

## Workshop in Vietnam organized by “Vietnam Peace and Development Foundation”

### On the theme "Identification of International People's Solidarity for Peace-Security and Sustainable Development"

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“Good Morning,

I am very glad to be with you today.

I especially thank the Vietnamese Foundation for Peace and Development for inviting me to this seminar where I represent the Mouvement de la Paix France.

This is my first visit in Vietnam, and I feel a great emotion.

Like many people of my age, my political, social and pacifist commitments result from an awareness that has been marked by the heroic struggle of the Vietnamese people for their freedom.

I remember that one of my first demonstrations in Paris took place in 1975 to celebrate in the presence of the Vietnamese delegation, the end of the Vietnam War.

Finally, maybe if some of you know, when Ho Chi Minh came to France, he was hosted by Lucie and Raymond Aubrac, two Fascist resisters who were among the main founding members of the Mouvement de la Paix. Ho Chi Minh was the godfather of one of their children.”

## PEACE IS THE ONLY WAY FOR THE FUTURE OF HUMANITY

### I - SOME FINDINGS AND GENERAL ANALYSIS

#### **I.1. Extreme wars and violence, in an uncertain world dominated by financial and power logics, which cause people's legitimate concerns for peace and for an international human security**

On almost all continents, and particularly on the African continent and in the Middle East, conflicts and violence bloody states, regions, oppose communities. Strong tensions also exist in Asia.

The Middle East is on fire, especially with the tragedy experienced by Syria, mainly because of the invasion of Iraq by the US, NATO and their allies in 2003 and the intervention in Libya has aggravated the situation by throwing the entire sub-Saharan region into war and insecurity.

Terrorism fueled by violent extremism is striking indiscriminately in many regions, particularly in Iraq and Syria with Daesh but also in France, Belgium with the attacks of 2015 and 2016, and around the world.

The situation is aggravated by the willingness of the US and Israel not to respond to the legitimate rights of the Palestinian people victim of unacceptable violence these days with a hundred deaths slaughtered with savagery by the Israeli army firing bullets against unarmed youth.

The Ukrainian crisis and the outstanding conflicts in the republics of the former Soviet Union are fueled by NATO provocations and its desire to encircle Russia but also the EU's desire to detach Ukraine from its partnerships Eastern European countries, while this country should keep his partnerships with Russia and Western Europe to secure the conditions for its development.

### **1.2. The common aspiration of peoples to peace is thwarted by a financial capitalism guided by the search for immediate profits**

While the scientific and intellectual potential of today should meet the immense needs of sustainable development for the people, the world military spending continues to increase, reaching according to the SIPRI 1739 billion dollars in 2017. However, only 9% of these spending for 10 years would make it possible to solve, according to UNDP, the main problems facing humanity (water supply, illiteracy, food security, etc.).

On the other hand, the United Nations peace operations budget is only \$ 8.7 billion, or only 0.5% of the world's annual military spending and the contribution of the richest states to reduce the inequalities of development resulting from the previous colonial dominations is very insufficient.

The mechanisms implemented by an economic and political system dominated by the big multinationals and their political clerks oppose the realization of people's' desire for peace. The financial logics at work in the world under the domination of a few multinationals richer than many states, push for the search for financial profits in the short term, and prevent to satisfy this aspiration. These mechanisms fuel internal clashes between societies and between the most important financial or state powers for the determination of zones of influence, both for the capture of wealth and for the control of economic and political decision-making levers. They plunge millions of people into misery, violence, war, fuel climate change and impede the achievement of the goals of sustainable development. This system, in spite of the resistance of the peoples leads to a greater fragility of the existences and the planet and to a questioning of a human security that the scientific and intellectual potentialities of today make it possible to satisfy.

The capitalist system, globalized and over-financialized, through imperialist logics and despite the need to respond at least partially to the resistance of peoples, tries to impose the logic of militarization of international relations contrary to the aspirations of peoples.

The election of Trump in the US and the rise of extreme rights and racist and xenophobic nationalisms in Europe add uncertainty to the fragilities of today's world.

### **I.3. A widely shared finding: the war is always a failure. Peace is the only way for the future of humanity**

Peoples find that military interventions and wars only result in failures. They help deconstruct civil societies and cause death, destruction, disasters, instability. They bring new wars without bringing any solution. They aggravate all the problems. Civilian populations who only want to live in peace are the main victims and are partly thrown on the road to exile. The Mediterranean Sea is transformed into a cemetery for those fleeing wars and misery. Strategies led mainly by the US and NATO, which claimed to fight terrorism through increased arms spending and war, only led to its expansion. They have sown war and the people are still more insecure.

The financial logics lead to mercenarization under the aegis of arms dealers with mercenary companies almost listed on the Stock Exchange.

At the same time everywhere in the world strong resistance against wars, violence, social regressions are developing. Social, pacifist and eco-respectful alternatives are being developed for access to culture, welfare, employment and sustainable development at the initiative of young people and women in particular.

The current popular struggles in France show this, the Portuguese experience as well.

In the Maghreb and in Africa, civil societies with young people and women at the forefront are advancing to transform things from the local level. New solidarities between the peoples of the "south and north" are established by taking advantage of social networks and new means of communication. Thus recently in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), especially in Kivu, thousands of young people have organized concerts for peace. In the DRC, thousands of women gathered in Beni in a huge popular choir demanding peace in this region with the participation of a new Mouvement de la Paix created in Rwanda, the DRC and Burundi as part of a partnership between the French Mouvement de la Paix and activists from this region met at the World Social Forum in Tunis. Young people in the USA against arms sales lobbies is also a sign that things are moving along with student struggles and mobilizations for Middle East peace solutions.

### **I.4. The millennium goals for sustainable development have not been achieved**

In this context, the commitments made by Heads of State in the year 2000 and reaffirmed in 2005 to achieve the Millennium Development Goals to halve poverty in the world have not been fully significant progress often due to the internal dynamics of peoples rather than the political will of states. Youth initiatives around the world on all issues of sustainable development and peace are multiple, sometimes scattered, but real. The example of African youth is enlightening in this respect.

At the same time, every 10 seconds, a child dies of hunger or the consequences of hunger. One billion people around the world live in extreme poverty. It is a major factor of social insecurity, violence and armed conflict. Indeed, underdevelopment, misery, unemployment, injustices, lack of democracy, illiteracy, obscurantism are fertile ground for all instrumentalizations that promote hatred, clashes, conflicts and still prevent more people to ensure their food security and to benefit from the considerable scientific and technical advances of the present period.

The objectives to be attained and the challenges for peace imply calling into question the choices made by international financial, economic and political institutions (IMF, World Bank, WTO) and their most powerful national and international state or private relays ( G7 for example). This device aims to govern the world without consultation neither with the less powerful states nor with the United Nations.

## **II - EUROPEAN UNION AND FRANCE ATTACHED AT NATO**

**II.1. The EU, tied to NATO, is militarizing, trying to subject people to the logic of profitability of a free wild competition, trying to impose austerity policies. All factors that promote the rise of populism and the extreme right despite resistance not enough coordinated**

The European Union has tied its security policy to NATO. But the conception of NATO under US domination is to sit security on logic of power and military interventions contrary to the spirit of the UN Charter. At the geographic Europe level; NATO poses a threat to the security of Europe in particular because of its desire to extend its hold on the former member states of the Warsaw Pact, to encircle Russia through the installation of its missile defense shield, by developing military maneuvers in the Baltic countries with the participation of France and demanding an increase in the military expenditure of the European Union and the European States.

The June 2017 European Council on Security and Defense reinforced these guidelines by advocating the development of a European defense and military industry, deepening NATO's relations, and creating a European defense fund with 50 billions of euros and whose main mission would be to develop a "competitive" European military industry.

Finally, the deposit of American atomic weapons in several European Union countries constitutes with the French, British and Russian atomic weapons a danger for the whole of humanity and is an opposition of the durable development mentioned in the paragraph above. In addition, the European Union has destroyed the sovereignty of the Greek people and imposed a real economic war on them. These neoliberal policies put people in competition and lead to the creation of walls, xenophobia, hatred of foreigners and the rise of neo-fascist forces. Migrants fleeing wars and misery are seen as delinquents and victims of unacceptable violence. Only capital circulates freely and escapes to tax havens.

But still clearly insufficient resistance is organized between peoples, cooperation between Peace Movements (bilateral relations or networks between peace movements (England, Scotland Ireland, UK, Belgium, Balkans, Italy, Portugal, Germany, France, etc.) European coalition against NATO, joint work during the recent NPT commission, support of several States to the process of nuclear disarmament, vote of the European Parliament favorable to nuclear disarmament, progressive experiment underway in Portugal.

Trump's willingness to unilaterally break the Iran nuclear deal is provoking some interesting reactions, particularly from Germany, and we must push for a common EU-Russia front for the preservation of this agreement.

## **II.2. France pursues a policy favoring the militarization of international relations and arms sales, and hinders nuclear disarmament**

### **II.2.1. The military programming law 2019-2025: 295 billion in the service of militarization, arms sales and therefore war**

The new President of the Republic made voted in March 2018 for the period 2019-2023 a military planning law that provides for 295 billion military expenditure. This law confirms that the arms industries are considered as an element for the competitiveness of the France through arms sales as confirmed by the strengthened links with Saudi Arabia.

It is on this basis that during the last 5 years, the last term of office, arms exports from France have increased from 5 to 17 billion Euros for the great satisfaction of a military-industrial lobby that controls 80% medias. This law aims to increase, as requested by NATO, the budget up to 2% of GDP, an increase of ten billion euros per year by 2025.

### **2.2.2. France turns its back on negotiations about nuclear disarmament while availing itself of multilateralism**

While under the NPT (Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons), the Nuclear Weapons Prohibition Treaty (TIAN) has just been adopted by 122 states at the UN in July 2017 and the Nobel Prize Peace has been attributed to the ICAN Network, France reaffirms its commitment to nuclear deterrence and refuses to participate in negotiations within the United Nations on the issue of nuclear disarmament. The law of programming plans to double the credits currently devoted to nuclear weapons in the budget of France in order to fully renew the fleet of nuclear submarines is 40 billion in 6 years but 120 billion over 20 years if unfortunately we do not let's not stop this program.

## **III - WHAT TOOLS DO WE HAVE TO ADVANCE IN THE CONSTRUCTION OF PEACE**

- **The UN Charter and the founding texts of human rights (economic, social rights, etc.)**

It is therefore important to demand respect for the United Nations Charter and Article 4 which states that: "*The members of the organization shall refrain in their international relations from the threat or use of force either against the territorial integrity or political independence of any State, or in any other way incompatible with the purposes of the United Nations*". Similarly, it is necessary to fight for the respect of Article 26 of the Charter which requires to: "*promote the establishment and maintenance of peace and international security by diverting to armaments only the minimum of human and economic resources of the world*".

- **United Nations resolutions on the culture of peace**

The United Nations General Assembly (GAO) in its resolution 53/13 of 15 January 1998 states that *"the task assigned to the United Nations (preserving future generations from the scourge of war) calls for a transition to a culture of peace, consisting of values, attitudes and behaviors that reflect and promote conviviality and sharing based on the principles of freedom, justice and democracy, all human rights, tolerance and solidarity, which reject violence and advocate for conflict prevention by tackling their root causes and solving problems through dialogue and negotiation and guaranteeing to all the full enjoyment of all rights and means to participate fully in the process of their society"*. This resolution and the following resolutions set out eight fields of action in which they invite peoples, States, NGOs, national and international institutions, all sectors of education, media, trade unions, etc to intervene for :

1. *Promote international peace and security*
2. *Promote respect for all human rights*
3. *Promote sustainable economic and social development*
4. *Ensure equality between men and women*
5. *Promote democratic participation*
6. *Develop understanding, tolerance and solidarity*
7. *Support participatory communication and the free flow of information and knowledge*
8. *Strengthen the culture of peace through education*

The concept of a culture of peace has a revolutionary potential, but in order to acquire all its strength and effectiveness, it needs people to appropriate it, to make it live and to act for its concrete application. The culture of peace is the rejection of the inevitability of the evils that afflict humanity, and therefore a source of hope for the builders of another world of justice and peace.

- **The UN Resolution on the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)**

The General Assembly, meeting at the United Nations Summit on Sustainable Development from 25 to 27 September 2015, adopted resolution 70/1: "Transforming Our World: The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development".

These 17 objectives, as well as for the culture of peace, are points of support for the struggles of peoples at the global level as they tackle the causes of conflict and integrate peace, sustainable development, human rights and social justice by linking them. In addition, they integrate two major challenges: education and decent youth employment that are essential for stable and secure societies.

The Sustainable Development Goals, according to the text of the resolution, "will guide action over the next 15 years in areas that are of crucial importance to humanity and the planet".

*Goal 1. Eliminate poverty in all its forms and around the world*

*Goal 2. Eliminate hunger, ensure food security, improve nutrition and promote sustainable agriculture*

*Goal 3. To enable everyone to live in good health and promote the welfare of all at all Ages*

*Goal 4. Ensure equitable, inclusive and quality education for all and opportunities for lifelong learning*

*Goal 5. Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls*

*Goal 6. Ensure access for all to sustainably managed water and sanitation services*

*Goal 7. Ensure access for all to reliable, sustainable and modern energy services at an affordable cost*

*Goal 8. Promote sustained, shared and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work for all*

*Goal 9. Build resilient infrastructure, promote sustainable industrialization that benefits all and encourages innovation*

*Goal 10. Reduce inequalities in countries and from one country to another*

*Goal 11. Ensure that cities and human settlements are inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable*

*Goal 12. Establish sustainable consumption and production patterns*

*Goal 13. Take urgent action to fight climate change and its impacts \**

*Goal 14. Conserve and sustainably use oceans, seas and marine resources for sustainable development*

*Objective 15. Preserve and restore terrestrial ecosystems, ensuring sustainable use, sustainable forest management, combating desertification, halting and reversing the land degradation process and ending the loss of biodiversity*

*Objective 16. Promote the development of peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, ensure access to justice for all, and establish effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels*

*Goal 17. Strengthen the means to implement and revitalize the Global Partnership for Sustainable Development*

- **The international convention against climate change (COP21) despite its insufficiency**

The dangers that the consequences of climate change can cause for peace are enormous. For example, any sea-level rise in high-density coastal areas and deltas, as is the case in Asia, can result in incalculable and conflict-generating demographic friction. On the contrary, the desertification of certain regions has identical effects.

This convention is a success of the struggles for a sustainable development. It is deplorable that the US wishes to withdraw from this agreement. They have indeed an overwhelming responsibility in this but also to find solutions to the consequences of the wars that this State has led (agent orange in Vietnam, the destruction of Iraq, violation of the TNP etc).

- **The Nuclear Weapons Prohibition Treaty**

This treaty covers the whole spectrum of nuclear weapons activities, prohibiting any State part of it from engaging in the development, testing, production, manufacture, acquisition, possession or stockpiling, threat of use of nuclear weapons or other explosive nuclear devices. This is a great victory for the peoples of the world. After chemical weapons and bacteriological weapons, it is nuclear weapons that are banned as weapons of mass

destruction, on the basis of a ban treaty. Humanity now has a legal instrument to eliminate weapons that can undermine the survival of humanity, including by accident. On the other hand it will be necessary to win the battle of the ratification and many obstacles remain to be raised.

- **The aspiration for peace and the intervention of public opinion**

The aspiration to live in peace is a common aspiration for the vast majority of peoples and individuals on the planet. Most of the results have been achieved through the intervention of peoples. It is our main lever as Peace Movement. Successes indicate that the action of peoples to build a world of peace is essential and effective. But these actions are all the more effective because they find links, support, and convergences in all sectors of society, locally and internationally; and they can bring together citizens, States, national and international institutions. All the above examples benefited from these convergences;

#### **IV - WHAT ARE THE OBJECTIVES OF CONVERGENCE POSSIBLE?**

- The struggle for peace and sustainable and fair development. The reduction of military expenditures, the stop of arms trade and the allocation of savings made to the objectives of Sustainable Development and the satisfaction of social needs
- The ratification of the TNP and the elimination of nuclear weapons
- The defense of the climate convention (cop21) and its improvement
- The revalorization of the United Nations and multilateralism by respect for the principles of the United Nations Charter
- For Europe, the initiation of a Helsinki 2 process aimed at making the European space from Russia to Ireland and in its relationship with other continents and in particular Asia and Africa a place of cooperation and not of confrontations in a multipolar world where the temptations of force and war are present. It also implies the proposal to make Europe a free-zone of nuclear weapons.
- The fight against racism, xenophobia and the rise of fascist extreme-rights.
- The dissolution of NATO and the closing of military bases abroad.

#### **V- A FORCE REPORT THAT SHOULD BE WORKED**

##### **V.1 A contrasted situation**

The industrial militarist lobbies are powerfully organized and support their plans for social regression, including the development of war and the militarization of international relations wherever they can.

If we achieve results through struggles over the medium and long term, the situation is serious and the threats to peace are real.



Of course, each of our organizations, in his country, locally and with specific actions with other partners at the international level, leads struggles and builds rallies. We succeed time to time to find moments of convergence at the international level. But we can see that the mobilizations for the peace are not at the level where they should be in relation with the gravity of the situation.

## **V.2. Learn from the global mobilization of 2003 and the victory of getting TIAN**

There are two particularly illustrative examples for us. The great world demonstration in 2003 to oppose the war in Iraq and the struggle in recent years for the treaty to ban nuclear weapons.

When we speak of the aspiration for peace, the mobilization of public opinion against the war, we must go back to the 2003 demonstration. This is the greatest demonstration ever against the war. A world event which brought together millions of people for two days from Melbourne to San Francisco. It expresses well the aspiration of the peoples. It is the combined action of the public opinions and all these organizations, certain states, institutions, unions. This mobilization did not prevent the imperialist war but managed to prevent the legalization of this war by the UN as wanted the USA. It shows the immense reserves of forces for peace that exist in the world.

As far as the Treaty for the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons (TIAN) is concerned, what is original is that the battle to obtain this treaty is the result of a new dynamic that has been initiated through the constitution of a broad international convergence based on the humanitarian approach and bringing together international NGOs including the Red Cross, international institutions including the United Nations, States, global trade unions, global networks of elected officials and parliamentarians, peace and many other organizations.

These two examples are interesting to ponder for our future struggles, as they provide indications on how to conduct them in order to achieve concrete results.

## **V.3. Is this not the moment to launch a global unitary dynamic aimed at bringing together forces and dynamics for peace?**

The question is to know how to bring about initiatives convergences so that the immense aspiration of the peoples to peace, justice, fraternity, solidarity which is consubstantial of the fight for peace and social progress is expressed forcefully and shows its political and social strength.

About peace movements, should we not, on the occasion of this seminar, launch ways of working to generate new dynamics that converge social struggles and struggles for the environment; for sustainable development, the preservation of the planet, women's rights, human rights and against racism and xenophobia, solidarity with migrants and refugees with struggles and initiatives for peace and disarmament?

The situation is serious enough for us to reflect on how to make the peace movements more visible and more effective, and how to create common actions between these movements. How beyond the great diversity of all organizations that participate in the struggle for peace, for social welfare, for sustainable development, against racism against xenophobia and create friendship between peoples come together around unifying goals above to get results?

The current situation requires ambitious and unpublished initiatives to promote unitary moments of peace struggle against specific global goals, for example on the occasion of the International Day of Peace or the 26th of September for nuclear disarmament. The goal is to achieve mobilizations at the level of those we experienced in 2003.

This meeting is it not the opportunity to launch a process to federate all the existing energies for world peace, while respecting the great diversity that characterizes these energies.

The Vietnamese people with its organizations, its peace movements, its leaders, given the heavy toll it has paid against imperialist wars, but also its experiences and of its culture of the gathering forged in the hardships that it underwent, possesses all the legitimacy necessary to propose initiatives gathering and innovating at the world level. The goal is to make possible the convergence of the struggles of the peoples for a world of peace but also with international institutions, associations, trade unions, NGOs, states etc.

#### **V.4. Our meeting work in France**

After the succession of terrorist attacks in France in 2016, the Mouvement de la Paix has taken the initiative to launch an appeal to organize peace's walk and a national collective for peace. One was formed to express loud and clear the demands of peace.

This collective was created on the basis of a text that states: "*The aspiration of peoples to live together in peace in solidarity, justice and fraternity is immense. We are convinced that none of our differences of beliefs of belonging or of philosophical, political, religious, trade union or other sensibility should hinder the expression of this common aspiration*".

Today it brings together 150 very diverse organizations (associations, unions, various collectives, feminist movements, alterglobalist movements, political parties, etc.).

The collective formed is involved in several actions including:

- Organization of 40 peace's walk in 40 cities gathering between 12 and 15,000 people on 22 September 2017
- The elaboration (thanks to a joint work of 53 organizations) of a "Peace White Book" intended to propose alternatives to the militarist policies of the successive governments of France. (Currently 3500 copies of this book have been sold and a reprint of 3000 copies is in progress.)
- The making of a film "The bomb and us" that allows the multiplication of debates throughout France, in partnership with many organizations and local partnerships with cinemas, to challenge and question nuclear deterrence.

- The implementation of a national petition to demand that France ratify the treaty to ban nuclear weapons, stop its atomic weapons modernization programs, reallocate funds saved to social needs, for a policy of peace based on the eight areas of the culture of peace
- The preparation of peace's walk on 22 September 2018 as part of the International Day of Peace
- Demonstrations on 14 October 2018 in front of the sites where French atomic weapons are manufactured or stored.

Other thematic collective exist (ICAN, Peace in Palestine, against NATO, for the solidarity to the migrants etc) which associate with Mouvement de la Paix.

The Mouvement de la Paix is also a member of the collective that will organize a major demonstration in France on May 26 against the retrograde reforms of the current government and against its militarist policy.

**For its future, humanity has no other way than peace!**