

Dr. Vladimir F. Petrovsky

Ten Steps for a World of Peace and Security

1. Re-focus on the United Nations and its Charter

If the world is going to become a better place, and I believe it is, then there is an important role for the UN to play. The international system of the twenty-first century — the first century of the emerging human-oriented civilization — can be envisaged as the realization of the idea of interdependency. It will be the world of the worlds, a commonwealth of different cultures with each of them encouraging the traditions of peace, coexistence and mutual enrichment. Diversity will be its wealth; unity, its force. The next century may become a time of opening up vast potentials, a time of creating well-being and stability in the world. And this is precisely the aim of the United Nations.

2. Incorporate moral and ethical foundations into politics

There is a need to merge law and ethics in international politics and create a political mentality of a new kind, which will unite rather than divide people, and produce a feeling of solidarity amongst them. In particular I am referring to the mentality of the political leaders—those few people who determine the course of events. Fundamentalism, of a religious or political variety, is one of the major causes of the current instability in the world. The UN Secretary-General recently defined this situation as “a crisis in the psychology of international relations.” Thus, what the UN needs most of all is to facilitate the creation of a new philosophy of international interactions, a new concept of human civilization, one that will unite the peoples of the world rather than divide them into good and bad, virtuous and evil.

3. Acknowledge the sovereignty of the human being

The supremacy of international law in all directions presumes the protection of the human being, his or her rights and his or her dignity. There is one universal kind of sovereignty emerging in the new global society, and it is absolute. This is the sovereignty of the human being, the sovereignty of the individual. The supremacy of international law includes a humanitarian imperative: the observance of the humanitarian threshold in all actions. It can be asserted that Kant’s vision of what is now referred to as responsible global governance really is a final “realization of Nature’s secret plan to create a perfectly functioning state as a single condition of complete development of man’s natural capacities.”

4. Mobilize political will and reform executive culture

Most significant of all, however, is the political will and responsibility of the states. In fact, this is the key to the solution of the problem. Effective multilateralism depends primarily on political will, more so than it does on structures or procedures. Political will demands responsible behavior from all those participating in the global interaction, beginning at the state level. The state is in no way a monolithic, impersonal structure. Even before the radical changes in the international arena that occurred at the end of the 20th century, the actions of one and the same state often depended not so much on what party held power, but who personally was in power.

5. Balance of interests rather than balance of power

The time has come to develop a planetary way of thinking which subsumes the definition of national interest within the global context. The logic of a planetary way of thinking brings to the foreground the task of providing not a balance of power, but a qualitatively new balance: the balance of interests of all the countries of our planet.

6. Adopt a multifaceted approach to collective security

The international community has at its disposal a set of tools to build the system of cooperative collective security. Peacekeeping, peacemaking and preventive diplomacy, development and humanitarian assistance, diplomatic and humanitarian intervention, continued disarmament, strengthening of international law, together with close cooperation among the international organizations and between them and civil society: these and other instruments can be effectively used to strengthen peace on our planet.

7. Need for constructive parallelism in negotiation (disarmament)

In the new world there is no place for such techniques as “linkages” often used during the Cold War. On the contrary, the multilateral disarmament fora, including the Conference on Disarmament, can rely more on the principle of constructive parallelism, which presupposes that progress in one area facilitates efforts undertaken in another sphere. This approach can stimulate disarmament not only in the nuclear field but in others as well. This observation is also applicable to the Conference on Disarmament.

8. Cross-section partnerships

A cross-section partnership with a variety of politicians, business associations, civil society groups, religions and professional communities, international and non-governmental organizations, academic institutions and artists is essential for ensuring the mobilization of funds, product donations and volunteer support of all, including those who have a direct impact on an agenda for sustainable development, and the management of all living species and natural resources. This multi-stakeholder approach could equally promote new perceptions and new policies for international issues, enhancing their relevance for domestic constituencies while confronting the most relevant issues on the global agenda, in order to build an institutional base for politics in a healthy democracy. Political will, practical steps and partnerships have to be combined with a renewed spirit of global cooperation and solidarity.

9. Comprehensive dialogue

I deeply believe that the idea of dialogue among civilizations is no mere catch-phrase or trite political slogan. It is an invitation for us all mentally to leap over our ancient cultural divisions and to understand better not only one another’s world view, but also our irreplaceable respective contributions to our common cultural heritage.

10. No globalization without a human face

The 21st century will achieve a new and radiant definition of progress if we can manage to put a human face upon our world. It seems clear to me that a holistic approach will continue to be the guiding force towards problem-solving at the international level, and that a multilateral effort is required. This being the case, it is imperative to seek ways to revitalize and strengthen the United Nations as we prepare to enter the twenty-first century. The UN’s importance in the future will continue to grow.