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Stichworte zur Rede – es gilt das gesprochene Wort

First of all I would like to take the opportunity to thank pagan and the planning committee for organizing the Counter Summit and for their invitation to speak here today. The Counter Summit gives us a good opportunity to share our commitment for peace, our thoughts and our plans for future campaigning on our way to peace.

Speaking as a christian and representative of the German section of the international Catholic peace movement Pax Christi when I occupy myself with the NATO doctrine my criterion is to examine whether the steps and methods chosen by NATO are consistent with the Christian idea of a just peace.

It is somehow unbelievable but the NATO alliance claims to be acting in the name of peace. After the meeting of NATO´s Secretary General and the german chancellor Angela Merkel, to discuss the strategic concept my very astonished eyes read the following words of Rasmussen: *"NATO was, is, and will remain an instrument for peace. Through our operation we are defending peace. Through our cooperative approach to security, we are promoting peace. Through our engagement in crisis management, we are preserving peace."*

The Christian idea of a just peace presents ideas that I think most of you can share. Of course it involves more than the simple absence of war. A just peace includes social justice, worldwide solidarity, and access to food, clean drinking water and health care for all human beings. It also means the integrity of creation, means the empowerment of women, means dialog, reconciliation and non-violence. A just peace therefore requires the respectful and ethical use of resources requires equitable economic structures throughout the world, and it requires the willingness of individuals and nations to act in solidarity and to

communicate truthfully and trustingly. NATO´s new strategic concept is most certainly not a good guide to how to pursue this path.

There are four aspects I will talk about to illustrate why I think so:

- NATOs future engagement concerning climate change and refuges
- Nuclear weapons
- the missile shield
- democracy as Nato walks it and the Afghanistan war.

1) NATO wants to prevent and manage crises – Natos future engagement concerning climate change and refuges

The United Nations Millennium Development Goals describe the most urgent problems that have to be dealt with in building and sustaining a just peace. To justify their strategic concept NATO points to some of the greatest challenges facing the world today. They name, on one hand, climatic disasters, hunger, poverty and the armed conflicts that are forcing people to leave their homes. And on the other, the dependence of the industrial countries on oil and other dwindling resources. But NATO´s approach to the problems is to sustain the interests of the NATO states, instead of seeking the solutions in solidarity and mutual security. Quite the contrary: on the basis of the confrontations between east and west, NATO is now applying the same methods and instruments of threat and military power to sustain the dominant role of its member states in today's world. That doesn´t promote a just peace.

2) Nuclear weapons

What a great time to give NATO a new strategic concept, but *what* a missed opportunity to seize on the idea of a world free of nuclear weapons. Global zero is back on the world's agenda. This course has found the support of the majority of the world's population. But what

does NATO do? NATO insists on nuclear weapons. NATO even adheres to its first-strike policy. The people of the world want a future, but NATO is holding on to the past with its cold war - deterrence philosophy. NATO is pursuing a policy of confrontation with the peoples of the world. But what we want is disarmament – both nuclear disarmament and conventional disarmament.

The analysis and recommendations of the group of experts name the argument we can all sing along like a hit song: “As long as nuclear weapons exist, NATO should continue to maintain secure and reliable nuclear forces…” I hear this argument also from some guys in the churches. But why don´t they understand that they have created a perpetual motion machine? Like this we would never get rid of these arms.

NATOs insistence on the maintenance, even modernization, of nuclear weapons is tantamount to a policy of threats, deterrence and the militarization of international affairs characteristic of former times. Again: that’s not the path to a just peace as we want it.

The message of the new strategic concept concerning nuclear disarmament is disappointing and worse than what was to be expected: “It commits NATO to the goal of creating the conditions for a world without nuclear weapons – but reconfirms that, as long as there are nuclear weapons in the world, NATO will remain a nuclear Alliance.” That means the goal itself is not what NATO commits itself to and that very clearly is a step backwards. To us it can only mean to go on campaigning for concrete steps to a world free of nuclear threats.

3) Missile Shield

The development and deployment of a Missile Defense System will have wide-reaching and grave consequences for any bilateral or multilateral disarmament initiatives. The question is still unanswered, what exactly will be the target of a Missile Defense System? Iran appears to be the only remaining so-called potential adversary. But, from the information available, Iran is far from being able to build weapons capable of reaching intercontinental targets. The

arguments for setting up a missile shield are therefore apparently unfounded. In short: the sole purpose of missile defense is to increase the profit margins of the armament industry. By resuming missile defense, NATO will fuel the arms race. But who will be paying for this? A new arms race will indirectly lead to increased poverty in third world countries, and it will increase cutbacks in the welfare state in Europe. This means NATO is also jeopardizing the social harmony.

You know as well as I do that I was am only talking about what I heard and read about what might be the content of the strategy. That's a real problem because it means that NATO generates obstacles to democratic processes. Last week's discussions on the new strategic concept presented a clear of NATO understanding of democracy: all discussions were held behind locked doors! The parliaments of the NATO member states were barred from these discussions, as was the general public. This lack of a democratic process was no exception. NATO is an alliance of states with decision-making processes that systematically avoid all forms of democratic control. This military alliance claims to promote democracy in **Afghanistan**, but in fact, suspends the rules of democracy itself.

This leads me to my last comment. So far I have not mentioned the **war in Afghanistan** and NATO´s goal of emerging from it victorious. I have only one thing to say on this situation: The military operation in Afghanistan has failed – the consequence can only be to cease all combat operations immediately, to negotiate a ceasefire in all regions and to begin pulling out the international forces now!