

Soka Gakkai International
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Statement
by
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“Maintaining international peace and security: the importance of Security Council Resolution
1325(2000)”
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Madam Chair/Moderator,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

I am delighted and honored to share some thoughts with you today on the state of global peace and security and how it could be attained and maintained in the face of increasing and persistent threats. I am delighted to have had the opportunity to chat with many of the young people present here during the last hour or so. After a very enlightening and exciting hour listening to the brilliant ideas and sharing your enthusiasm, I look forward to hearing what I am sure will be insightful perspectives on this issue during the question and answer session.

A number of recent developments have brought considerable attention to the issues of the protection of global peace and security. As far back as September 2003, Secretary-General Kofi Annan, concerned about the deep divisions among Member States on the nature of threats to global security and the appropriateness of the use of force, constituted a High Level Panel of eminent persons to provide him with a shared, comprehensive view about the way forward on critical issues and to assess current threats to international peace and security. The Panel’s report entitled “*A More Secure World: Our Shared Responsibility*” put forward a new vision of collective security – one that addressed all of the major threats to international peace and security felt around the world. The Panel noted: “ours is an age of unparalleled interconnection among threats to international peace and security, and mutual vulnerability between weak and strong”. The Panel submitted that “any event or process that leads to large-scale death or lessening of life chances and undermines States as the basic unit of the international system is a threat to international security”. Against that definition, the Panel identified six clusters of threats with which the world must be concerned now and in the decades ahead:

- Economic and social threats, including poverty, infectious diseases and environmental degradation
- Inter-State conflict
- Internal conflict, including civil war, genocide and other large-scale atrocities
- Nuclear, radiological, chemical and biological weapons
- Terrorism
- Transnational organized crime

I would propose to add a seventh -- natural and man-made disasters. But I would pause and ask you and me: what does peace and security really mean? Or conversely, what does a threat to security, or to be without peace and security mean to us?

Let me answer that question from my own perspective when I was a young person, like most of you in this room today. In the early 1970s, the peace and stability that I had known back in my home country Uganda was shattered and lost following political instability and the ascent to power of General Idi Amin Dada, whom some of you may have read about in your history books or even seen in the movie *“The Last King of Scotland”*. Suddenly, fear crept into our daily lives. Leaving the house and just visiting friends and family became a risky venture. You could be stopped by the military, beaten and tortured for perceived violations. The threat of rape by those ostensibly in charge of military checkpoints was real. When I left Uganda a year later to pursue further studies abroad, I knew that I might never see many of my family and friends again. The peace and security that I had taken for granted was gone in an instant.

Although that form of disruption of the peace and security that I experienced in the 1970s is different from the kind that most of you are familiar with today, the fear, apprehension, heightened risk of physical or emotional abuse, deprivation from the enjoyment of day to day life, are characteristic of the loss of peace and security.

For some of you here today, maybe the loss of peace and security is closely tied to the events of September 11 2001. Maybe, as a result, you are among the 48 per cent of Americans who, according to the 2010 Americas Barometer survey, fear that there would be a violent attack by terrorists in the next 12 months. For this 48 per cent, and indeed for many around the world, the threat of terrorism is perhaps the fundamental challenge to peace and security.

But the threats to global peace and security are varied and have evolved and even intensified. We are reminded of these threats on a daily basis. Yesterday’s New York Times offers a couple of examples which I quote from here:-

BANGKOK, Thailand — “Clashes between an ethnic rebel group in Myanmar and government soldiers have pushed a flood of at least 10,000 refugees across a river into Thailand, one day after Myanmar held its first election in 20 years.” “Continuing unrest in parts of the minority ethnic areas led the government to exclude 1.5 million people from the election. Minority groups in Myanmar’s untamed regions have been fighting against government control since the country’s independence from Britain in 1948, in one of the world’s longest-running separatist insurgencies.”

Here is another:

ST. DENIS, Haiti — Three medical workers arrived at a clinic near here over the weekend on a mission to deliver supplies and spread the word about preventing a deadly cholera outbreak from getting worse after the torrential rains brought by Hurricane Tomas. The cholera outbreak, which has killed more than 500 people and sickened more than 7,000 in the past two and a half weeks, is largely confined to this region of rice paddies and small settlements, where the water has long provided life and livelihood.

The Washington Post provides another example:

“The U.S. tightened security on cargo shipments flown from abroad Monday, banning “high-risk” cargo from flying on passenger planes after last month’s discovery of a plot that originated in Yemen to send bombs in shipped packages. Homeland Security Secretary Janet Napolitano also extended last week’s ban on all air cargo from Yemen to include Somalia as well. And she limited to less than 16 ounces the size of toner or ink cartridges that can travel in checked or carry-on baggage, a response to the discovery of a bomb disguised as a toner cartridge and shipped as cargo at a London airport.”

These examples, different as they are, are a sample of events that can and have disrupted global peace and security. Indeed world peace and security has been threatened as much by terrorism, and natural disasters, as much as it is threatened by armed conflict and political or civil uprising.

Globalization, modern technology and modern forms of mass communication have helped to propagate some of the more modern threats to peace and security. Modern technology for example permits the rapid deployment of the weapons of war and fosters the proliferation of small arms. With stealth technology, unmanned drones have the capacity to launch attacks with speed, accuracy and without casualty. And although its effect is often discounted, the video game industry provides fertile ground for shaping the minds and abilities of young and old alike to inflict damage both in situations of conflict and peace. Although I am sure that there will be many here who will disagree with me as much as my own children would, the X-box 360 game, Call of duty: Modern Warfare fuels violence among those who are vulnerable as they are able to practice some of the horrendous tactics of modern warfare in their own living rooms, choosing civilian victims, who are often the helpless targets in real warfare too.

Clearly, war and other forms of armed conflict account for a significant part of the threat to global peace and security and their prevention and resolution remain at the core of the work of the United Nations. Among the mandates of the United Nations set out in the Charter is to take “effective collective measures for the prevention and removal of threats to the peace, and for the suppression of acts of aggression or other breaches of the peace, and to bring about by peaceful means, and in conformity with the principles of justice and international law, adjustment or settlement of international disputes or situations which might lead to a breach of the peace”.

Over the years, the United Nations has intensified its efforts to address global conflict. Although the trend in the prevalence of armed conflicts around the world shows that the number of wars rose steadily following World War II, this trend reversed after 1992. Interstate conflicts have also diminished in number and recurring conflicts rather than new outbreaks have accounted for a greater number of active conflicts. But the intrastate locus of war and conflict has not resulted in the localization of the effects of conflict within the boundaries of nation states. In fact, with globalization, migration and technology, national and civil conflicts have quickly expanded to entail international actors and with international repercussions.

A major challenge that has persisted in many wars is the attack of civilians both men and women and the use of women and girls bodies as battlegrounds or otherwise booty for the fighters.

These despicable acts are often committed even after the end of open hostilities. Moreover, the perpetrators of these heinous crimes often escape prosecution. In the war in Bosnia between 1992 and 1995, an estimated 50,000 girls and women were raped, many repeatedly and brutally. In the Democratic Republic of the Congo, massive rapes have characterized the ongoing war in the eastern province. In Afghanistan girls' and women's rights are consistently violated and the application of Shari'a law entails ruthless treatment for perceived violations of religious and cultural codes.

Concerned by this trend, in 2000, the United Nations Security Council adopted resolution 1325 (2000) to galvanize support and action to address not just the abuse of women in situations of armed conflict but also to ensure that their views were more consistently included in all aspects of conflict resolution, peacemaking and peacebuilding.

Resolution 1325(2000) was hailed as a landmark resolution. It was the first Security Council resolution that specifically recognized the role of women as equal participants in peace processes. But even more important, the resolution recognized that full participation by all – both women and men in peace process would increase the chances of sustainable peace. Resolution 1325(2000) recognizes that women bring a unique perspective to the peace table. The Security Council acknowledged that women were the most able to address the challenges they faced. Thus the Security Council resolution 1325(2000) opened the doors for women's active involvement in prevention of conflict, peace negotiations, peacebuilding and rehabilitation and recovery. Implicitly the Council acknowledged that inclusion rather than exclusion was the key to sustainable peace.

Now of what relevance is resolution 1325(2000) to advancing global peace and security, in general?

First, although resolution 1325(2000) focuses specifically on women, peace and security, its focus on participation brings to the fore, a critical prerequisite for achieving sustainable peace; inclusion. It is critically important to include the diverse members of the society in particular those emerging out of conflict. This includes both victims and the perpetrators, men and women, young and old, and those with disabilities. Only by understanding the basis of conflict will the prospect of ending such conflict be realized. The idea of engaging both perpetrators and victims in the process of peacebuilding is not a popular one. But the question is – can we secure peace without engaging everyone regardless of how heinous their crimes have been? Does exclusion not simply reinforce the level of brutality and deepen exclusion?

Security Council resolution 1325(2000) clearly recognizes the role that all parties to armed conflict must play to ensure peace and security. It repeatedly calls on all parties to armed conflict to take specific action to ensure the safety and rights of women and girls. Yet without some form of engagement with the parties, progress cannot be made. It is important to note, in this respect that those who commit some of the most atrocious acts of violence in the context of armed conflict are victims too. Amnesty International has reported repeatedly on the continuing recruitment of child soldiers by armed groups to fight in the ongoing conflicts in the province of North Kivu, eastern Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC). Child soldiers who attempt to escape have been killed or tortured, leaving many with no choice but to perpetrate the heinous acts with which they

are tasked, including rape of their own family members and others in their communities. It is essential that we develop a new paradigm for negotiating sustainable peace in such contexts.

Second, addressing peace and security from the perspective of gender equality is essential. Resolution 1325 (2000) draws attention to the unique perspective that women can bring to the peace process and places conflict resolution and peacebuilding in the context of gender equality and women's empowerment. Whether in situations of armed conflict or natural disaster or in the context of major pandemics such as HIV/AIDS, women lead efforts to restore normalcy within their households and communities. Including women in all processes to address and sustain peace and security must not be viewed as a favour to women. It is essential for development and peace.

While resolution 1325 (2000) emphasizes participation as an essential element for ensuring the achievement of sustainable peace and security, it also recognizes the enactment and enforcement of appropriate laws as a prerequisite. The resolution calls upon all parties to armed conflict to respect fully international law applicable to the rights and protection of women and girls, especially as civilians, in particular the obligations applicable to them under the Geneva Conventions of 1949 and the Additional Protocols of 1977, the Refugee Convention of 1951 and its Protocol of 1967, the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women of 1979 and its Optional Protocol of 1999 and the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child of 1989 and the two Optional Protocols of 25 May 2000, and to bear in mind the relevant provisions of the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court. In this sense resolution 1325 (2000) underscored the fact that sustainable peace and security must rest on a solid set of laws that hold those who violate the rights of others accountable. All the provisions of international law and international humanitarian law must be invoked and applied to ensure the prevention of crimes, especially the horrendous abuse of women and girls that is often perpetrated by militia and civilians alike during and after conflict. This is a prerequisite for the success of efforts to ensure global peace and security.

While the United Nations Charter envisioned threat to peace and security as emanating from essentially State action we know now that to the contrary the most challenging threats come from non-State actors. Security Council resolution 1325 (2000) perhaps is one of the Council's resolutions that clearly articulates this point by emphasizing the crucial role of non-State actors. Women can be strong non-State actors in reversing the negative impact of armed conflict. Yet, much more remains to be done to provide for their meaningful participation. Too often they remain excluded from the peace processes.

So let me finish by asking -- what could you do as young people to assist the process of ensuring sustainable global peace a reality? What could you do to halt the apparent descent into an increasingly less peaceful, less secure world? What could you do to support the development of a world that is safer for you and future generations?

You must advocate for the inclusion of all in all processes of conflict resolution and peacebuilding. Everyone deserves a voice and every voice must be heard – young and old; male and female. You may not be able to halt the catastrophes that are created by events such as the earthquake in Haiti, or the effects of Hurricane Katrina in New Orleans, or the volcanic eruptions from Mount Melapi in Indonesia. However, you can work to ensure that both at the height of these

crises and in the reconstruction that takes place after, the voices of all are heard and the needs of all are considered. You can work to ensure that in all these situations there is a focus on four areas that guide the implementation of resolution 1325 (2000) --- these are prevention, participation, relief and recovery and protection. It is time to move away from a knee-jerk approach to addressing threats to peace and security and to ensure that our efforts become more comprehensive.

To support these efforts, you must advocate for the enactment and especially for the enforcement of legislation to support the prevention of the violations of the human rights of women, men and children where peace and security are threatened.

Finally, you must work to eradicate the stereotypes and discrimination that often lead to the exclusion and victimization of key players, especially women and girls, in the quest for peace and security. As young people, you have the energy, the tools, and the command of technology at your disposal to make change happen. You also have the power to initiate that change now in your generation. You can work to ensure the full inclusion of the principles enshrined in resolution 1325 (2000). You can reverse the discrimination against women and girls and the violence against them that is so often an aspect of the breakdown of peace and security. You can begin that change now.

Thank you for your attention.