

## **Building peace: is there anything new under the sun?**

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Tonight I shall ask: is there anything new under the sun? The answer is: yes. I shall talk about three new developments that relate to peace.

What is peace?

Our ideas of peace have altered with time and place. Peace is no longer something hammered out between belligerents, nor a settlement on paper signed by generals in a tent with armies on either side, not even jockeying for a cease-fire.

Peace is not merely the absence of war. 'Positive peace' is a social condition in which overt violence, including exploitation and structural violence, has ceased. Structural violence refers to denial of rights; hunger or starvation; disease that is preventable; lack of education, jobs, housing, and play; and freedoms of expression and assembly. How do we reach this state that may seem too good to be true?

Peace-building

One of the new developments of the past three decades is the concept of peace-building. What does peace-building mean? It is policies and programs to restore stability and effective social, political, and economic institutions and structures after a war or other debilitating or catastrophic events. That is: lessening the risk of relapsing into conflict by strengthening national capacity at every level for managing conflicts, and laying the foundations for sustainable peace and development. Peace-building as a complex matrix of processes has continued to grow and become more important. The concept has widened, and now includes transforming military services, reducing the number and nature of conflicts and disputes, development, democracy, human rights, justice, building the capability to resolve disputes, nonviolent action, gender, and peace education.

Efforts to implement peace-building have met some difficulties:

- over-reliance on external parties
- lack of legitimacy in the eyes of recipients and target groups, particularly in relation to newly-formed institutions
- lack of agreement over roles and implementation of responsibilities by all parties to the conflict
- failure to address the underlying or root causes of the conflict
- limits of leadership in political transition or extreme crises
- aspirations to build a society that functions better than it did prior to the conflict.

I personally visualize peace-building as a bridge from conflict and conflict resolution to 'positive peace', in which conflict-prevention, peacekeeping, recovery and development are all part of a collective and sustained endeavor to build durable peace. Hence, peace-building is a continuum including: strategy, processes, and activities aimed at sustaining long-term peace; and seeking to reduce chances for relapse into conflict.

To work, this broad concept must catch human imagination. Narrow institutional approaches focused on post-conflict reconstruction of formal state institutions are not enough. Indeed this is happening. Grassroots peace-builders have become equally as important as institutional approaches and are deepening the meaning of the term.

To be effective, peace-building *must* encompass nonviolent collective action — so that people, groups, and societies grasp that violent insurrection is less effective than fighting

with the tools of civil resistance. People are not going to stop fighting for rights and justice, yet *how* groups and societies fight can change. Without such understanding, it will be hard to prevent acute conflicts and relapses into civil war.

What can the UN do? The UN has limits. However, UN Security Council resolutions propose blueprints for prodding countries and regions from war to peace. Generally speaking, UN actions work better than many realize. With dogged efforts, the world's battle deaths in the past decade have dropped to approximately one-third of those during the cold war. The odds for any cease-fire lasting, which were only 50:50 in the 1990s, have increased to 88%.<sup>1</sup> In some situations, the UN provides a critical framework. For example, Israel's main imperative for withdrawing from the territories that it militarily occupied in 1967 is the same as the Arabs' obligation to accept Israel — that is: UN resolutions.

### Positive developments

Scandinavian researchers at the Peace Research Institute Oslo (PRIO) have found that the past decade has seen fewer war-related fatalities than any decade in the last 100 years. Their new study of battle deaths in armed conflict from 1946 to 2002 shows that battle deaths worldwide have decreased over most of this period, primarily due to a decline in interstate and internationalized armed conflict. (Harder to see are *war* deaths in conflicts past and present, due to deaths outside battle, especially displacement and disease in conflict zones, and targeting of civilians.)

Joshua S. Goldstein calculates in *Winning the War on War* and other writings, that during the first half of the twentieth century, world wars killed *tens of millions*, leaving entire continents in ruins. But in the second half of that century, during the Cold War, proxy wars ended the lives of *millions*, as the world trembled in fear that nuclear warfare could wipe out the human species. Today the worst hostilities, such as the war in Iraq, kill *hundreds of thousands*. Even so, these figures are very troubling.

More conflicts today are ended by negotiated settlement than by military victories. So found a 2008 Rand Corporation study. In investigating how terrorist groups come to an end, the authors analyzed a roster of terror groups that existed worldwide between 1968 and 2006, and found that most groups ceased because of operations carried out by local police or intelligence agencies, or because they negotiated a settlement with their governments. Military force was only rarely the primary reason for the end of terrorist groups.<sup>2</sup> Nor was terrorist violence very successful. Research by Max Abrahms studied 28 terror groups listed by the U.S. State Department since 2001. They accomplished their goals only 7% of the time.<sup>3</sup>

Local civilian initiatives to prevent killings are growing, and are now extensive in some conflict areas.<sup>4</sup> For example, in 2000 in *War Prevention Works*, the Oxford Research Group identified 400 civilian peace-building initiatives across the world. One estimated tally, assuming some overlap, would be that there are now more than 2,000.

Comparative studies show that programs to prevent violent conflict cost far less than interventions *after* a dispute has become a crisis. I quote from a recent report put forward by scholars of peace and conflict: 'Research shows that, on average, one dollar spent on preventive programs compares with approximately sixty dollars of program costs to respond to crises once violence erupts.'<sup>5</sup>

Let me report to you that finally a moment has arrived in the United States, after the costly wars in Iraq and Afghanistan, in which U.S. expenditures on the military can be questioned — even by sitting members of the Joint Chiefs of Staff. Almost all the Joint Chiefs of Staff are on record calling for reducing the U.S. nuclear arsenal.

The United States sustains 750 military bases right now. I believe that the United States

went to war in Iraq because it had the capability, and because formidable forces in U.S. politics were heavily promoting it. To my surprise, with astonishing speed upon taking office, President Obama unquestioningly bought the military's view on Afghanistan. He personally signs for every unmanned drone attack in, say, Pakistan.

Nonetheless, space is opening for discussion of decreasing U.S. militarization of foreign affairs. A new study by Washington's Center for Strategic and International Studies assumes a 30% cut in defense spending in the next decade. Advocates of high military budgets have lost popular support in the United States. U.S. military personnel dropped from 2.2 million in 1989 to 1.4 million in 1995. Observers who watch closely believe that the U.S. defense budget will drop by a trillion dollars over the next ten years.

Still, what troubles me is that U.S. society does not have robust debate on 'guns or butter'. Why? Lobbyists manipulate the language and stage-manage the debate. War costs are buried; they are funded from yearly supplemental appropriations (rather than regular processes) and at obscure times. The Department of Defense is formidably politically efficient.

Yet defense appropriations, which were \$180 billion at their height, are now \$88 billion. We now have more progressive Democrats in the Congress than at any time in the last two decades. The Republicans are divided. The Pentagon is split on Iran. This creates opportunities.

Am I discouraged? No. Peace studies not only dares to ask how we can build more peaceable societies, it seeks to alter the 'real world'. More to the point, I see evidence of younger generations having a keen interest in studying how to build peace. Students clamor to enter peace and conflict studies; the trend is driven by the young.

#### Gender equality

So what else is new under the sun? The importance of gender equality is a second new development. Some believe that gender equity is the central ethical issue of the twenty-first century.

Gender is not the same as a person's sex. It is the result of conditioning, a social and historical construction.<sup>6</sup> Gender studies show that gendered roles affect virtually all of human life. 'Human rights' are often assumed to be gender-blind, but apart from the loosest figurative sense, rights do *not* have the same meaning for women and men. Approximately 1.5 billion women and girls have no rights whatsoever: they are sold into marriage, forced into marriage, bought and sold, surgically mutilated, and subjected to many forms of violence, some of it involving systematic trafficking. The paternalistic argument that wars are fought to defend women and children is a grotesque myth. War provides cover for heinous crimes against women.

During the past thirty years, evidence has confirmed that gender is crucial to building peace. Thirty years ago I asked Robert McNamara, then head of the World Bank: 'Bob, if you could make only one intervention at the Bank to change the equation worldwide, what would it be?' He responded immediately, 'I would put every girl in the world into school.' The Bank, he said, had data demonstrating that improvements in the education and status of women stabilize and uplift the whole of society — the situation of men and children, as well as women. The uplift of women and their increased participation in public policy improves health status, reduces poverty, sustains the environment, and consolidates democracy in societies long bowed by authoritarianism and tyranny.

Women and women's groups are increasingly viewed as being among the most potent forces available for the prevention of acute conflicts, warfare, and violence. A new perspective gaining recognition asserts that the empowerment of women is the only way

to achieve lasting peace. This is not to say that women exude maternal attributes or have a reflexive interest in peace-making. It is to say that continuing socialization of human beings for making war, rather than building peace, will only bring more wars.

On 31 October 2000, the UN Security Council formally acknowledged through Resolution 1325 the changing nature of warfare, in which civilians are increasingly targeted, yet women continue to be excluded from participation in peace processes. Resolution 1325 for the first time addressed not only the inordinate impact of war on women, but also the pivotal role women should and do play in conflict management, conflict resolution, and sustainable peace. Peace, without full participation from women, is unsustainable, in the view of the Security Council. Resolution 1325 enjoins member states to take steps to ensure all forms of protection for women in conflict and asks for increasing roles for women in the building of peace, and peacekeeping operations and mechanisms. Central to the resolution is a major alteration, in which women are recognized not only as survivors, but as crucial mediators of social change and agents of history. The ramifications are potentially enormous, as dozens of countries work on national plans of action to institute its mandates. Resolution 1325 is being implemented by national plans of action. Sixteen countries, including the United Kingdom, have completed theirs.<sup>7</sup>

#### Nonviolent action

What about the third new development, collective nonviolent action, also called civil resistance? This not a new field, yet the attention and interest in what is also called nonviolent struggle is new and different.

Two reasons for this are (1) the peaceful transitions from Soviet rule and communist order that occurred in the 1980s and 1990s in the former Eastern bloc and (2) the Arab Awakening that began in 2010. Worldwide, these are the two most significant social upheavals in two generations, and both resulted from national movements of nonviolent resistance in combination with other factors.

British Quakers have played an important role in development of nonviolent action. A brief reminder: in 1787 Quakers, Methodists, and other likeminded advocates joined together 'to oppose all forms of coerced labour'. They organized a Society for the Abolition of the Slave Trade and coordinated a campaign in the British Isles. Between 1787 and 1788, some 100,000 people throughout Britain signed abolitionist petitions.<sup>8</sup> During the last decade of the eighteenth century and the first decade of the nineteenth century, nonviolent methods such as delegations and demonstrations were also used, along with meetings, electoral participation, lobbying, strikes, and related means of coordinated action.<sup>9</sup> By 1807, parliament had made it illegal to ship slaves to Britain's colonies, and British activists insisted that their government act against other slave-trading countries.<sup>10</sup>

Employment conditions in the factories and mines of 19th-century Britain were stark. Boys aged five were chained to the coal carts they pulled in mines, and girls of eight worked in the underground darkness twelve hours a day. Combating these conditions with nonviolent methods, in Britain and the United States trade unionists used strikes, through which they consciously withdrew their labor. Economic boycotts exerted financial pressure. Use of such methods allowed workers to reach negotiations and collective bargaining with management to improve working conditions and wages. Other rights resulted from struggles between landlords and tenants. Possibly the most remarkable transnational nonviolent movement of the modern age was the women's suffrage movement.

Civil resistance has been effective in crucial areas of human progress, including the establishment of basic rights, decent working conditions, and safety standards. This is not 'passive resistance', a term still used by journalists and diplomats who have had no formal preparation in nonviolent action, even though Gandhi rejected the expression in 1906 as inaccurate and misleading.

Civil resistance is effective. In 2005 Adrian Karatnycky and Peter Ackerman found that democratic transitions characterized by violence are much less likely to result in sustainable democracy than those led by oppositions fighting with nonviolent action. The consolidation of democracy may be in part be related to *how* the struggle was fought.<sup>11</sup> Two scholars, Erica Chenoweth and Maria J. Stephan, retrospectively studied 323 violent, nonviolent, and mixed campaigns that took place between 1900 and 2006. They found that nonviolent campaigns achieved success 53% of the time compared to 26% success in violent campaigns.<sup>12</sup>

## Peace education

The barrier to a worldwide strategy for building peace is not that we are deficient in knowledge. So, if we know so much, and persuasive evidence is available, how can we achieve a global strategy for the building of peace? The key is translation of what we know to be true into all the streams of daily life. To build peace, peace education is key, education about how to build more peaceable societies. Peace education involves all sectors of societies, including leaders and activists.

Although some of its content is universal, peace education varies with culture, history, and locale. Things are not simply the way they are; they are shaped by values, social norms, institutions, and discourses that affect the way we think. How do we change values, norms, and discourses? A lecture series is one good way to show that a topic is important and must be recognized. It can alter what people think is important, what is worthy of recognition and celebration. It can even change prestige systems. A lecture series cries out, 'pay attention, this is significant'. With the establishment of the Olivier Memorial Peace Lecture, the Friends in Ludlow are taking a stand on educating the public about peace. You are giving recognition to work that tangibly contributes to constructing a worldwide strategy for building peace.

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<sup>1</sup> Joshua S. Goldstein, "Think Again: War," *Foreign Policy*, September-October 2011. [http://www.foreignpolicy.com/articles/2011/08/15/think\\_again\\_war?page=full](http://www.foreignpolicy.com/articles/2011/08/15/think_again_war?page=full). Also see *idem*, *Winning the War on War: The Decline of Armed Conflict Worldwide* (New York: Penguin Group, 2011).

<sup>2</sup> Seth G. Jones and Martin C. Libicki, "How Terrorist Groups End: Lessons for Countering al Qaeda" (Santa Monica, California: Rand Corporation, 2008). Go to [http://www.rand.org/pubs/monographs/2008/RAND\\_MG741-1.pdf](http://www.rand.org/pubs/monographs/2008/RAND_MG741-1.pdf).

<sup>3</sup> Max Abrahms, "Why Terrorism Does Not Work," *International Security* 31, no. 2 (autumn 2006): 43.

<sup>4</sup> Numbers change constantly. For starters, Search for Common Ground works with groups in 30 countries. See <http://sfcg.org/>. Peace Direct cites 600 organizations on [www.insightonconflict.org](http://www.insightonconflict.org). See the U.S. Alliance of International Conflict Prevention [www.aicpr.org](http://www.aicpr.org). See the Peace Portal of the GPPAC Foundation (Global Partnership for the Prevention of Armed Conflict), formerly known as the European Centre for Conflict Prevention, supported by the Netherlands Ministry of Economic Affairs and the city of The Hague for materials <http://www.peaceportal.org/home>.

<sup>5</sup> Advancing Peace and Mitigating Crises - Recommendations and Proposed Language for the Foreign Assistance Act (FAA) Concept Paper, from the 3D Security Initiative and the Alliance for Peacebuilding, New York, 2010.

<sup>6</sup> *Guidelines on Gender-Neutral Language* (Paris: UNESCO, 1999), 5. Go to <http://www.unesco.org>.

<sup>7</sup> See [http://www.un.org/womenwatch/ianwge/taskforces/wps/national\\_level\\_impl.html](http://www.un.org/womenwatch/ianwge/taskforces/wps/national_level_impl.html).

<sup>8</sup> Charles Tilly and Lesley J. Wood, "Contentious Connections in Great Britain, 1828-34," in *Social Movements and Networks: Relational Approaches to Collective Action*, ed. Mario Diani and Doug McAdam (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009), 149, 150.

<sup>9</sup> Tilly and Wood, "Contentious Connections in Great Britain," 150.

<sup>10</sup> *Ibid.*, 151.

<sup>11</sup> Adrian Karatnycky and Peter Ackerman, *How Freedom Is Won: From Civic Resistance to Durable Democracy* (New York: Freedom House, 2005). See [http://www.freedomhouse.org/uploads/special\\_report/29.pdf](http://www.freedomhouse.org/uploads/special_report/29.pdf).

<sup>12</sup> Maria J. Stephan and Erica Chenoweth, "Why Civil Resistance Works: The Strategic Logic of Nonviolent Conflict," *International Security* 33, no. 1 (Summer 2008): 7-44. See

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[http://www.nonviolent-conflict.org/images/stories/pdfs/stephan\\_chenoweth.pdf](http://www.nonviolent-conflict.org/images/stories/pdfs/stephan_chenoweth.pdf). Also see Erica Chenoweth and Maria J. Stephan, *Why Civil Resistance Works: The Strategic Logic of Nonviolent Conflict* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2011).