

The NTO policy statement

NO to Armament – YES to a Sustainable Security Policy

by conflict mediation, diplomacy, peace- and conflict research and mutual arms reduction

President Putin has surprised many by his invasion into Ukraine. At the moment the Ukrainian people suffer immensely, and it cannot be out ruled that it will get worse. Large sections of the international community have with unusual determination reacted with extensive sanctions which will in the short term undermine the economic and social function of the Russian Society.

At the same time, most European governments have without any distinct opposition in most parliaments adopted far-reaching armaments plans – in Denmark an astronomical increase of the defence budget dictated by NATO. Last time we heard about the “policies of necessity” was the neoliberal race to the bottom; now it is an arms race towards an inferno.

The reaction is intelligible. However, we suggest a less harmful route. Reality is that NATO’s military superiority already is somewhere near 10:1 – but Putin’s recklessness has set the Western security policy checkmate. Against an unreliable/unpredictable opponent with atom bombs you cannot use military superiority without risking an inferno/an Armageddon/a holocaust. Nuclear deterrence works both ways. This is why we watch powerlessly while Ukraine is being crushed. Will this dilemma be different if a single NATO country is attacked? The war has revealed that military strength does not in itself create security.

But rearmament can also be outright harmful. If we want to avoid conflicts leading to war, we must think up a different security policy in which conflicts are phased out by diplomatic means based on more insight and knowledge of other countries’ needs and interests – and which tries to solve some of the conflict-causing problems such as global inequality, climate-related undermining of living conditions etc. A policy that aims at solving conflicts such as global inequality and climate-related destruction of people’s living conditions that will otherwise evolve into long term security risks.

We cannot spirit away military conflicts. But armament is the wrong signal to send – and to no avail in a global conflict between the world’s superpowers as now witnessed.

In our opinion long term prevention of armed conflicts will be best promoted by a civil society organized around a demand on the political elite for PEACE. It should not be hopeless in democratic countries – but, needless to say, extremely difficult in countries with autocratic regimes, censorship and an absent or manipulated democracy – like for instance the Russian one. The long-term prevention of armed conflicts is our landmark. The invasion of Ukraine is not a project of the Russian people. It is the more or less preposterously ideological project of an autocratic regime, and it is carried out by suppression, information control and populist nationalism.

Confident of its victory after the breakdown of the Soviet Union the West has simply-mindedly neglected the defeated part and trusted that a modernization process in Russia of economy, social conditions and not least democratic conditions with respect for civil rights would eliminate the potential for conflict. The modernization process has taken many different forms in different parts of Russia and the Post-Soviet republics. Heavy social and political contrasts exist in all of them. As far as we know none of them exhibits model democracies, nor does Ukraine. But we want to focus on the modernization processes in the former Soviet Union as well as inside present Europe. As a peace movement we want to contribute to acknowledgement of different historic backgrounds and a respect for local democratic efforts.

We call for a broad mobilization of demands for a new political direction: peace. We don’t deny reality. There are war and refugees; Denmark is a member of NATO and of the EU. We want to contribute to a realization of a security policy based on arms reduction, diplomacy, peace research and conflict mediation. There are no easy solutions – neither armament nor withdrawal from NATO tomorrow.

Therefore, we call for a broad popular movement that has a direction and is open to dialogue and disagreement about the means. We have set up a range of views and demands we hope a lot of people will be able to gather round:

- Unequivocal condemnation of Putin’s war in Ukraine and demands for immediate ceasefire
- Criticism of the Russian military intervention into Georgia and annexation of Crimea
- Criticism of NATO’s – and Denmark’s – military intervention into Libya, Iraq and Afghanistan which raises doubt about the defensive purpose of the alliance
- Recognition that NATO's gradual enlargement in Eastern Europe after the fall of the Berlin Wall without any security guaranties to Russia has contributed to worry and uncertainty

- Any country has a right to determine its security policy. Doubt concerning aggressive intentions must be resolved by bilateral mutual inspection agreements and, if necessary, by international guaranties
- Denmark must actively support and ratify the UN Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons. In a situation with risks of nuclear war suddenly alarmingly current, there is a need for resumption and intensification of agreements on nuclear weapons, START, INF, NPT, TPNW (ICAN), the Iran Agreement, etc. - with particular pressure on the United States, Russia and China
- At the end of the war in Ukraine, efforts must be made to involve Russia in a common European security architecture. The Russian economy and the Russian civil society must be re-involved in an exchange with the rest of Europe as soon as possible
- The EU must not have a European army, but must step up its efforts for peace, mediation, sustainable trade, green transition, democracy and development
- Denmark must not arm itself further but contribute by diplomacy, conflict mediation and development aid. Russia has a strong and aggressive military, but its military expenditures are only 8% of that of NATO's
- Denmark must not have American soldiers deployed and military equipment stationed in Denmark. This will not increase security, but on the contrary increase the risk of Danish involvement in armed conflicts controlled by the USA
- Denmark must politically re-establish an institutional framework for peace research
- Regardless of origin, refugees must have access to residence, protection and the opportunity to apply for asylum in Denmark
- Climate destruction is one of the biggest threats to world peace. Therefore, securing sustainable energy must be an essential part of a peace and security policy
- The peace movement should have the largest possible political and social width and establish co-operation with similar movements in other countries