperial orders(e.g., North Korea). The most fundamental rights to food and medicine have been snatched away from millions of people through sanctions imposed in the name of human rights. NGOs and faith communities have been prohibited by international sanctions and national security laws to practice their most fundamental ethic of care for the other by organising humanitarian aid across the borders. Whose peace? Whose security? As the Indian peace activist Arundhati Roy puts it this the 'peace that bleeds.'

The War Paradigm has aims to establish a securitised or militarised peace. Whose security? It is the security of a particular international order that determines what is democracy, human rights and peace. It is the security of the superpower that leads that international order and makes that

superpower invulnerable from any outside attack. Security guarantees are given to the allied states by the superpower reconfiguring different regions of the world its war frontiers and strategic locations. Multilateralism is not tolerated. In the East, the Korean peninsula in particular and the Pacific countries are increasingly becoming such frontiers more than ever before. In the West, through the NATO alliance the Euro-Asian region is rapidly coming under the War Paradigm in the name of securing the sovereignty of Ukraine. Law of non-intervention is applied against Russia for militarily invading Ukraine, but continuous political interventions in Ukraine by the USA and UK seen as justified. By the time of Russian invasion the British special commandos had trained at least 20,000 members of the Ukrainian defence forces. Any peace negotiation has been stopped while advancing the War Paradigm. Here there is a clear separation between application of law and determination of political truths. The truth about the empire's other ways of economic, political and military interventions are concealed. After the Cold War the guarantees given to maintain peace have been not fulfilled. Instead NATO power has been expanded. Window of Vulnerability needs to be closed and makes the superpower invulnerable. Let the others fight the superpower's wars. Others too enter into the war game, North Korea and Russia. China has been brought into the Taiwan Strait to show its military power.

## Peace Paradigm: Resistance to War and Peoples' Peace

In response to the War Paradigm, we also witness uncompromising resilience and resistance of many groups and peoples who have opposed the War Paradigm and upheld the Peace Paradigm. They are inspired by different cultures, traditions, historical movements, etc. Above all these have been

triggered by the basic human concerns. The voices of those who are afflicted across the world are not only voices of despair, but also of hope. Peace Paradigm upholds basic human concerns above militarised security. In fact, the Peace Paradigm prioritises human security as distinct from state security. The call for basic human concerns arise from the those who are vulnerable. Those who are vulnerable reach out to others as they need each other. They open the Window of Vulnerability to get connected with others. It is this need for each other that challenges the War Paradigm and its global militarization and militarism. In fact, the empire does not have allies, it only has subjects under its command and control. It even does not have the full support of its own citizens whose human concerns are not addressed; the homeless, the unemployed, the sick and the poor are totally abandoned. The call for democracy, justice and freedom which opens the path way to connect with one another form the Peace paradigm. In fact, the Peace Paradigm can arise only by realising our vulnerability under the War Paradigm.

The Peace Paradigm arises not only from the vulnerable groups in the society but also from countries who oppose destruction of what they have built socially and economically for decades. After the WW II, Europe formed the European Union to overcome the War Paradigm, its militarisation and militarism. Europe shared borders for decades. Not only that after the Cold War Europe and Russia build a common economic corridor through the building of underwater gas pipelines Nord Stream I and II addressing basic human concerns. East Asia did not move towards that direction. Japan developed a Peace Constitution. The Armistice Treaty in the Korean Peninsula emerged. Both of which came into effect under the gaze of USA. China became independent and developed its economy. Japan and Korea too developed its economy. In a globalised world there is space for

economic cooperation and promote the Peace Paradigm, but the USA's power projection through militarisation continues to threaten the region. One great example of the Peace Paradigm through economic cooperation in the Korean peninsula was the Kaesong Industrial Zone. The EU has entered into the War Paradigm of the USA and UK. Russia too has entered into the War Paradigm too. The main trigger came from outside. Both the EU and Russia have developed hostilities now. It may happen soon in East Asia in an explicit way.

## Conclusion

What are the basic steps needed for a movement of the Peace Paradigm? It necessary to realise that we all are vulnerable and there is a need to come together in different ways and through different means. There is an absolute need to determine the truth through analysis rather than allowing ourselves to be driven by militarism through law, media, public discourses, etc. Without internationalising the Peace Paradigm it is not possible to resist the War Paradigm. as it is sustained by a global militarisation. The global order determines the local. Therefore the local needs to link with the global movements that uphold the Peace Paradigm. Groups alone cannot resist the War Paradigm it is of paramount importance to involve the various states to promote the Peace Paradigm. Real power and pragmatism of states at times can be of benefit to stop war and promote peaceful resolution of conflicts. We have seen such attempts many times as I outlined at the beginning of this paper.

As faith communities we need to adopt a prophetic stand in exposing

and denouncing the false belief in militarised peace and security. It is a false god. It is worship of empire, not the God of the people. We have been made to believe that without increased militarization we will die. Supporting the government against North Korea will secure our lives. In fact it is the greatest false belief of our times where we have been blinded spiritually, psychologically, socially and politically. Such a belief in fact is a cult of death which makes us believe that our security is dependent on nuclear submarines and further weaponizations. They not only take away human lives but also destroys the earth. Such a belief goes against the God of Jesus Christ, who gives life and life in abundance. Biblically, theologically and spiritually the only answer to the destructive War Paradigm of the Empire is self-sacrificing love, love of the neighbour and even love of the enemy. We have to give up false notions of peace and security and embrace peace achieved through mutual understanding between the parties in conflict. It cannot be done by closing the doors and windows, but by opening them so that new possibilities may arise to live together. Finally let me quote a poem from Dorothy Soelle who not opposed nuclear weapons, but also US bases in Germany.

### 〈The Window of Vulnerability〉

The window of vulnerability  
 must be closed –  
 so the military say  
 to justify the arms race  
 My skin  
 is a window of vulnerability  
 without moisture, without touching  
 I must die

The window of vulnerability  
is being walled up  
my land  
cannot live  
We need light  
so we can think  
We need air  
so we can breath  
We need a window  
Open toward heaven.<sup>8</sup>

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8 Soelle, *The Window of Vulnerability*, vii.