



# Many to Many

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*“Many to Many” is a quarterly publication under the aegis of Peace Through Unity as a communicating link between “we, the peoples” of all nations, races, creeds and ideologies offering in the spirit of the preamble of the United Nations Charter an instrument for the furthering of better relationships based on deepening mutual understanding and the aspiration to promote unity and cooperation beyond all differences.*

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## Contents

Trust .....	3
Editorial – Peace .....	4
Democracy, Peace, and Peace Science .....	5
Ubuntu Knows No Borders.....	7
Thoughts on Tunisia .....	10
Democracy And Peace - 1.....	13
Democracy And Peace -2.....	16
Understanding the Mind of Putin.....	17
THE GREAT INVOCATION.....	26

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## Trust

The Dictionary tells us that the word **trust** is of Old Norse origin and means **strong**. Trust has also come to mean: 'firm belief that someone or something is reliable, true, or able to do something.'

Today the tremors of the Earth are becoming increasingly powerful and devastating shaking even the highest mountains and the disturbances of the atmosphere wreaking havoc throughout every continent and surrounding seas. These planetary convulsions are coinciding with the systemic erosion of the fundamental structures of human societies; the world of economics and people in powerful, decision-making, positions revealing their true worth.

The fickleness of the human law and justice system within different nations is also being brought to light. The yawning gap between rich and poor has been increasing while more than 50 million refugees, asylum-seekers and displaced men, women and children – the largest number since WWII – are living in camps between borders waiting and hoping for the opening of a welcoming door.

But this invasive systemic condition, which has been able, indeed enabled, methodically to permeate every part of today's debt-ridden societies and environment, seems to have reached its peak and is now slowly losing momentum. The cost of this state of affairs to the dignity and worth of an increasing number of people can no longer be ignored.

Although general fatigue, hurt, or attempts at denial may have us resorting to readily

available 'comfort foods' to soothe, entertain or distract, the response to the rhythm of changing seasons, inherent in us all, is hard to ignore. We, and all living things, including our planet - indeed all bodies within the entire universe - go through steps and stages of evolution, each forward step shattering the 'shell' of the old. The journey toward a common goal will proceed within the wider scheme of things. If we ignore or resist this law of nature, the Earth, our Mother, will remind us.

So, where shall we find that which can be trusted? What is 'reliable, true, or able to do something'? Maybe another definition in the Dictionary holds the answer: Trust is: 'the state of being responsible for someone or something.'

It has been said that we have the leadership that we deserve; the kind of leadership that reflects the values we have in general chosen to live by. We now have the opportunity to move beyond despair, self-pity and finger-pointing and use our hard-earned democratic freedom to become responsible for 'someone or something'; and re-connect with that 'state of being', that clear and strong place within ourselves, on which the future civilisation can be built..

On his recent visit to Sarajevo, Pope Francis, stressed that it is so easy to talk about peace: *"Leaders across the world often talk of peace while they sell weapons and spread war. From you, the first generation of children born after war, I expect integrity and harmony between what you think and what you do – anything else is hypocrisy".*

Yes, let us listen to the heart which keeps things simple and true. Let us fearlessly and conscientiously - as individuals within one

human family within the unity of nations - build the world in which we all can live together in peace with one another as good neighbours. Yes, let us together walk through the welcoming door into our common future.

*Gita Brooke, June 2015*

## Editorial – Peace

One would think that in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, we would be able to settle differences without resorting to violence. However, not only does violence exist between individuals, it also is still happening between countries. With horrendous consequences for both individuals and societies.

It is sometimes thought that conflicts exist as a result of people being 'bad' or 'evil'. While there are bad people, more often the trigger is fear, founded or unfounded. Fear of loss of face, fear of loss of dignity, fear of loss of position, but probably most often, fear of loss of power and prestige. In such cases, dialogue and compromise are seen as weaknesses, when, in fact, they are strengths.

It would be fair to say that all organised religions and states to some degree pay at least lip service to an individual having freedom of speech, freedom of association, freedom from injury and freedom from persecution. The United Nations Declaration of Human Rights sets out universal 'rights' but also emphasises recognition of the rights of others. If put into practice, we would all treat each other as we wish to be treated

ourselves. The Golden Rule. And a peaceful society would be the reward.

When peace prevails, societies prosper, with people working, earning and spending to the advantage of all. The economy improves and grows concentrating on basic needs being met. The economic argument is often put forward as a benefit of conflicts and wars – the military/industrial complex. Employment will expand in the production of weapons of war, training of armed forces personnel, feeding and clothing armies being some examples. Conflicts – and their contests – are even credited with technological advances in manufacturing and communications. But it doesn't take a genius to realise that the human resources thus employed have skills which can be used for peaceful outputs with only temporary dislocation or interruption to work. Employing teachers and trainers will allow skills applied to 'war' outputs, being redirected to develop clean energy sources and the distribution of power; to improved transportation systems, to improved communication systems.

But this takes leadership and commitment from more than individuals. While we can all make our contribution to peaceful living, persuading society to do the same needs direction from our governments. In a democracy, if enough people have this desire, they will elect representatives who will enact laws and provide incentives to this end. However this is where things can go awry, especially when greed and corruption take hold – where the power and prestige is born

and grows. This results in power being directed against the individual, and the growth of privileged elites. Despite the conflicts in many countries around the world, in general, the period after World War II, has been relatively peaceful on the world stage. The horrors of war, with humans deliberately setting out to harm or kill other human beings just because they have a different 'nationality', or more disturbing, the so-called 'collateral' damage of killing civilians and razing homes and businesses to rubble. Trench warfare is still happening in the war in Ukraine as well as the use of 'sophisticated' weaponry which can be activated from miles away. This is not any form of progress which we might have expected from the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

Forms of government are many and varied, but are commonly democratic or autocratic. Neither of which can guarantee a peaceful existence for its citizens. Neither of which is 'right' or 'wrong' – just different. Often the times will influence which form will apply. Some dictatorships are benign and will benefit citizens; some democracies stagger under greed and corruption of representatives; some will use 'legal' means to work against the people. As individuals, we need to be vigilant and able to recognise and dismiss misinformation disguised as 'news' and 'facts' from the news media. When enough people are willing to make their voices heard over a government trying to misuse its power and take positive and peaceful (if allowed) protest action, governments can think again – or at least enter into dialogue to find an

acceptable compromise. Currently Israel would be an example of this.

Protest action in favour of promotion of peace will be more effective in long run than violent protest action against something, especially with a professional and balanced news media to report responsibly on the issue.

Let us all make our own contribution by our actions to creating the culture of peace.

## Democracy, Peace, and Peace Science

Does democracy contribute to peace?  
Does peace contribute to democracy?  
What about the democratic peace theory which posits that democracies tend not to fight wars against other democracies? These are some of the big questions and heavily researched topics in political science and international relations. For this reflection piece, we shall let these big questions rest and instead show selected examples from peace and conflict studies, henceforth peace science, that examine democracy and peace from different vantage points. Hopefully I can make the case to give peace science a chance when addressing some of the essential questions of war and peace.

Peace science, examines the causes of war and the conditions for peace. It is a normative endeavor looking at how conflict can be prevented and how peace can be made more just and durable.

Insights from peace science help us understand how militarism undermines peace around the world. Peace science also can contribute to a narrative shift about the assumed effectiveness of violence by demonstrating that nonviolent responses are often more effective, less costly, and, most importantly, more humane than military action. At the War Prevention Initiative, we publish the [Peace Science Digest](#) to make those important findings accessible, understandable, and useful. Here's a snapshot of some obvious and not-so-obvious nuances of democracy and peace.

Let us start with democracy and militarism. [A study](#) exploring the impact of militarism on democracy in the member countries of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) over a time period from 2010 to 2016 found that militarism has an adverse impact on democracy over time. Most countries with the highest levels of militarism are among those with the lowest levels of democracy and most countries with the lowest levels of militarism are among those with the highest levels of democracy.

Another [study](#) examining whether the status of civil society organizations in a country receiving foreign democracy aid influences the likelihood of civil war onset found that the support can be a double-edged sword for policy makers and practitioners looking to strengthen democratic norms and institutions while

simultaneously reducing the risk of violent conflict. Foreign democracy aid increases the likelihood of violence in contexts where civil society organizations (CSOs) are weaker – where these groups have faced state repression and/or exclusion, or where they exhibit low trust in the government's commitment to democratic reforms.

Nonviolent resistance, as found in a further [study](#), makes democracies more likely to succeed. On average, democratic regimes with nonviolent resistance campaigns during government transitions survive over nine times longer than those with violent resistance during transition. The findings of this research provide further evidence of the power of nonviolence and its importance to those seeking to confront their governments. Nonviolent resistance campaigns not only increase the likelihood of political systems transitioning to democracy, but also the longevity of the democracy once it is in place.

Domestic policies, specifically the pressures of reelection, can force democratic leaders to avoid difficult wars. Even though this [study](#) was based on a theoretical simulation, we can recognize the importance of peace advocacy and pressure on elected leaders that if they chose war, they will lose an election. Of course, a somewhat wishful perspective from those of us working in the United States advocating for peace and against war.

This brief overview has shown the impact of militarism, the role of civil society organizations, the power of nonviolent resistance, and the importance of domestic politics all in relation to democracy and peace. The reason for sharing these research snippets is to make a case for the science of peace to advance the practice of peace.

We are at a stage in human history where we can say with confidence that there are better and more effective alternatives to war and violence. Despite a perception of overwhelming violence, which is true in parts of the world, humans have also figured out alternatives. Building peace in theory and practice is becoming increasingly professionalized, yet at the same time we must center the perspectives of those most affected by all forms of violence.

Let me offer some big picture thinking about war and peace. In the public, wars are not celebrated anymore. Yet they are presented clearly in a way that they are necessary – the famous “last resort.” Often a military intervention is justified for the sake of defending lives or building democracies. To begin with, killing people to save people does not make any sense. But back to my point about how to use insights from peace science. Next time when the notion of military intervention in support of democracy comes up, maybe the undue influence of militarism, the strengthening of civil society

organizations, the support for nonviolent resistance, or paying attention to domestic politics can alter an otherwise predetermined militarized course of action.

Peace Science does not offer a solution to all problems, and, like any other social science, it needs to be open to scrutiny. This is particularly important because this discipline does not only provide theoretical and empirical knowledge related to issues of war and peace, but it also has the normative goal of advocating for the prevention of war and the creation of cultures of peace. I hope, however, John Lennon would forgive me if I asked: Can we give peace science a chance?

*Patrick T. Hiller, Ph.D.* is a Conflict Transformation scholar, professor and is Director of the War Prevention Initiative of the Jubitz Family Foundation.

## Ubuntu Knows No Borders

*To be hopeful in bad times is not foolishly romantic. It is based on the fact that human history is a history not only of cruelty, but also of compassion, sacrifice, courage, kindness. What we choose to emphasize in this complex world will determine our lives. If we only see the worst, it destroys our capacity to do something.* Howard Zinn

Returning to South Africa after 25 years, I was struck by the despair felt by many after experiencing in the 1990s such hope for a truly transformative society. Yet, despite lamenting the “unfinished



work," there was still something under the surface guiding people and resulting in wellsprings of creativity, whether in an expansion of integrative or collaborative law or the government's Human Rights Commission's *Social Harmony Thorough National Action* (SHINE) project that has all South Africans being partners in cultivating more social solidarity, respect and harmony in the country. South Africa continues to lead with creative strong examples of ubuntu thinking in action.

I'd first learned about ubuntu during the South African truth and reconciliation process as I coordinated the International Monitoring Project of the South African Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC). Sitting with the Commission's co-chair Archbishop Desmond Tutu in a café in East London, he described it to me saying, "There is no direct translation in Western terms, but ubuntu is the essence of being human. The solitary individual is a constriction in terms. We are corporate. What I do to another I do to myself." That moment changed not only my outlook on life, but felt like a dormant portal in my heart had opened.

I remember those hearings as if it were yesterday. We wept with Nobel Peace Laureate Archbishop Tutu in the first hearings in 1996 as he put his head down on the table with tears flowing like the blood from the attack that triggered his reaction. He wept for the whole nation and for any of us who

always feel a great disconnect from a world still fueled by war or violence.

Tutu had told me on a break that day that he should not have, as the chair of the Commission, lost his composure, but it was a courageous and necessary human reaction to such torture. He modeled ubuntu, our universal connection, what he described to me as "the essence of being human," in those simple moments. How we long for leadership who can not only point out problems, or offer packaged solutions, but that can put down their head, in the face of war, violence or hunger, and weep.

Through the years that followed, I discovered that ubuntu knows no borders. Our search for a stronger connection in our lives and in our world requires a rediscovery, not a new invention. These paradigms of interdependence have always existed. Whether the Native Hawaiian's *aka*, the Navajo's *K'e*, the Kaxiwana in Brazil's *Txai*, the cosmic web or interbeing of the Buddhists, the Mardu's *Mauri*, or the Australian Aborigines' *Anpernrrentye* - that believe we are all one family tied together in a web of relationships. Each reflects the interconnected nature of all humans. Across the planet there's an endless string of nations and peoples who reject *us vs them* and embrace our connection and commonality.

By drawing upon the ancient, intuitive wisdom inherent in these non-dominant cultures, we can build a bridge across the

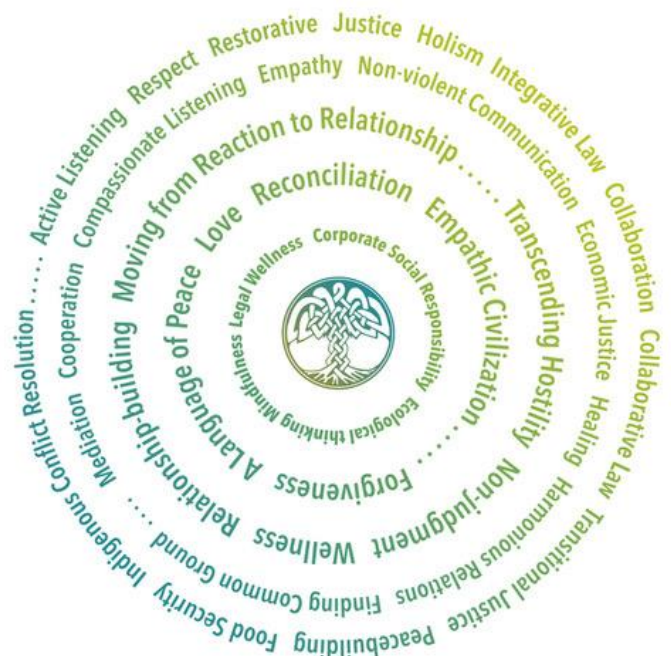


ages and cultures, between *us* and *them*. This secret to a new way of living has existed throughout time. It's not about mirroring one culture or romanticizing or idealizing its traditional ways of life, but honoring their perspective- their ubuntu - and beginning to relearn how to live from that special place.

How we respond to the world around us determines whether we live in a world of separation or the interconnected reality of ubuntu. It is what gives me hope that change is possible. Less of moving mountains and more of shifting our angle of vision from what separates us to what unites us. We curate shows, homes and events. Is it not time to curate our lives and institutions to be an example of a shining beacon of connected hope for our children and the planet?

For my part, I have expanded the work of The Ubuntuworks Project, a US based non-profit educational organization, and am collaborating with a dynamic international board of directors. The Project builds bridges with organizations and individuals on research and strategies to move us locally and globally toward an era of ubuntu. By incorporating ubuntu based principles into our institutions, be it workplaces, schools, corporations and courtrooms, we shift the way society's power structures function.

### Ubuntu-Based Principles



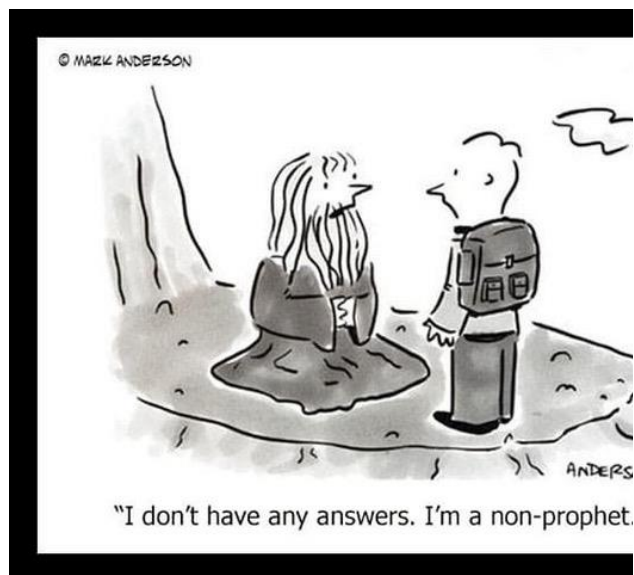
Expanding principles of respect for others, finding common ground and listening deeply, the Project weaves a web of organizations and collects the stories and data around compassion and the power and productivity of working from interdependence. Applying an ubuntu filter to how we develop communities, deal with each other as nations, engage in activism, educate our youth or enhance workplace relations, can send ripples into our society that moves us from reaction to relationship. The result: more hope and change.

Our divisiveness is what Einstein called “an optical delusion of consciousness.” We can choose a different path. Please join our volunteer team, send some organizational connections or powerful media for the Ubuntuworks Resource Hub or donate to a new future at [www.ubuntuworks.org](http://www.ubuntuworks.org)

In closing, we return to our own *Moment of Zinn*. At Ubuntuworks we choose to emphasize, not our separation, but the millions of people and the endless organizations who are working toward an interconnected, more compassionate world. It is a natural human way of being, and taking it deep into our institutions, builds hope and opens hearts for a new tomorrow.

Eric Sirotkin [www.ubunuworks.org](http://www.ubunuworks.org).  
Practicing peace and human rights lawyer in Santa Fe, New Mexico USA: founder and executive Director of the Ubuntuworks Project.

## Cartoon



## Thoughts on Tunisia

Many New Zealanders are geographically challenged when trying to place Tunisia. Often, the conversation looks like this:

Me: " Yes I'm living in Tunisia now"

Other person: "Oh Tanzania"

Me: " No, Tunisia"

Other person: "Oh South Africa"

Me: " ....."

Really, I had the same conversation several times. Even my new NZ COVID-19 vaccination paperwork states that I was vaccinated in Tanzania (though the original certificate clearly states 'Tunisia') (!)

For those of you less acquainted with the country than I, here are a few fun facts:

A small country two-thirds the size of NZ, but with over double the population (12m), dwarfed between giant neighbours – Libya and Algeria, in the most northern part of the African landmass (and closest point for 'migrant' sea-crossings to Europe - Sicily); main exports: oranges, dates, olive oil (apparently much of the Italian labelled oil is actually Tunisian); predominantly Muslim (though a recent study showed that 46% of young adults don't believe in God – the highest percentage of any Muslim country); large tourism industry (in 'normal' times) – damaged in 2015 by two terrorism attacks killing 60, then the pandemic; ancient viticulture industry; home of Carthage and Hannibal (yeah, not Greek or Roman...); Arab but 'not Arab', African but 'not African'; a cursory understanding of Tunisian

Arabic will elucidate that it has so many 'borrowings' (Amizigh, Turkish, French, Italian, Spanish) that other Arabic speakers have difficulty in understanding them...recently a Tunisian friend was chatting up a waitress in Beirut, and was mortified when she asked to swap to English (particularly hilarious, as the second language in each country is of course French).

Tunisia is also famous for being the birthplace of the 'Arab Spring'... after a market trader immolated himself (and died), in protest of the confiscation of his produce after failing to produce a licence (and then being beaten by the police). Subsequent popular demonstrations protested against the lack of freedom, democracy, unemployment and corruption, and led to the overthrow of President Ben Ali in 2011, who had led the dictatorship since 1987. In Tunisia this event was called the Jasmine Revolution, named after the flower that locals wear behind their ears (men and women, NZ 50c, or 1 dinar), and was relatively unpainful, with only around a month of agitations before the government was overthrown, and relatively few deaths (under 350). Of course, this triggered unrest in other Arab countries, where in Egypt, protests were eventually suppressed, and in Syria, Libya and Yemen.

Tunisia held free elections and was held up as a paragon of democracy, well relatively so. Unfortunately, the large number of political parties led to

unwieldy parliamentary coalitions where change was hard to effect and (the populous perceived that) corruption was rife. Actually, you don't have to look hard to see corruption in Tunisia - market traders are still targeted by police who ask for pay-offs, and service is likely more efficient at (some) municipal offices with cash in your hand. (Tunisia is also the Queen of bureaucracy, you have to have the patience of a saint and a couple of spare days or weeks with any engagement with Tunisian bureaucracy - so obtaining the correct paperwork for anything can be a massive trial of fortitude...luckily, the locals are used to this and have some resilience). I diverge...

I was in Tunisia for the 2019 elections - parliament and president (separately). A moderate conservative religious party (Ennahda) won the most votes (19%), formed a government and provided the Prime Minister. The presidential election was in two parts - in the first vote with over 20 candidates, no one held a majority - so a run-off was held between the top two - Kais Saied, a law professor with ties to no political parties (or real campaign), who vowed to rid Tunisia of corruption; and a media magnate, and at that time - ironically, imprisoned for corruption, Nabil Karoui. Saied won with over 72% of the vote. As well as an anti-corruption platform, he talked of decentralising power and 'direct-democracy'. So, what happened?

In July 2021 Saied suspended parliament (and dissolved it 8 months later) after clashes between the public and security forces over poor governmental management of the health sector (pandemic) and worsening economic situation, and fired the Prime Minister. He re-wrote the Constitution and held a national referendum re: this though only 30% of voters turned out. There have also been 'attacks' on the judiciary. The most recent parliamentary elections (December 2022) were boycotted by most – with only 9% of eligible voters. A new electoral law (September 2022) disempowers political parties, enabling politics centred around the individual – again, presumably to fight corruption.

Even in 2019, many people were apathetic and not motivated to vote – as successive governments seemed to make no difference to economic stagnation or levels of corruption. Kais Saied was popular – particularly amongst the more educated. You can see who's voted – as the tip of the index finger is dyed with ink. Now, friends who were supporters of Saied think he's doing 'crazy things' and some are looking for work abroad as the economic situation deteriorates. Others still trust his vision of a corruption-free and then prosperous Tunisia. Saied has dallied with the IMF who would insist on structural reform, including the end of all subsidies. Political suicide in a country where much of the populous subsists on subsidised bread (NZ 10c a

baguette). COVID-19 and Ukraine are very bad timing.

Western commentators talk to the rise in autocracy and death of new democracy. For Saied, these measures are (apparently) short-term only, when (if) his goal is accomplished, he will hand over the reins (no doubt exhausted).

Other not cool stuff lurks....I'm currently in NZ, so hearing this 2<sup>nd</sup> hand – but sources within Tunis talk of political abductions as well as a round-up of over 300 migrants after a murder – Tunisian police are never subtle.

So, how will it all end? Presumably as long as Saied can depend on the support of the police and army, things will drift along. But Tunisian's are great demonstrators – I was very surprised by the huge numbers of (peaceful) demonstrations that are held in central Tunis when I lived there (so unlike NZ). If the political parties, particularly Ennahda can galvanise people into more protests, who knows how it will all end. Ultimately, economics may be the key driver – the Ukraine conflict severely impacted supply and price of foodstuffs (I visited a few months ago – shortages of coffee, sugar and flour). Everyone is suffering ...

*Author details withheld for security reasons. Any questions or comments should be directed to the editor, or Peace Through Unity website. (February 2023)*

## Democracy And Peace - 1

*“World democracy will take form when men everywhere are regarded in reality as equal; when boys and girls are taught that it does not matter whether a man is an Asiatic, an American, a European, British, a Jew or a Gentile but only that each has an historical background which enables him to contribute something to the good of the whole, that the major requirement is an attitude of goodwill and a constant effort to foster right human relations. World Unity will be a fact when the children of the world are taught that religious differences are largely a matter of birth; that if a man is born in Italy, the probability is that he will be a Roman Catholic; if he is born a Jew, he will follow the Jewish teaching; if born in Asia, he may be a Mohammedan, a Buddhist, or belong to one of the Hindu sects; if born in other countries, he may be a Protestant and so on. He will learn that the religious differences are largely the result of man-made quarrels over human interpretations of truth. Thus gradually, our quarrels and differences will be offset, and the idea of the One Humanity will take their place.”*

*The Problems of Humanity* by Alice Bailey pg. 61 chapter 2.

As we move deeper into the Aquarian Age, ruled by Libra, justice becomes vital for democracy to survive and thrive. Democracy and peace go hand in hand, it is impossible to imagine peace without a democratic mindset that puts democracy above self. As President John Kennedy declared, “Ask not what your country can do for you, ask what you can do for your country.” Richard Haass

addresses this sentiment in his new book, “The Bill of Obligations,” opening a discourse around his development of the 10 habits of being a good citizen. It is a call for change and a blend of civics, history and political analysis; suggesting that Americans must re-envision citizenship in support of democracy’s survival.

Peacetime encompasses civil rights, a vibrant educational system, fairness, co-existence, investments in the people, spreading the wealth, sharing, generosity over greed, intelligence over ignorance, vision over blindness, joy and wisdom over anger and hate, using the mind over the emotions.

Humankind is in a rough initiation phase at this time, some teachings have called it “the long dark,” and as we know from the Ageless Wisdom Teaching, we are bracing ourselves for upheaval, as humanity transmutes and transitions from being centered in the solar plexus to the heart center.

There was a time, not long ago, when we were getting close to addressing disarmament. The discussions at the United Nations with world leaders valued the power of disarmament and how that would lead towards peace. Leaders were adamant about sharing power, and realized it was about trust. Yet, things fell apart and the trust was broken. We witnessed how democracy and peace require inspiring leadership: leadership that pulls no punches, leadership that uses their mind and

heart over emotions, leadership that loves all human beings, leadership that does not fall prey to fear, greed, and power, leadership that accomplishes change for the good of all human beings.

There are times when many have expressed feelings of hopelessness and questioned, "where is the justice for the evil, cruel, vicious atrocities that have plagued our planet," and been exasperated with the slow pace of human consciousness that would hold these injustices to account. One of my favorite stories of hope and commitment to investment in the longer vision comes from the documentary "Watchers of the Sky." One of the film's narrator's, Benjamin Ferencz, was a prosecutor at the Nuremberg Trials for the people responsible for the atrocities committed by the Nazis. He found meaning for the "long arc of the moral universe" with the example of Danish astronomer, Tycho Brahe of the 16<sup>th</sup> century, who was seeking the meaning of the universe. Brahe had convinced the king to build him a laboratory allowing him to chart and record the placement of the stars. Twenty-five years later a new king came to the throne and questioned what Brahe was doing. Brahe just said that he was "watching the skies." The king asked why, and Brahe said that he had charted 97 volumes charting the movement of every one of those stars trying to discover the meaning of the universe, admitting that he hadn't found it yet. However, he believed that someday his 25 years of labor would

prove useful and save a person in the future 25 years of labor. Ferencz ends the story saying that when the American astronauts landed on the moon more than 500 years later, they had with them the tables of Tycho Brahe. The charts remained accurate.

Justice, peace, democracy of the people, by the people, for the people, was Hakeem Jeffries message as he was handed the gavel as the democratic minority leader of the United States House of Representatives. His speech gave hope for new leadership showing strength and unanimity of purpose. He spoke of not becoming weary in doing good, the need of giving voice to the voiceless, defending the call of liberty and justice for all, exclaiming diversity is a strength not a weakness, a gorgeous mosaic, and out of many we are one. He ended his speech going through the alphabet, entertainingly and amusingly, albeit educating citizens on citizenship: "American values over autocracy, benevolence over bigotry, constitution over the cult, democracy over demagoguery, economic opportunity over extremism, freedom over fascism, governing over gaslighting, hopefulness over hatred, inclusion over isolation..." until he came to the last letter of the alphabet "z," with laughter and applause. The qualities of heart and mind were exposed in his speech as well as pointing to the forces against democracy and peace. They are destructive forces; yet, do they realize that "what destroys" also forces change? Social psychologists have revealed that



we don't change willingly, yet change is inevitable.

Harmony versus chaos, synthesis versus separation, through the innovation and investments in the people, especially investments in young people, this change is happening in our culture. It is also interesting to note that 19% of students in the United States are international, becoming a magnet for students around the world to learn about democracy. They get a taste of democracy by knowledge of the Four Freedom's that were etched in stone at the Franklin Delano Roosevelt Memorial in Washington, DC in 1941: freedom of speech, freedom of worship, freedom from want, and freedom from fear, which has been a democratic ideal of living with this code of ethics. Peace and democracy are entangled within this code.

Living in a democratic society is a privilege others have sacrificed for so that we may maintain its mission. And although our culture seems to be breaking down, how can this lead to a breakthrough? We are daily witnessing challenges to our long history of support for a free press. Integrity, truth, fearlessness, accuracy, courage, active intelligence, and compassion, are some qualities hoped for in our journalistic arena. Many have given up their lives for truth. Educating the public in learning to discern between what is real and unreal serves civil society. One journalist revealed that scientists had discovered that the earth's core had

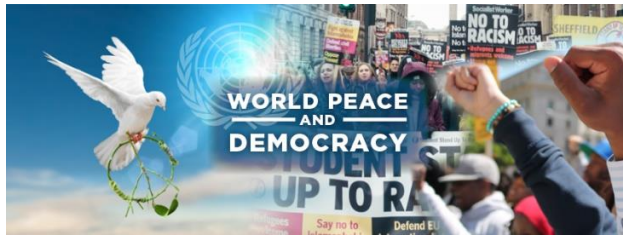
stopped and reversed. This opened a discussion between educators, politicians, journalists, and psychologists, on what that might mean for the climate and external events. Living in a democratic society allows for information to flow and be challenged as well as advanced.

What questions need to still become a part of the dialog of living for peace in a democratic world? The searing loss of innocent lives, genocide, hate, violence, cruelty, what more is needed? The Ageless Wisdom through Alice Bailey gives us guidance: that there is a plan, that we are not alone in the universe that there are Masters of Wisdom that have trod the way before us with courage, patience, strength, and love, and that there is a Soul. With faith, Soulful living demonstrates this relationship through the daily craft of living, and what becomes refined through craft elevates to an art form. If we ask daily, what is the soul asking of us, we may discover our "inner" peace and then Bailey's prophesy on democracy and peace, may become manifest.

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## Democracy And Peace -2



*"Democracy serves the cause of peace because it offers the possibility of justice and of progressive change without force."* Boutros Boutros-Ghali (6th UN Sec-Gen)

The rising spread of fascism worldwide at this alarmingly perilous time in planetary history behooves us to understand just how essential Democracy is to Peace. Thus, how important it is to actively work to promote Democracy if we want lasting Peace on earth.

For as articulated in the UN's 1999 Declaration and Programme of Action on the Culture of Peace Resolution A/RES/53/243, democracy is an essential aspect of the Culture of Peace. This landmark document cites eight action areas necessary to actualize the Culture of Peace. Action area five is **FOSTERING DEMOCRATIC PARTICIPATION** - specified in that Resolution as follows:

- a) Reinforcement of the full range of actions to promote democratic principles and practices;
- b) Special emphasis on democratic principles and practices at all levels of formal, informal and nonformal education;

- c) Establishment and strengthening of national institutions and processes that promote and sustain democracy through, *inter alia*, training and capacity-building of public officials;
- d) Strengthening of democratic participation through, *inter alia*, the provision of electoral assistance upon the request of States concerned and based on relevant United Nations guidelines;
- e) Combating of terrorism, organized crime, corruption as well as production, trafficking and consumption of illicit drugs and money laundering, as they undermine democracies and impede the fuller development of a culture of peace.

David Adams, who in 1998 was responsible at UNESCO for the initial drafting of the Declaration and Programme of Action, adds the following UN background to this topic.

*"We prepared the document at UNESCO at the request of the UN Secretary-General. The version we submitted to him (A-53-370, see link below), contained the following introduction to the section on Democratic Participation. Paragraph 77: "The fostering of democratic participation and governance is essential for the development of a culture of peace and non-violence. This is the only way to replace the authoritarian structures of power which were created by and which have, in the past, sustained the culture of war and violence. As emphasized by the UN*

*Department of Political Affairs, promoting a democratic culture strengthens a culture of peace, because they are intimately related - in fact the different sides of the same coin. And, as stated by the Copenhagen Declaration on Social Development, "... democracy and transparent and accountable governance and administration in all sectors of society are indispensable foundations for the realization of social and people-centered sustainable development [which, with social justice] are indispensable for the achievement and maintenance of peace and security within and among our nations."*

Paragraph 77 was not included in the final version of the document adopted by the UN General Assembly because the European Union objected to any mention of the culture of war and violence. Three other paragraphs drew criticisms from Member States and were not mentioned in the final version: paragraph 81 on *capacity-building in dispute resolution*, paragraph 84 on a *culture of management*, and paragraph 85 on *Truth and Reconciliation Commissions*. [Thanks, David Adams for sharing this interesting UN historical detail].

The full version of A-53-370 is housed at the following website of the United Nations: <https://undocs.org/Home/Mobile?FinalSymbol=a%2F53%2F370&Language=E&DeviceType=Desktop&LangRequested=False>

In the English version the section on democratic participation is on page 30. If you have problems accessing the UN page, it is also available on David's website at [https://www.culture-of-](https://www.culture-of-peace.info/annexes/resA-53-370/pages30-31.html)

[peace.info/annexes/resA-53-370/pages30-31.html](https://www.culture-of-peace.info/annexes/resA-53-370/pages30-31.html)

In conclusion, this strong Democracy / Peace connection urges us as peacebuilders to take bold actions that strengthen Democracy to counter the spread of authoritarianism. We can (and MUST) do this now! I end with a quote about Democracy by our beloved *Peace Through Unity- Many to Many Originator*, International Peace Networker **Gita Brooke** in a book titled **A GREATER DEMOCRACY DAY BY DAY - Out of Many, One.** *"We fully trust the human spirit. We believe in its beauty and its courage."*



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## Understanding the Mind of Putin

The war in Ukraine is bringing the world to the most dangerous moment in our lifetime, certainly since the

Cuban Missile Crisis of 1962. The war is now seriously escalating and could very easily end up in a nuclear exchange. On Dec 2, 2022, US forces in Lithuania transitioned from defensive to offensive modality ready for “immediate action” near the Russian border. Ukrainian President Zelensky’s visit to Washington three weeks later further exacerbated the war, now supported by \$112B in US aid. The new weaponry promised like the Patriot missile system and the Abrams tanks will require US support troops in Ukraine. Over a dozen NATO nations are contributing arms to Ukraine. Poland is now sending fighter aircraft. Meanwhile Russia is fortifying Crimea and the land bridge to Russia with several hundred thousand more troops. Putin has stated he will defend these Russian territories with nuclear weapons. The irresistible force of US/NATO expansion is meeting the immovable object of Russian nationalism and Ukraine is being destroyed. The escalating conflict is getting *very* dangerous. On Mar 14, 2023, a Russian fighter jet collided with a US drone missile over the Black Sea and the drone was destroyed. This marked the first time that US and Russian military forces had direct hostile contact.

What is unique about the conflict in Ukraine is that the war is not against some small country that has no possibility of matching the might of

US power as was the case of Vietnam or Iraq or Afghanistan. In Ukraine, the US is going against another Superpower as fully armed and capable as the US. For the first time, the US and Russia are going into direct war with each other with the prospect of a nuclear exchange a growing probability with each escalation of the conflict.

What exacerbates the danger even further is that simultaneously the US is escalating tensions with China and China is aligning itself more closely with Russia. This pits the US against two superpowers simultaneously in escalating tensions, each one of which has enough nuclear weapons to end life as we know it.

Even more dangerous is the reality that the world is experiencing runaway climate change and extreme weather events are laying waste to environments and communities all around the world. The world needs *urgently* to move toward full and proactive cooperation between all parties. Only global collaboration between the US, Russia, China and all other nations will solve the climate disaster befalling all of us. Provoking war at this moment, especially a nuclear war, is essentially suicidal for humanity. Ukraine, like Cuba in 1962, is not worth the potential destruction the global order. We need to stop the war immediately.

But there is no pause in the West to consider either the dangers of escalation or a strategy for peace. The mainstream Western media and virtually all the politicians are cheering escalation and promoting further war. Day after day, we are bombarded with reports about Russian atrocities, Russian incompetence, Russian failures, Russian intransigence. This messaging permeates our mass media with no dissenting voices ever aired. Putin is depicted as a tyrant, a corrupt autocrat and as someone possessed with delusions of grandeur threatening nuclear war. In the face of the onslaught of Russia's "unprovoked aggression" against Ukraine, our only option, we are told, is war in support of the Ukrainians who are fighting valiantly for their freedom.

Hearing no contrary voices, most of the public believes this to be true, that Putin is a delusional tyrant, that Russia's invasion of Ukraine was unprovoked and that we need to support Ukraine's war for liberation against Russian aggression. The reality is that nothing is further from the truth. The public is being played by the US neo conservatives. Essentially, the neo cons are a group of American strategists who believe that the principal goal of the United States should be what then Deputy Secretary of Defense Paul Wolfowitz termed in a 1991 White Paper "full spectrum dominance" of the US over

the world. This means that the central goal and organizing principle of the United States should be to secure global military and economic supremacy and the weakening if not destruction of any potential adversaries who would challenge US supremacy.

Their playbook is always the same: create an enemy in the public mind, depict them as a threat to our way of life, demonize their leader as a Hitler-like figure, craft the conflict as a defense of freedom and human rights, promote war as the only option to defend ourselves against aggression, stifle dissent. It has worked every time – against Ho Chi Minh and the Viet Cong in Vietnam, the Sandinistas in Nicaragua, the FMLN in El Salvador, Noriega in Panama, Saddam Hussein in Iraq, the Taliban in Afghanistan, Qaddafi in Libya, the Serbs in the Balkans, and now Putin in Ukraine. The enemies change but the fomenting of hatred against an enemy does not.

The neo cons know that if they can generate sufficient hatred of an enemy, the public will support any war. As Voltaire said, "If you can make me believe absurdities, you can make me commit any kind of atrocities." Hate is the ultimate absurdity in a world in which every nation, every culture, every human being is interconnected with everyone and everything else and we all need each other as never before,

especially as we all face runaway climate change. War in the face of climate disaster is the ultimate atrocity.

Breaking through the mass propaganda to the actual reality of what is happening in Ukraine is key to the solution we all seek. As with Winston Smith in *1984*, the truth is what sets us free. To begin, look at a map of Ukraine indicating the progress of the war since the Russian invasion on Feb 24, 2022. It shows that what the Russians have done over the past year is simply to secure a land bridge between Russia and Crimea to ensure Russian access to the Black Sea. They have not invaded to take over Ukraine. They have not sought to re-establish a greater Russia in eastern Europe. Russia has done the minimum necessary to secure its access to the Black Sea. This war is a geo-strategic move by Russia to reclaim ancient and critically strategic Russian territory in the face of US/NATO expansion that seeks to weaken Russia and eventually to break Russia up.

To understand why Russia took this action, it is important to recall that twice in the last two centuries Russia has been invaded from Europe – first by Napoleon in 1812 and second by Hitler in 1941. Both invasions were unprovoked and devastating. After Napoleon's invasion, the Russians pushed the French forces back and consolidated control in parts of Eastern Europe. After

Hitler's invasion, the Soviet Union pushed the German forces back, taking control of Eastern Europe. The Soviets remained in Eastern Europe for the next 45 years determined to keep a buffer between the Russian heartland and Western Europe. Their rule over Eastern Europe was dictatorial and rapacious, triggering numerous revolts.

Then came Mikhail Gorbachev, a visionary statesman who saw that the Cold War was pointless, that eastern Europeans needed their freedom and that Germany wanted to be reunited. He envisioned a new global order and proposed that the Soviet Union would withdraw from Eastern Europe and allow Germany to be reunited providing that the US and NATO would not expand eastward. President Bush, Prime Minister Thatcher, Chancellor Kohl and NATO all agreed that NATO would "not move an inch to the East," as Secretary of State James Baker put it, and on this basis Soviet forces withdrew from Eastern Europe, the Berlin Wall came down and Germany was reunited.

The US and NATO violated this agreement. In 1999, President Clinton expanded NATO east absorbing Poland, Czech Republic and Hungary despite objections from former US Ambassador to the Soviet Union George Kennan who said it would reignite the Cold War, and Clinton's own Secretary of Defense William Perry who agreed with Kennan and

threatened to resign. In 2004, President Bush Jr. expanded NATO again absorbing Bulgaria, Slovakia, Croatia and the Baltic states of Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania. This put NATO directly against the Russian border.

This was done while ignoring not only repeated Russian objections but also repeated Russian proposals, made by both Yeltsin and Putin, that the US and Russia work in partnership. Yeltsin and Putin offered to discuss Russia joining NATO and the EU. They wanted peaceful relations. Russia was no longer Communist, so why not work together as partners? This was and is the basic Russian position.

In 2008, the US pressured NATO, over objections from the Germans and the French, to announce that Ukraine and Georgia were next for NATO membership. In response, Putin stated that this was a red line and "existential threat" and that if NATO destabilized Ukraine, Russia would respond. He said at that time that Russia would retake Crimea. Russia took military action against Georgia to ensure it would not join NATO.

The US and NATO continued to destabilize Ukraine and engineered the Maidan coup in 2014 overseen by then Vice President Joe Biden that brought in pro-NATO anti-Russian Ukrainian leadership. The Russian

language was prohibited in schools and Ukrainian forces began bombarding the Donbas in eastern Ukraine where 80% of the population is Russian. Putin supported and armed the Russian communities in the Donbas. Russian forces seized Crimea.

Russian control of the Black Sea north coast and Crimea goes back to 1783 with Catherine the Great and even further back to Kievan Rus, the birthplace of Russia in the 9<sup>th</sup> century. Crimea is part of Russia's ancestral heritage. Russia will not yield what it has taken. Putin will protect Crimea and Russian access to the Black Sea with nuclear weapons. Putin has made this crystal clear. Putin knows that Russia must have access to the Black Sea for it to remain a great power. Putin has secured Crimea and he will not yield. Everyone needs to take this in: Putin will not yield Crimea or its land bridge to Russia and he will use nuclear weapons if necessary to defend what is now Russian territory.

Escalating the war in Ukraine in the face of clear statements that Russia will use nuclear weapons to defend Crimea dramatically increases the risk of nuclear war. The tragedy is that the war is the conclusion of the road not taken when the US decided to fight rather than partner with Russia at the end of the Cold War. The road the US took back then is

what has led to the war in Ukraine now. The war in Ukraine is the result of US aggression against Russia, not because of an unprovoked attack by Russia against Ukraine. This is the reality.

Waging war in Ukraine is conceivably the greatest strategic mistake in US history, possibly in modern history, certainly since the end of the Cold War. Imagine if the US had abided by the agreement with Gorbachev and had worked with Russia, as it did with Eastern Europe, to integrate Russia into a larger economic and security zone. This is what Gorbachev, Yeltsin and Putin repeatedly proposed. This would have created a common economic and security union that would have stretched from Gibraltar to Vladivostok. US supremacy would have been secured for the indefinite future and liberal democratic forms would have prevailed across the EurAsian landmass. America could have birthed with Russia the beginnings of a global civilization based on democratic values. That is what Gorbachev essentially envisioned, that the Cold War should be superseded by the fundamental understanding that "the security of one is the security of all." Instead, the US seized its "uni-polar moment" in the aftermath of the collapse of the Soviet Union in December 1991 to embrace the strategy of "full spectrum dominance" proposed by the neo-

cons and proceeded to wage war in Iraq, Afghanistan, Libya, Syria and many other areas around the world as well as aggressively expand NATO to the east. From the very beginning, the neo-cons have sought to weaken Russia and eventually to break it up. The US proved incapable of moving beyond a Cold War mentality with Russia even though Russia was no longer Communist. The resulting expansion of NATO eastward, in violation of the very agreement upon which the Soviets withdrew from Eastern Europe, has forced a Russian response, finally, in Ukraine to secure a vital land bridge to Crimea. The Russians know that if they lose Crimea and allow NATO to absorb Ukraine, regime change in Moscow is next. Ukraine is not the end game. It is the precursor to the destruction of Russia. The Chinese also know this. They know that if Russia falls, they are next. Already, the US is escalating tensions against China. This is the prime motivator for them to side with Russia in Ukraine.

This is critical to understand. The war in Ukraine is the next move in the neo-con playbook to secure world domination by the United States. By expanding NATO east, the US now controls all of Europe, east and west. The neo cons are intent on weakening Russia and eventually breaking it up. The same neo con strategies that brought war in Iraq and Afghanistan are bringing war in Ukraine. The troika who are spearheading this war



are neo cons: Victoria Nuland, currently Under Secretary of State for Eastern Europe, who was Dick Cheney's Assistant National Security Advisor, Anthony Blinken, Secretary of State, and Jack Sullivan, National Security Advisor. President Biden subscribes to the neo con goal of global US supremacy and has supported NATO's expansion to the east from the very beginning under President Clinton. US policy in Ukraine is shaped by the neo con playbook.

Put starkly, if you believe the current narrative that this war is the result of unprovoked Russian aggression against Ukraine and that the only solution is more weapons to Ukraine, you are being played by the neo cons. This is exactly what they want you to believe to sustain the war. For the neocons, war is the preferred instrument of policy to secure US global dominance.

Ironically, the Ukraine war is already over even if the fighting continues. Russia has secured what it requires and the current map will not change much unless the West is willing to go nuclear. With Russia securing Crimea, Europe has come to a final settlement of the conflagration ignited by the two World Wars of the last century and continued by the Cold War. Consider that in 1990, Russia controlled all Eastern Europe. By 2008, it was the US, not Russia, that controlled all Eastern Europe

through NATO with the single exception of Ukraine and Crimea. What we are witnessing is a final boundary struggle between Russia and the West. Inseparably intertwined yet forever apart, Russia and the West are coming to a closure upon which a new order can and must be built.

What is emerging simultaneously is the beginning of the first global coalition capable of supplanting the US as a new center of geo-strategic gravity. Russia, in a growing alliance with China, India, Iran, Saudi Arabia, Brazil, South Africa and numerous other nations (BRIC plus), is coalescing a global alliance that is challenging the US militarily in Ukraine and undermining the US dollar through the momentous announcement in November 2022 that OPEC will now sell oil in currencies other than the dollar. This move significantly undermines the financial supremacy of the US dollar which since 1972 has been the exclusive currency for the sale of OPEC oil. It was in 1972 that President Nixon took the US off the gold standard and through an arrangement with Saudi Arabia for US security guarantees for Saudi Arabia put the dollar on the oil standard. Oil is the most sought after and traded commodity in the world. For the past fifty years, virtually all oil has been sold in US dollars. This era is now over. The war in Ukraine is shapeshifting the geostrategic

balance of the world. On March 16, 2023, Russia, China and Iran held joint military exercises in the Gulf of Oman. China has brokered an unprecedented peace agreement between Iran and Saudi Arabia. A new multipolar world is emerging.

The war in Ukraine may well be remembered by history as the end of the uni-polar moment and the death knell of *Pax Americana*. In fomenting war in Ukraine, the US has gone one step too far and has triggered a reactive momentum toward a new world order in which US primacy will be increasingly challenged if not superseded by a multipolar coalition of BRIC plus countries, now joined by Iran, South Africa, Saudi Arabia and others.

To begin the pathway to peace, the great question that must be asked is this: can we learn to empathize with the Russians as we currently empathize with the Ukrainians? This might sound simplistic, even naive given the circumstances, but around the answer to this question may hinge the destiny of human civilization. If the Americans and Russians, now aligned with China and a growing coalition of nations, continue to escalate this war, nuclear weapons will surely be used and unimaginable destruction will be rained down upon us all. If the Americans and the Russians can transition to diplomacy, peace will have a chance. But first, we must

interrupt the hate machine of our mass media and governments. The war will not stop as long as hatred spews out of our mass media 24/7/365 reinforced by our politicians.

Much more than tanks and fighter aircraft, we need empathy. We need to pause in our hatred of the Russians and imagine what it must be like to be in their position. Empathy is the antidote to hatred but this takes great compassion of the heart. It takes a willingness to see the world from the other point of view, to realize that the Russians are not ogres and demonic warmongers but people just like us who are defending their ancestral lands from the attack of a foreign invader who is intent on their destruction.

Empathy means a willingness to look beyond our hatred of Putin and understand that seizing Crimea and the land bridge to Russia is what any Russian leader would do in similar circumstances. In Putin's mind and in the collective consciousness of Russia itself, what the Russians are confronted by is the third great invasion of their homeland after Napoleon and Hitler --- the massive military power of the United States and its NATO allies encroaching aggressively right against the Russian border. In Putin's mind, he is simply defending Russia from attack. The Russians have been forced to respond to the eastward expansion of NATO

by securing Crimea and a land bridge to Russia to ensure Russia's access to the Black Sea. Any great power would make the same move as the Russians when confronted by a hostile military expansion on their border. This is the key to understanding Putin. It is also key to understanding the geo-strategic reality of this war.

Empathy also means equally deep sympathy for the Ukrainians who have only been a sovereign state since 1991 and therefore one of the newest countries in the world. Ukraine means "crossroads" and has experienced almost all the ebbs and flows of Western history since the primordial beginnings of Europe. It was here that the kingdom of Rus was born, where the Cossacks roamed, where the great empires met, fought and traded. Ukraine has been a gathering place from her very beginnings. Ukraine is the breadbasket of Europe. Ukraine is thus in a real sense the heart of Europe. To be violating her as we are and knowing that the sure consequence of further escalation of war will be even more destruction of Ukraine, is to commit a great transgression against everything noble in ourselves. We are desecrating our Mother when we should be collaborating on greater issues to protect her. As Ukraine finally emerges as a sovereign state,

she should be honored with peace not destruction.

Ukraine wants its sovereignty and should have it along with the Russian claim to Crimea. These two claims are not mutually exclusive. Ukraine and Russia have had dealings for over a millennium. Russia actually controlled Ukraine from 1783 to 1991. Ukraine and Russia must both be honored in a way that brings them into a greater union. Their current enmity is only being fomented by the expansion of NATO under US hegemony into Ukraine and Russia's response. Ukrainian sovereignty and Russian access to the Black Sea can easily be accommodated if all parties would simply stop fighting and sit around a table and negotiate a settlement.

It is time to call up the spirit of Jean Monnet. Imagine a new "Greater Ukraine" as a Coal and Steel Commission 2.0, the precursor to the EU envisioned by the French diplomat after WWII. Like France and Germany back then, Ukraine and Russia now could form a joint governance and commerce framework combining both Ukraine and Russian Crimea into a "Greater Ukraine." Given the level of our crisis, nothing less than something like this will suffice to deliver us. Europe did it 75 years ago out of the ashes of war. We can do it today out of the ashes of Ukraine.

To summarize: The pathway to peace emerges from the reality on the ground and the intertwined history of Ukraine and Russia:

- The key is an immediate ceasefire and Summit of all parties to focus on settling the boundaries and beginning discussions to establish a greater union of Ukraine, EU/NATO and Russia.
- Russia should keep Crimea and the land bridge with Russia which it has already annexed into Russia.
- Ukraine should be sovereign and neutral with its own access to the Black Sea through Odessa.
- Ukraine and the Russian territories should form a “special status” economic and security union and be completely demilitarized in the spirit of an EU 2.0.
- The US and NATO must recognize Ukrainian neutrality and Russia’s right to Crimea.

We urgently need a ceasefire and diplomacy. Otherwise we may end up in a nuclear war between the superpowers. We can figure this out by dialoguing with each other in a spirit of empathy within the context of a positive vision of the future. We just need to penetrate the propaganda of our mass media hate machine and see the “other” is someone just like ourselves. Once the hatred has been transformed by

empathy, peace will have a chance to blossom.

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## THE GREAT INVOCATION

**From the point of Light within the Mind of God**

**Let light stream forth into human minds.**

**Let Light descend on Earth.**

**From the point of Love within the Heart of God**

**Let love stream forth into human hearts.**

**May the Coming One return to Earth.**

**From the centre where the Will of God is known**

**Let purpose guide all little human wills  
The purpose which the Masters know  
and serve.**

**From the centre which we call the human race**

**Let the Plan of Love and Light work out  
And may it seal the door where evil dwells.**

**Let Light and Love and Power restore  
the plan on Earth.**