



Peace, Nature and Cooperation in the Baltic and Arctic Regions

International Online/Offline Conference & Round Table Discussions September 21 – 22, 2024, Regional Press Institute LLC

Ca. 1 pm Norwegian time/ 10 min Susanne Urban – WILPF Norway - (online)

- 1) <https://open.spotify.com/track/7EXH8GkErqSYwYuRickOfd?si=895eb5bb515b4fe1> [1:35 min]

♪♪ Beavivás – I wanted to start with this joik to the Sun by Ulla Pittijärvi/ Frode Fjellheim in respect to the indigenous people of the North. They have been living sustainably over centuries.

The Sun, my Father. The Earth, my Mother. Beavi, áhčážan, Eanni, eannážan. [sápmi]



«Reconciliation - Clearing the past, building a future - Neighbours as friends not enemies – through common projects.»

I will present a mega-idea for a Large-scale clean-up. The suggestion of a big joint drill based on peace researcher Johan Galtung stating that joint projects for mutual and equal benefit enable parties to build trust and to find common ground.

2) Reconciliation, to make the future liveable

What damage has been done? Who and what has been hurt and needs healing? There is a whole network of actors and factors behind any action. Reconciliation itself should close the worst aspects of the past but open the future and make it liveable.

Reconciliation with the Earth

If there is anything that is sacred, it is that humans are part of the web of life on Earth. But we have now caused disruptions that threaten the complexity of the unique phenomena we so take for granted – living systems. And where there is harm to a responsive system, there is a need for reconciliation.

What harm has been done / and is likely to be done? The list is long as many of the speeches in this conference have shown. Ending the harm is an enormous task.

3) Elements of reconciliation are:

- Safety from further harm in this relationship
- Uncovering the “truth” of what happened
- Acknowledgment by the offender(s) of the harm done
- Remorse expressed in apology to the victim(s)
- Forgiveness; Justice in some form, punitive or restorative
- Planning to prevent recurrence
- Resuming constructive aspects of the relationship
- Rebuilding trust over time
- Closure.

Why is reconciliation relevant to our conference?

Because there is little trust between our countries – and cooperation is the only way to achieve trust and mutual security and build a liveable future. And cooperation across borders and faultlines is needed to cope with environmental challenges.

Conflict is another word for incompatible goals. Conflict

is not negative, as conflict can result in an improvement of a situation. We must not mix up conflict with violence! Can knowledge of conflict resolution help us to promote work for Peace, Nature and Collaboration?

4) **Clearing the past, building a future: sorting out a conflict.** The opponents with incompatible goals in Baltic and Nordic regions are not «*The West vs. Russia*» - but much rather Nature and Civil Society on one hand, and Militarism on the other. We need creativity and will to find projects for mutual and equal benefit.

Is it possible to find a concrete joint project in **Baltic and Nordic regions**? Reconciliation means healing through togetherness, and vice versa, togetherness for healing - for closure. A joint project may help us identify points of togetherness more easily.

3xC: Every good project is constructive, creative and concrete. So, let's anchor a concrete project in a positive vision for the future.

5) **A bold vision – for a positive future – for Peace, Nature and Cooperation in the Baltic and Arctic Regions? My contribution to this conference will be opening our way of thinking. Thinking wild, and thinking big: what can we dream of? Let's jump into ...**

Joint-Clean-Up-Juncture, a bold vision:

A large joint military exercise, like those that are organized every year "routinely", with 30,000 troupes and *all* necessary logistics, supplies, information, etc. But instead of weapons, the forces are equipped with what is needed for a large-scale clean-up operation in the Baltic Sea, polluted by dumped WWII material, in addition to many other chemical substances, residues from fertilizers washed out with rivers, etc.

(Joint = NATO and Russia – yes) Reference-projects can be, among others, the Norwegian Defence Force's clean-up of the Hjerkins firing range, and France cleaning up the river Seine for the Olympic games '24.

This is a sketch needing a lot of further developing, among others relating to the UN.

Background is i.a.

- UN Agenda 2030 – reaching the Sustainable Development Goals through peace and partnerships. (16 & 17)
- The expertise of Oleg Bodrov, one of the initiators of the conference – Public Council of the Southern Coast of the Gulf of Finland, Board member of the International Peace Bureau, St. Petersburg
- Nuclear power plants in the Baltic: The danger linked to war/ hostile actions, even military exercises in the Baltic, with around thirty nuclear power plants, some only 70 km away from war in Ukraine.
- International military-divisions cooperating on large scale emergency-response after extreme flooding in Central and South East Europe September '24

Such a joint military exercise would be training for

- A possible emergency related to radioactive contamination from reactor-powered vessels at Us-bases like Northern Europe's largest marine base, Håkonsvern ('40-50 reactor driven vessels' docking annually today)

- **Training for what we all know is coming: A crucial clean-up and healing of nature and environmental destruction in Ukraine...**

Yes, such a West-East-joint clean-up-drill is a wild thought. Exactly what we need, facing a wild reality. Besides: We must reach for the stars to get the moon. I hope you don't back down?

Coming from Norway, the reason I started with a sapmi song/ joik is that indigenous people are best in living sustainably for ages, the sapmi nation is transgressing our political borders, and they are the main victims of military exercises and test ranges in the high North. Maybe Sami Parliaments would be the high protectors of the Large-scale-CleanUp?

