

The Norwegian Nobel Committee  
Henrik Ibsens gate 51  
NO-0255 OSLO, Norway

Copenhagen, January 30 2015

### **Nomination of Jan Oberg for the 2015 Prize**

As a member of the Danish parliament I would hereby like to nominate Dr. Jan Oberg (/Öberg), of Lund, Sweden, for the 2015 prize.

Dr. Oberg is a Danish citizen who has dedicated his life to the work for a change of international relations where peace by peaceful means will replace the traditional and conventional idea of peace by military means. As detailed in the following Mr. Oberg is a prolific writer who has promoted his approach to peace in many books, articles and in practical hands on work in several of the world's worst troublespots. With great acumen Oberg makes extensive use of the new communication technologies, and he is a very active teacher and speaker in academic, political and other public fora. Instead of pursuing an academic career, Oberg preferred to be independent; he has organized and funded, and been the director for almost 30 years of the Transnational Foundation for Peace and Future Research, TFF, in Lund, Sweden.

The whole thinking and practice of Dr. Oberg, his whole work, obviously lies within the core of the original idea of the Nobel Peace Prize. His work has had a unique impact on the academic as well as public understanding of how to build international peace and reduce armaments and violence. He has significantly increased the level of general information and insight into matters of war and peace; through work on the ground in selected international conflict and war zones, he has practiced peace theories and contributed to non-violent resolution of conflicts, to reconciliation, demilitarization and peace.

In today's world civil society initiatives play a very different and vastly more important role in the peace efforts than at the time Nobel wrote his will. Civil society is developing new mechanisms and networks to balance the existing lopsidedness of global structures and cultures which so blatantly favours armament (including nuclearism) and military means, exactly the forces that Nobel expressly wished to abolish or reduce through the core content of his 1895 will. The purpose of the will is to have international relations governed by law rather than military power.

In today's world we much more often hear the language of power, threats and humiliation than the voices of moderation, tolerance and respect in relations among states and peoples. To make the world a better place, we need a more fair balance and more free opinion formation; we need analyses entirely independent of state, party political and corporate interests. Humankind needs honest information to balance stereotypes cultivated and reflected in media-constructed images of what happens around the world. We need knowledge-based scholarship and diversified information/news that also highlight the omnipresent potentials of non-violence as both a means and an end.

I nominate Jan Oberg because he and the 60 TFF Associates have shown such

extraordinary talent, perseverance - TFF was established in 1985 - and determination to, with very small means, mobilize peace luminaries and bring together the world's most insightful and principled pro-peace advocates from numerous countries and cultures. Via homepage, media including social media and mails TFF reaches 3-5 million people annually.

TFF is an all-volunteer foundation that upholds the ideal of free research and the freedom of expression of even controversial views. As a principle it receives no organisational support from governments or corporations anywhere.

In most admirable ways he has struggled for so many years to build an impressive dynamic network for peace studies, dissemination and the practice on conflict mitigation on the ground in the world's hotspots. Under Oberg's leadership TFF has worked with fact-finding and conflict analysis, education, advocacy and constructive peace plans in all parts of former Yugoslavia, Georgia, Burundi, Somaliland and Iraq. And it began in 2012 to work with and in Iran with a series of closely related aims: fact-finding, influencing the exclusively negative news stream about the country through texts and photos plus establishing co-operation with at least one university about establishing, for the first time, academic peace research there.

One example of the innovative talents of Dr. Oberg is his invention of the concepts of "NIMO, the New International Military Order" in the 1970s, "human security" about 25 years before this became a household concept in international discussions; "conflict mitigation" instead of resolution and "MIMAC - Military-Industrial-Media-Academic Complex", expanding on President Eisenhower's farewell speech in 1961.

Awarding him the Nobel Peace Prize will encourage others around the world who are not in the media every day but may well, I believe, be much more important in the struggle for peace and justice than those who are there. To make this alternative approach to peace visible was a main consideration for Nobel when he complied with the entreaties of Bertha von Suttner and included «the prize for the champions of peace in his will."

It remains fundamentally important to reward those who have a dialogue orientation to power but never will be co-opted by it. I strongly believe that Jan Oberg fits the demilitarization idea that Alfred Nobel wished to support by the prize; confirmed by the language in the will on «creating the brotherhood of nations,» the reduction of armies, and the promotion of "peace congresses" in their many modern forms: public meetings, online communities, halls of education and training as well as scholarly and grassroots peace congresses that in Nobel's time promoted international law and justice as the alternative to arms races and military power.

For further details and arguments, please see the attached MEMO and the websites mentioned in the MEMO. Sincerely  
yours **Christian Juhl**  
Member of Parliament,

Dinamarca

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MEMO

Annex to nomination of Dr. Jan Oberg for the Nobel Peace Prize

### 1. Who is Jan Oberg?

Jan Oberg was born in Aarhus, Denmark in 1951 and is a Danish citizen. At the age of 26, while conducting studies for his PhD at Lund University (1981) he took up research in Somalia (1977-81) on the relationship between development strategies and conflict resolution and engaged in a deeper understanding of and mediation activities in the war that had just broken out with Ethiopia.

At the time, research of this type in Somalia was a pioneering effort, and experimenting with how academic research can benefit conflicting parties and the public good is a distinguishing character of his lifetime devotion to helping alleviate suffering in conflict regions and improve the security of people far outside the academic community. With TFF Associates he has practised a similar type of field work in more and more elaborate ways, from 1991 in all parts of former Yugoslavia, in Georgia (1992-93), in Burundi (since 1999-2012) in Iraq (2002-2003) and Iran (2012- ). One of many results is a blog published about "Yugoslavia - What Should Have Been Done?" from 2014 with the equivalent of more than 2000 pages.

Oberg is also the only person who serves simultaneously as goodwill adviser and mediator to three governments in Belgrade and the non-violent Kosovo-Albanian leadership under Dr. Ibrahim Rugova which led to the only known plan for a 3-year negotiated solution to the Kosovo conflict which, tragically led to NATO's bombing in 1999.

Oberg served as director of the Lund University Peace Research Institute, LUPRI, 1983-1989; during the 1980s he also served as Secretary-General of the Danish Peace Foundation and was a member of the Danish Government Commission on Security and Disarmament Policy over almost 10 years.

With his wife, Dr. Christina Spännar (also a sociologist) he founded the private, all-volunteer (i.e. no one employed or salaried) network TFF with about 60 scholars, area experts, former diplomats, military/peacekeepers, media people and NGO leaders in 1985. It deserves mention that that network holds 50/50 women and men, from the age of 25 to mid-80s, practitioners and theoreticians and both Christians, Muslims, Jews, Buddhists, Gandhians, Quakers and atheists.

To this day it remains unique in a) consistently promoting the UN norm of “peace by peaceful means” and upholding a clear Gandhian inspiration, b) being devoted to genuinely independent scholarly-based work and public debate by being people-financed and not supported by any government or corporation, and c) experimenting with research methods on the ground and creatively, on its shoestring budget, promoting public peace education in a wider sense through the use of the most recent electronic technology.

His academic production contains about 4 000 pages, including four books of his own, numerous contributions to other books, editing and co-editing. His total production, including media and other non-academic works counts over 1200 titles. In addition to university and other formal teaching, Oberg has given more than 1400 public lectures in front of very different audiences, from high-level politicians and NATO officers to media people, labour unions, schools and a wide variety of civil organisations in about 20 countries but mostly in Europe and Japan.

It is noteworthy that Jan Oberg left Lund University in 1989 and chose not to seek permanent employment anywhere else. Instead, he has served as visiting scholar/professor and taught at numerous institutions in between missions to conflict regions and participating in public debates.

I find it important that the Nobel Peace Prize be awarded also to scholars and not just to practitioners. Jan Oberg is both a and impressive theoretician and on-the-ground practitioner.

## 2. The main reasons for nominating Jan Oberg

Academic production with facts, critique and constructivism. Oberg’s production is remarkably large and it has, over the years, moved from understanding arms and warfare towards understanding the underlying causes of militarism, cultural dynamics and, most importantly, to a systematic exploration of the constructive perspective and strategies that focus on potentials for a better future for all. Thus, he knows facts and theories, he is a vivid critic of all the unnecessary violence and, in addition, emphasises in all he does that we can change the world towards less violence. His work is concrete pro-peace and not just anti-war and not just preaching. And his books as well as his activism highlights the strength of underlying forces and structures seldom exposed in media and political debate.

Concrete inputs to pro-peace policies including peace plans and human reconciliation facilitation in e.g. Somalia, Croatia, Bosnia, Kosovo, Macedonia, Iraq, Burundi and Iran, as well as an alternative peace and future policy for the European Union and a series of UN conflict-management reforms.

Innovative concepts and methods coupled with quite accurate early warning. Doing new things and doing old things in new ways characterises his work. For instance, already in 1978 he wrote about “human security” – becoming a commonly accepted idea rather exactly 25 years later – and about the New International Military Order. TFF’s work is based on a consistent application of the concept of conflict mitigation; and with Fischer and Nolte in the book “Winning Peace” (1989) he gave the idea of alternative military-cum-civilian defence and security a new broader content aimed at

making it possible to switch much faster than otherwise to a nuclear weapons-free world. TFF's 1991 report "After Yugoslavia – What?" was the first to suggest the deployment of UN peacekeepers in ex-Yugoslavia and led to consultations with then mediator Cyrus Vance as well as Serb and Croat leaders. Before the wars actually began, Oberg predicted those in Croatia (Krajina, Western and Eastern Slavonia), Bosnia, Kosovo, Iraq and also predicted both that the West would find another main opponent after the Cold War and that the US response to September 11 would lead to more wars and a rise in terrorism. A TFF classic is "Preventing War in Kosovo" from 1992, 6 years before it actually broke out. Oberg is the only person who has worked as goodwill mediator and advisor at the same time to three governments in Belgrade and to the then Kosovo-Albanian leader, Dr. Ibrahim Rugova. It led to an elaborated proposal for a three-year UN-negotiated solution published in 1996. Characteristically, his book (in Danish) about Iraq, written in 2002 and 2003 is called "Predictable Fiasco" and also presents a 20-point plan for dealing with Iraq with political rather than military means. Developments in today's Iraq has proved his prediction quite true. TFF is innovative in being an all-volunteer network and not an institute, independent of state and the corporate funding and in having explored earlier than most research institutions the potentials of the Internet since 1997 and having expanded in 2007 into the five leading social media, making use also of photography (Oberg is also a part-time photographer) and videos.

Reconciliation focus. TFF's and Oberg's basic approach to conflict-mitigation is that human beings must be in focus from the beginning to the end and that a conflict must never be stolen from the parties (broadly defined) by the foreigner. If a will to peace is not present in the hearts and minds, there will be no peace in the larger society. But the will to peace must be assisted with knowledge, with good thinking and creativity; the peace-maker/mediator must be educated too. Thus, with his colleagues, he has conducted numerous reconciliation and forgiveness seminars while war raged in the vicinity e.g. in Sarajevo, Mostar, Banja Luka, Vukovar, Osijek, Montenegro and Burundi – some with protection of UN police. Main audiences have been high-school students, young politicians, NGOs, military and media people. Since 1999 when he was invited to work in Burundi, he has promoted reconciliation between Hutus and Tutsis through training seminars, the building of NGO Coalitions and given the first-ever peace studies course there, been an adviser to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and taught at a private university.

Consistent commitment to education for bridge-building and non-violence. Jan Oberg has sought to build bridges between peoples in conflict, between academia and public education and between expertness and solidarity with victims of violence. The 'red thread' through and through has been his belief that non-violence is stronger than violence and that we do not need conflict prevention but violence prevention. His is no lofty talk; 'armed' with knowledge from field trips, often dozens of them, he devises concrete ways out of the delusions – indeed dangerous human folly - of 'peace by violent means' that regrettable seems to still be a fundamental norm within what is called 'Realpolitik'. Like a doctor should never talk about a patient she/he has never seen, Oberg never talks about countries or conflicts that he has not done fact-finding in. Since 1974, he has visited Yugoslavia some 80 times, went to Iraq before the war, has been about a dozen times to Burundi – the point for him being that impressions acquired in the capital over a few days does not yield a deeper understanding useful to doing conflict-mitigation and promoting peace and

reconciliation. This explains TFF's very select group of conflicts, worked with and in for so many years and the quite unique reservoir of longterm-based knowledge has accumulated. Finally Oberg as an educator and trainer. He has held or holds lecturing positions, visiting scholarships or professor positions in Sweden, Denmark, Japan, Italy, Spain, Austria and Burundi; thus, he has shared his knowledge and field experiences with several thousands of young people receiving it in multi-cultural settings. Add to that more than 1400 public lectures in about 20 countries and his work as scholar, educator and activist is likely to have had a quite rare impact on many and different audiences.

### 3. More information

Many more examples and the character of Jan Oberg's academic and field work, his writings and educational video productions are well exhibited on TFF's homepage <http://www.transnational.org>. and on <http://www.youtube.com/TFFVideo>. 4. Curriculum Vitae Jan Oberg's CV with further details, memberships, awards and publications over the last few years can be found on TFF's homepage: [http://www.transnational.org/About/j\\_oberg.html](http://www.transnational.org/About/j_oberg.html)