

The growing significance of
nuclear armaments.

A challenge for the ethics of
peace and the political sphere.

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Foreword

The hope and expectation engendered by the end of the East-West conflict that there would be a progressive decline in the importance of nuclear armaments has proven unfounded. Although they have received little notice in the public sphere to date, the issues of nuclear armaments and nuclear deterrence and the peace and security policy problems they entail are once again of increasing importance. The doctrine of the Church concerning the limited and temporary legitimacy of nuclear armaments and nuclear deterrence under the ethics of peace has been clearly stated, which is why we are greatly concerned about current developments.

As a result of this situation, the German Commission for Justice and Peace is increasing its efforts pertaining to developments in the field of nuclear armaments and nuclear deterrence. In this regard, the "Just Peace" working group has presented a comprehensive appraisal of the situation. The positions espoused in Chapter III of this document, which deals closely with the conclusions to be drawn pursuant to the ethics of peace and the political sphere, have been adopted by the German Commission for Justice and Peace as their own.

It is our hope that we will be able with this document to make a contribution to the discussion of the prospects for nuclear disarmament which is so urgently required; it is already evident that it will be necessary to conduct this debate at a European and international level as well. The German Commission for Justice and Peace will utilise the opportunities at its disposal to foster this debate, for if we are to avoid weakening the prospects for security structures which offer long-term viability, it will be necessary to draw attention to and combat the trend towards the re-legitimisation of nuclear deterrence.

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