

FEATURES

A NEW PARADIGM IN INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS? REFLECTIONS ON SEPTEMBER 11, 2001

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Before I started my first American lecture tour in 1963, a Jewish colleague from America visited me in Tübingen and asked me: "What is the topic of your lectures?" My answer was: "The Church and Freedom." "Very interesting," he said, with a charming smile. "I know that there's a Church, and I know that there's freedom, but I didn't know that you could have the Church and freedom together!"

Now, nearly 40 years later, as I was preparing my lectures for the United States this time, I was also asked about my topic and said: "America and the New Paradigm of International Relations." And the answer in Europe was: "I know that there is America, and I know that there is a new paradigm, but I didn't know that you could have America and the new paradigm of international relations together!" And people asked me: "Why do you want to enter the lion's den?"

In 1963 I was able to convince a few people that the church and freedom can go together. And I hope that in 2002 I shall also convince my public that America and the new paradigm can go together. But let me now start in a very un-American way: from history.

I. Paradigm Change in International Relations

Let me begin with three symbolic dates that signal the new paradigm in international relations that has been slowly and laboriously establishing itself: its announcement (1918), its realization (1945), and finally its breakthrough (1989).

The first opportunity: In 1918 the First World War ended with a net result of around 10 million dead, the collapse of the German Empire, the Habsburg Empire, the Tsarist Empire, and the Ottoman Empire. The Chinese Empire had collapsed earlier. American troops were on European soil for the first time and, on the other side, the Soviet Empire was



Hans Küng delivering the Bucerius lecture

in the making. This marked the beginning of the end of the eurocentric-imperialistic paradigm of modernity and the dawning of a new paradigm. That new paradigm had not yet been defined, but had been foreseen by far-sighted and enlightened thinkers, and was first set forth in the arena of international relations by the United States of America. With his "Fourteen Points," President Woodrow Wilson wanted to achieve a "just peace" and the "self-determination of nations," without the annexations and demands for reparations that some in Congress wanted. President Wilson has been ignored too much in the United States and even denigrated by Henry Kissinger who often polemicized against "Wilsonianism".

The Versailles Treaty of Georges Clémenceau and Lloyd George prevented the immediate realization of the new paradigm. That was "Realpolitik." The word was first used by Bismarck, but the ideology was developed by Machiavelli and first put into political practice by Cardinal Richelieu. Instead of a just peace, the First World War ended with a dictated peace in which the defeated nations took no part. The consequences of this approach are well known to you: fascism and Nazism (backed up in the Far East by Japanese militarism) were the catastrophic reactionary errors which two decades later led to the Second World War, which was far worse than any previous war in world history.

The second opportunity: 1945 saw the end of the Second World War with a net result of around 50 million dead and many more millions exiled. Fascism and Nazism had been defeated, but Soviet Communism appeared stronger and more formidable than ever to the international community, even though internally it was already experiencing a political, economic, and social crisis because of Stalin's policies. Again, the initiative for a new paradigm came from the USA. In 1945, the United Nations were founded in San Francisco and the Bretton Woods Agreement on the reordering of the global economy was signed (foundation of the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank). In 1948, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights followed, along with American economic aid (the Marshall Plan) for the rebuilding of Europe and its incorporation into a free trade system. But Stalinism blocked this paradigm in its sphere of influence and led to the division of the world into East and West.

The third opportunity: 1989 saw the successful peaceful revolution in Eastern Europe and the collapse of Soviet Communism. After the Gulf War, it was again an American president who announced a new paradigm, a "new world order," and found enthusiastic acceptance all over the world with this slogan. But in contrast to his predecessor, Woodrow Wilson, President George Bush felt embarrassed when he had to explain what this "vision thing" for the international order should look like. No

change in Iraq, no democracy in Kuwait, no solution for the Israel-Palestine conflict, no democratic change in other Arab states. And, at the present moment, doubts are also increasing in the United States whether the so-called "war against terrorism" can be our vision for the future. So today the question arises: Over the last decade, have we again forfeited the opportunity for a "new world order," a new paradigm?

I do not share this opinion. After all, despite the wars, massacres, and streams of refugees in the twentieth century, despite the Gulag archipelago, the Holocaust, and the atomic bomb, we must not overlook some major changes for the better. Since 1945, not only has humanity seen numerous great scientific and technological achievements. But many of the ideas set forth in 1918 that had been pressing for a new, post-modern and global constellation were also able to better establish themselves. The peace movement, the women's rights movement, the environmental movement, and the ecumenical movement all began to make considerable progress. New attitudes emerged toward war and disarmament, toward the partnership of men and women, toward the relationship between the economy and ecology, between the Christian churches and the other world religions. After 1989, following the end of the enforced division of the world into West and East and the definitive demystification of both the evolutionary and now also of the revolutionary ideology of progress, concrete possibilities for a pacified and co-operative world have begun to take shape. In contrast to European modernity, these possibilities are no longer eurocentric but polycentric. Despite all the monstrous defects and conflicts still plaguing the international community, this new paradigm is post-imperialistic and post-colonial, with the ideals of an eco-social market economy and truly united nations at their core.

Despite the terrors of the twentieth century, there is still perhaps something like a hesitant historical progress. Over the last century, the formerly dominant political orientations have been banished for good. For one, imperialism has no scope in global politics after decolonization. Moreover, since the end of the South African apartheid regime, racism, a consistent policy of racial privilege and racial discrimination, is no longer the explicit political strategy in any state. Likewise, in the countries of Western Europe, where it originated, nationalism has become a non-word and for many people is being replaced by "European integration."

The current movement is heading toward a novel political model of regional cooperation and integration, and is attempting to peacefully overcome centuries of confrontation. The result has been half a century of democratic peace, not only between Germany and France, not only in the European Union (EU), but in the whole area of the OECD (Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development, founded in 1948 and developed in 1960), which includes all of the Western industrialized coun-

tries (the European countries, Canada, Australia, New Zealand, Japan, and above all the USA). That truly is a successful paradigm change! There are wars in Asia, Africa, and in the Islamic world, but nobody could imagine a war between Germany and France or the United States and Japan anymore.

After this all too brief historical tour, I would like to move on to the fundamental definition of the new paradigm of international relations. I have received much stimulation and support in discussions among the small international "group of eminent persons" that was convened by UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan for the UN year of "Dialogue of the Civilizations" 2001¹, an endeavor that produced a report for the UN General Assembly, published under the title "Crossing the Divide: Dialogue Among Civilizations" (Seton Hall University, 2001).

II. The New Paradigm for International Relations and its Ethical Presuppositions

On the basis of the experiences in the EU and the OECD, the new overall political constellation can be sketched briefly as follows. Here, ethical categories cannot be avoided. In principle, the new paradigm means policies of regional reconciliation, understanding, and cooperation instead of the modern national politics of self-interest, power, and prestige. Specifically, the exercise of political action now calls for reciprocal cooperation, compromise, and integration instead of the former confrontation, aggression, and revenge. This new overall political constellation manifestly presupposes a change of mentality, which goes far beyond the politics of the present day. For this new overall political constellation to hold, new approaches to international politics are needed.

For one, new international organizations are not enough here; what is needed is a new mind-set. National, ethnic, and religious differences must no longer be understood, in principle, as a threat but rather as possible sources of enrichment. Whereas the old paradigm always presupposed an enemy, indeed a traditional enemy, the new paradigm no longer envisions or needs such an enemy. Rather, it seeks partners, rivals, and economic opponents for competition instead of military confrontation.

This is so because it has been proven that in the long run national prosperity is not furthered by war but only by peace, not in opposition or confrontation but in cooperation. And because the different interests that exist are satisfied in collaboration, a policy is possible which is no longer a zero-sum game where one wins at the expense of the other, but a positive-sum game in which all win.

Of course, this does not mean that politics has become easier in the new paradigm. It remains the “art of the possible,” though it has now become nonviolent. If it is going to be able to function, it cannot be based on a random “postmodernist” pluralism, where anything goes and anything is allowed. Rather, it presupposes a social consensus about particular basic values, basic rights, and basic responsibilities. All social groups and all nations must contribute to this basic social consensus, including religious believers and non-believers and members of the different philosophies or ideologies. In other words, this social consensus, which cannot be imposed by a democratic system but has to be presupposed, does not mean a specific ethical system, but a common basis of values and criteria, rights and responsibilities: a common ethic, an ethic of humankind. This global ethic is not a new ideology or “superstructure,” but gathers together the common religious and philosophical resources of humankind, for instance the Golden Rule (“What you do not wish done to yourself, do not do to others”) and a few very basic directives you find everywhere in humanity: not to murder, not to steal, not to lie, not to abuse sexuality.

A global ethic should not be imposed by law but be brought to public awareness. A global ethic is simultaneously oriented toward persons, institutions and results. Therefore a global ethic does not focus exclusively on collective responsibility so as to relieve the individual of responsibility (as if only the “conditions,” “history,” or the “system” were to blame for specific abuses and crimes). Instead, it focuses on the responsibility of each individual in his or her place in society and especially on the individual responsibility of political leaders. Free commitment to a common ethic does not, of course, exclude the support of law but rather includes it, and can in some circumstances make an appeal to the law. Such circumstances include cases of genocide, crimes against humanity, war crimes, and aggression contrary to international law, as recently in the former Yugoslavia. Meanwhile, following ratification by more than 60 nations, the International Criminal Court (ICC) can now be established, to which such violations can be submitted, specifically when a treaty state is unable or unwilling to impose legal penalties for atrocities committed on its territory.

As you know, the United States, which had always been in favor of the International Criminal Court, has recently tried to sabotage it, together with Israel, China, and Russia. And thus I arrive at the third—and for your ears probably most delicate—part of my speech. I could easily and comfortably have ended my lecture here or spent its third part on evasive generalities. I know, of course, that I am a foreigner, but I am not a stranger. I also know that it is not for me to give you advice on foreign policy but that you do expect me to express my personal concerns, which

are certainly shared by more and more American men and women and also by more and more columnists in the *New York Times* and the *Washington Post*. So I hope you will forgive my frankness!

III. Opportunities after September 11

It is notorious that the United States opposes not only the International Criminal Court but also other important international agreements like the Kyoto Treaty on Climate Change. This is a sad fact for all admirers of American democracy. To many people not only in the Islamic world, but also in the Asian and African worlds and in Europe, the present administration of the only remaining superpower seems to be disrupting the establishment of the new paradigm of international relations. I therefore cannot avoid comparing the new paradigm with the political reality after September 11, 2001, given that the fight against terrorism had to be started without doubt and the monstrous crime in New York and in Washington could not remain unatoned for. I had initially intended to entitle this part "Critical Questions after September 11," but I decided to reverse the perspective with the more hopeful title "Opportunities after September 11."

I shall dwell only briefly on the question whether after September 11 there was a possible alternative to the Afghanistan scenario that we experienced. It would not make much sense to philosophize after the event on whether another strategy would have been possible. What if, for example, President Bush had immediately taken command in the White House, as Winston Churchill certainly would have done, in order to announce the highest level of alert, but also to prevent any hysteria? What if he had not, for example, closed down the airports to the detriment of the economy? What if he had not called for "war," with fleets of ships and squadrons of airplanes, but for "combating" the terrorist network through other means: a great alliance with the Islamic states and an operation by the police and secret service with the support of the Northern Alliance and a build-up of a Pashtun Southern Alliance? What if he had cut off military supplies from Pakistan and financial support from Saudi Arabia? All this without the bombing of a whole country, without the human sacrifice and destruction that may already have outnumbered the victims of Ground Zero. Let me make this clear: I was never and I shall never be an absolute pacifist, but Christian fundamentalists, too, should know that in the Christian tradition war can only be the last resort, the *ultima ratio*, and never the first resort, or *proxima ratio*.

But now that we have this very questionable war, we must not allow anyone to prevent us from asking some questions. We have:

—a war that after more than six months has still not attained its primary objectives ("Osama bin Laden dead or alive"): Bin Laden es-

caped, and Afghanistan risks a descent into chaos: new tribal conflicts, the rule of the warlords, and banditry as in the period before Taliban rule; no, there is no peace in Afghanistan, and hundreds of Afghans are coming from all over the country to the American embassy to ask for war compensation for the loss of their families and their homes.

—a war in which European soldiers, too, are becoming increasingly entangled in actions on the basis of “unlimited solidarity” and are possibly condemned to years of maintaining a presence and getting involved in clashes in the Hindu Kush with responsibility for the capital, Kabul;

—a war which makes some by no means pacifist contemporaries ask what German soldiers are doing not only in Afghanistan but also in Kuwait and Yemen, what German frigates have achieved in Djibouti and the Horn of Africa, and whether German soldiers should also join in wars against Somalia and Syria, Iraq and even Iran, without any restrictions. The defenders of this new military foreign policy think that Germany could be “marginalized.” But no, Germany is too great and too powerful to be “marginalized.”

After the most recent experiences, the decisive question is more than ever: What international commitment should we make? And should we simply continue the fight against terrorism in this style? My concern is not the alternatives of the past but the alternatives of the future. Have we any alternatives at all, as long as foreign policy is above all military policy and billions of dollars are being spent on sinfully expensive new weapons systems and transport planes instead of on kindergartens and schools at home and on fighting poverty, hunger and misery in the world? Are there still any opportunities at all for the new paradigm outside the OECD world as well? I think that there are, and I want to indicate them cautiously: not with apparently certain predictions, but in the mode of “It could be that . . .” I shall do this in full awareness of all the real uncertainties of the future, which today often bring about fundamental changes more quickly than before, changes which are, however, not always for the worst. I shall adopt, so to speak, the realistic anti-Murphy principle: “What can go wrong need not always go wrong . . .” And here I shall limit my remarks to Afghanistan and the Middle East.

The War in Afghanistan

My position on the war in Afghanistan is this: I am known as a friend of the United States; I have often been a visiting professor here and I am an admirer of the great American tradition of democracy and the demand for human rights. And precisely for that reason I would plead for peace—even in the face of the campaign against terrorism:

It could be that the present American administration, too, will realize that those who think that they can win the fight against evil all over the

world are self-righteously condemning themselves to eternal war, and that even a superpower can carry out a successful policy only if it does not act unilaterally in a high-handed way but has real partners and friends, not satellites.

It could be that the United States, more shrewdly than former empires, will not overextend its power and come to grief through megalomania, but will preserve its position of predominance by taking into account not only its own interest but also the interests of its partners.

It could be that the American President, whose budget surplus has decreased in the past year by four trillion dollars and who must reckon with deficits again in the future, will once again reorient his budgetary policy and instead of being primarily concerned with military policy will be concerned with a more successful economic policy, which has in view further Enron-style bankruptcies, Arthur Anderson crimes, stock market disasters, and a recession that is still possible.

It could be that the present American administration, because it does not want to alienate the whole Islamic world, will take more interest in the causes of Arab and Muslim resentment towards the West and the United States in particular; that instead of being concerned only with the symptoms, it will be more concerned with therapy for the social, economic, and political roots of terror; that instead of spending yet more billions for military and policing purposes, it will devote more resources to improving the social situation of the masses in its own country and those who lose out all over the world as a result of globalization.

It could be that the superpower USA would also act out of self-interest to prevent the worldwide trust in certain standards of international law from being shaken, as it is when the only superpower sets different standards from those which apply generally in international law, because this only helps those powers which do not want to observe the standards of international law and precisely in this way encourages terrorism.

The Middle East

This is my position on the tragedy in the Middle East: I have been a friend of the state of Israel from the beginning; I made the "Declaration on the Jews" my special concern at the Second Vatican Council and, after the Council, I worked for the recognition of the state of Israel by the Vatican; and I am very proud to have earned an honorary degree from the Hebrew Union College of Cincinnati. Precisely for that reason I would plead for peace—even in the face of a situation from which there seems to be no way out. And I ask the Jewish members of this audience to understand my critical remarks as an expression of my concern for peace and security for the state of Israel.

It could be that in the face of the ever rising spirals of violence and death since September 2000 (when Ariel Sharon, heavily armed and protected, climbed the Temple Mount as a pure provocation and thus sparked the second Intifada), more and more Israelis will realize that they cannot win this war. The dream of a Greater Israel and Sharon's purely military strategy of "peace by repression" has failed and is disowned by a recent resolution of the Security Council that was introduced by the United States. This resolution conjures up "the vision of a region in which two states—Israel and Palestine—live side by side within secure and recognized boundaries." In the present conflict, it is absolutely necessary to distinguish between cause and effect. Many years ago, I had a long conversation with one of the greatest Israelis: Yeshayahu Leibowitz, professor at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem, a scientist and scholar of Judaism. He told me: "We lost the Six Days War on the seventh day. Because we refused to make peace, we became an occupation power."²

It could be that an increasing number of Israelis will realize that Ariel Sharon, who was already responsible for the disastrous Lebanon war in 1982 and the war crimes in the refugee camps there, and was therefore compelled to resign as minister of defense, led them astray a second time by his mindless demagoguery when he promised them peace through the policy of a strong hand. No one should be deceived: Even if Sharon defeats Arafat and his administration, he will still not be able to defeat the Palestinian people because the capacity of the oppressed to suffer is greater and more sustained than that of the oppressors. This is the lesson which many strong armies were forced to learn from guerilla wars.

It could therefore be that the army and the population will give increasing support to those more than 500 brave Israeli officers and soldiers who refuse to do military service in an immoral war, giving as their reason: "We will no longer fight beyond the 'Green Line' to occupy, to deport, to destroy, to block, to murder, to starve and to humiliate a whole people there."

It could also be that the Jews in America and Europe, already long challenged by the scandalous oppression of a whole people, will not only complain about the suicide bombers but will help to support the peace movement in Israel, which has reawakened again, and secure victory for those who are ready for peace in Israel, so that in this chaotic stalemate either this government adopts a new policy as quickly as possible, or another government is elected which really wants peace. To further this process, the U.S. government has the decisive role to play.

It could then be that under American pressure an Israeli government will withdraw troops, as it did in Lebanon in 2000 after two decades of occupation (Israel's "Vietnam"), and take up the peace proposal put forward by the Saudi-Arabian Crown Prince Abdullah, which has been

supported by the U.S., the EU, the UN and Russia: withdrawal from all occupied territories and recognition of the state of Israel by all Arab states, with normal political and economic relations. This would make possible an autonomous and viable (not dismembered) state of Palestine, preferably in an economic union with Israel and Jordan, which could be a blessing for the whole region and especially for Israel.

Indeed, it could be that then even the radical Palestinians, who have applied the same logic of violence, will stop their bloody terrorist activities, and that the Palestinians will realistically restrict their “right to return” to symbolic return for some particularly hard cases—in exchange for new settlements and financial compensation. In the long run only the recognition by Israel will lead to a less authoritarian and more democratic administration in Palestine.

Indeed, it could be that even the Jerusalem question could find a solution, like the “Roman question,” which likewise dragged on for many years when the Vatican and the Italian state fought over sovereignty over the holy city of Rome. A relatively simple solution was finally found in the Lateran Treaties: a single city with one city administration but two sovereignties, Italy on the left bank of the Tiber, and the City and State of the Vatican on the right. For Jerusalem, this would mean two flags and two sovereignties but a single administration in the one Old City (only this counts here)—if possible with a mayor and prime minister of the stature of Teddy Kollek.

Here particular demands would be made on the religions, not to support the official politics of their respective governments uncritically, but to show their prophetic role:

— “Recompense no one evil with evil” (Romans 12.17). This New Testament saying is today addressed to those Christian crusaders in America and elsewhere who look for evil only in the other, thinking that a crusade hallows any military means and justifies all humanitarian “collateral damage.”

— “An eye for an eye, a tooth for a tooth” (Exodus 21.24): this saying from the Hebrew Bible on the limitation of damage is addressed to those Israeli fanatics who prefer to take two eyes from their opponent instead of just one and would like to knock out several teeth, forgetting that the perpetuation of “an eye for an eye makes the world go blind” (Gandhi).

— “And if they incline to peace, do thou incline to it” (Surah 8.61): this saying from the Qur’an is addressed to those Palestinian warriors of God who today would still like most of all to blot out the state of Israel from the map.

Peace among the religions is a precondition for peace among the nations. That is the reason why I work so hard for a Global Ethic, which

in the age of globalization is more urgent than ever. In the age of the globalization of the economy, technology and communication, there is also a need for the globalization of ethics in coping with global problems. The two fundamental demands of the 1993 Chicago Declaration, taken up in the Manifesto "Crossing the Divide" for the Dialogue of Civilizations, are the most elementary ones that can be made in this regard, yet this is by no means a matter of course.

The first is the demand for true humanity: "Now as before, women and men are treated inhumanely all over the world. They are robbed of their opportunities and their freedom; their human rights are trampled underfoot; their dignity is disregarded. But might does not make right! In the face of all inhumanity our religious and ethical convictions demand that every human being must be treated humanely. This means that every human being without distinction of age, sex, race, skin color, physical or mental ability, language, religion, political view or national or social origin possesses an inalienable and untouchable dignity."

The second fundamental demand is the Golden Rule: "There is a principle which is found and has persisted in many religious and ethical traditions of humankind for thousands of years: What you do not wish done to yourself, do not do to others. Or in positive terms: What you wish done to yourself, do to others! This should be the irrevocable, unconditional norm for all areas of life, for families and communities, for races, nations, and religions".

But let me conclude now: I started with the lack of vision after 1989. I hope it became clear what his vision really could be. And I may summarize it in the following four propositions:

There will be no peace among the nations without peace among the religions.

There will be no peace among the religions without dialogue among the religions.

There will be no dialogue among the religions without global ethical standards.

There will therefore be no survival of this globe without a global ethic.

For further reading:

Hans Küng, *Global Responsibility: In Search of a New World Ethic* (New York: Crossroad, 1991; London: SCM Press Ltd, 1991)

Hans Küng, *A Global Ethic for Global Politics and Economics* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1997)

Hans Küng and Helmut Schmidt, *A Global Ethic and Global Responsibilities: Two Declarations* (London: SCM Press Ltd, 1998)

Notes

¹ Dr. A. Kamal Aboulmagd, Egypt; Dr. Lourdes Arizpe, Mexico; Dr. Hanan Ashrawi, Palestine; Dr. Ruth Cardoso, Brazil; The Honorable Jacques Delors, France; Dr. Leslie Gelb, United States of America; Nadine Gordimer, South Africa; His Royal Highness Prince El Hassan bin Talal, Jordan; Prof. Sergey Kapitza, Russia; Prof. Hayao Kawai, Japan; Prof. Tommy Koh, Singapore; Prof. Hans Küng, Switzerland; Graça Machel, Mozambique; Prof. Amartya Sen, India; Dr. Song Jian, China; Dick Spring, T.D., Ireland; Prof. Tu Weiming, China; The Honorable Richard von Weizsäcker, Germany; Dr. Javad Zarif, Iran; Giandomenico Picco, Italy (Personal Representative of Secretary-General Kofi Annan for the United Nations Year of Dialogue among Civilizations).

² See Leibowitz: "The Six Days War was a historical catastrophe for the state of Israel . . . In fact we are the ones who are not ready to negotiate and share. Israel did not want peace in the past, nor does it want peace today. It is interested only in maintaining its rule over the occupied territories." Quoted from Hans Küng, *Judaism: Between Yesterday And Tomorrow* (New York: Crossroad, 1992), 531f.