

## 11. NATIONAL SECURITY

What historians call modern times began with the slow military consolidation of the estates of feudal war lords into nations. Ever since then, a major requirement for each nation's government was to protect its people from being conquered and ruled by another nation. The military forces that established each nation was supposed to provide that protection against the military forces of neighboring nations. Anything that increased the military potential of one country was regarded as a threat to the national security of its neighbor countries. Accordingly each country sought to form military alliances with other countries. The situation remained inherently unstable, and modern history has been characterized by international warfare. War lords still fight among themselves to control small nations, and some small nations can, and still do, fight among themselves, but they could not protect themselves against a big military power. Big powers often intervene in small power wars.

War has historically produced a great deal of human suffering on the part of the young men who did the fighting, so much of which was in vain because one side usually lost the war. War became increasingly costly and irrational, so an elusive peace became almost everyone's ideal.

War has often been attributed to our animal heritage. But while animals may fight over food or over sex partners, once it is clear which of two fighters will win, the other usually runs away. Animals don't organize large numbers of their best fighters against large numbers of another groups best fighters and carry on prolonged warfare over different sets of ideas they hold. War is a human institution requiring much organization of people to fight, often over different religious or secular ideas

As for man's violent nature, that may be what now causes gang wars among uncivilized adolescents or drug dealers, but it does not cause wars between nations. National wars require leaders to magnify rather than resolve what they treat as interest conflicts between nations. And even then it requires propaganda and a draft to get otherwise unwilling youth to go out to kill people they don't even know.

So almost everyone wants peace. They translate peace as national security. All nations still seek security through military establishments large enough to be a deterrent to other nations that might otherwise attack them or threaten their foreign interests. Yet no nation can be militarily stronger than all possible enemies. Their military forces constitute a mutual threat system. But threats are ineffective unless they are believable. They are not believable unless some threats are carried out. So a mutual deterrence system sooner or later results in a war between opposing

military powers.

The Nazis were, hopefully, the last human group to glorify war. General Sherman was right, war is hell. Nobody in his or her right mind wants to have to have to fight, maim and kill people they do not even know. Yet national leaders have quarrels that they think have to be settled by drafting people and propagandizing them to fight it out for them.

Wars are no longer even between military forces. Now cities full of innocent men, women, and children are bombed to try to destroy civilian morale. When the Nazis first bombed cities, everyone was aghast and condemned it as inhuman. Now it is a normal part of war. How proud a nation must be to be able to drop bombs on cities just like the Nazis did.

Too many people who had bright future prospects are killed in wars, and many more are maimed. Even people who survive a war unharmed are no longer enthusiastic about having wars to fight. It doesn't seem to be a very rational way to use life's opportunities--to organize human beings to try to slaughter or maim each other. That can't be what life is for, nor a proper way to use it.

The historical record is certainly full of warfare. Groups have fought over tribal lands, rulers have fought to extend their rule, and people have been drawn into religious wars. In the twentieth century, nations can now be attacked by missiles launched from half way around the world. We have now developed modern military technology which can wipe out an entire city with a single atomic bomb.

Now no nation or city can even be secure against much destruction by missiles, some nuclear. Are national security and peace possible anymore? Must nations in a nuclear age remain potentially subject to mutual destruction? Or is it totally absurd for millions of human beings to be hostages to belligerent actions or fits of anger of national leaders, or to be potential victims of a miscalculation by leaders or of simple accident such as ballistic missile computer malfunction?

During the cold war between the U. S. and the Soviet Union, each nation, trying to be secure against the other, stockpiled nuclear bombs until each had the capacity to destroy the other country several times over. Our president boasted that there were enough nukes aboard a single submarine to destroy the Soviet Union--he might have been wrong, it might have taken two submarines to do it.

Both nations were relying upon a policy appropriately abbreviated as MAD (Mutual Assured Destruction) which was counted upon to prevent the war. But if war between the two countries had broken out by accident or by miscalculation, neither country would have survived if all the nukes had been used. Nukes cannot defend, they can only retaliate.

Our whole military buildup was supported especially strongly by many people who were almost paranoid about communism. But it would have been suicidal for both nations had we fought it out.

A few people hoped that if the cold war had become a hot war, not all the nukes would be used, and war would end in a quick peace. Would one side or the other would accept defeat or a stalemate although they could still destroy the other country entirely and were already enraged by the bombs that had fallen on them? Entirely unlikely. Neither of these outcomes would be acceptable to the military minded "hawks" who seem to dominate policy in most countries, so it is important to avoid wars that could raise the issue of using nukes or accepting stalemate or defeat.

The nukes are now said to be too dangerous to actually use in war; they are only to prevent war. We now have hydrogen bombs that are at least a thousand times more powerful than than the nukes dropped on Japan at the end of World War II. U. S. nukes are supposed to deter any direct attack on this nation.

The question is whether they will deter any other action by another country. Suppose that the U. S. considers another country's action to be so much against its interest in some respect that it might risk war to stop the action, what would happen then? If the other country or its allies had nukes also, we may find ourselves in nuclear war with its possibly irretrievably disastrous consequences. Even nuclear threats could lead to national suicide unintentionally.

Yet during the cold war the arms race went on for years, the U. S. even doubling its huge military budget in the 1980s till able to destroy the Soviet Union many times over. That would be enough to deter any sane leader there, and no stockpile would deter an insane one. So the huge growth of the nuclear stockpile only increased the threat to the human race from fallout if a nuclear war were to occur, even by accident or miscalculation.

There was room for rational debate as to whether human life on this globe could survive a nuclear war if it were to take place. Certainly neither the the Soviet Union nor the U. S. would survive this MAD policy in any recognizable form. Yet the arms race continued as though it would protect our national security. This was simply idiocy--dangerous idiocy.

War was narrowly averted when Kennedy was president and Kruschev put missiles in Cuba. The whole story including the role of a Soviet submarine is not entirely clear, but war was averted when Kennedy demanded removal of the missiles and Kruschev agreed when promised the U. S. would then not invade Cuba.

The U. S., and indeed the world, was in the end saved from a big nuclear war by luck, not by sensible democratic policies. No one would have

believed that a communist dictator, Gorbachev, would end the cold war. But that is what he did when he realized what the consequences might be if he intervened militarily in Poland and produced a U. S. military reaction. What he did not intend was the downfall of communism when he tried to reform it by introducing Glasnost, or public criticism of communist officials. No American president could have even tried to end the cold war without being called a communist and a traitor. Everyone should be very grateful that Gorbachev allowed Poland to slip from communist grasp without military action that might have resulted in a nuclear war.

What has happened to the huge nuclear stockpiles in both countries since then? By agreement both have been reduced somewhat, and the remaining nukes are no longer targeted upon the other nation. But the targets are still in the computers, and retargeting could be done very quickly. The Federation of Atomic Scientists has proposed several ways that the the nukes could be “dealerted” (the term used) so that it would take long enough to retarget them that war could not result from mistaking a weather satellite (for instance) for an atomic missile.

The U. S. Senate has also launched a program whereby American scientists and other experts help Russian scientists and military to try to safeguard Russian atomic materials and protect them against sale to any other country or stealing by anyone. Inexplicably the funding for the program has never been adequate and there is real danger that some critical Russian atomic scientists may be lured away by good employment offers by other countries.

The cold war military threat from the Communist Warsaw Pact has by now completely disappeared with the collapse of the Soviet empire, and it can never be restored. The freed nations will never again be subjected to Russian domination. Yet every excuse is made by our military to maintain a cold war military budget, devised to counter the Warsaw Pact. So we never developed an appropriately reduced peacetime military budget.

There were no national plans to facilitate a transition to a real peacetime military budget in ways that would minimize unemployment. People did fear unemployment if military spending was reduced. Job loss from scaling back the military could be purely temporary if labor was re-employed to meet civilian needs, of which there are many, including overcoming poverty and raising middle class standards of living.

The whole country could be better off with a drastically lower military budget. Retired military men in The Center for Defense Information argued that our whole military establishment is overblown, that it included many “pork barrel” projects, and could readily be cut to \$100 billion. The military budget was alleged to have taken on the average over \$20,000 in taxes from every U. S. household in a decade.

The U. S. continued to keep the old military-industrial complex fat by calling for modernization. Mere logic long ago ceased to apply to the military. There is no big power military threat to us. But we pay people plenty to keep continually designing new more dangerous military weapons. Then we think we must modernize by having lots of every destructive thing we can tax ourselves to have invented. Now we are in a technological arms race with ourselves All for jobs and profits?

Our military budget is now said to be about 13 times the combined military budgets of all the nations the Pentagon can conceive of as possible enemies. Some Congressman want to increase it further for our national security. They order and spend money on weapons the Pentagon does not even want. They are not in their right minds.

There is still the illusion, ever since Reagan proposed it, that the U. S. can protect itself against foreign missiles coming from anywhere in the world by developing the technology to shoot them down. This is wishful thinking. The far-fetched idea that what was dubbed a "Star Wars" technology could be developed that could defend us against foreign missiles is tempting, but the reality is quite different from the way it has been represented. Critics have shown that it could work, if at all, only against a very small attack, and that it could easily be overwhelmed or destroyed.

But it could be used as an offensive weapon, which is why it is feared by some countries. Read Star Wars by Robert Bowman, a military scientist who worked in the Star Wars program, to get a correct picture of the potential of "star wars". Indeed there is reason to think that the intent of the program is to continue it at whatever expense in order to establish compete military mastery of space by the U. S.

If, indeed, a nation could develop the ability to ward off missile attacks, other nations would fear it had obtained first-strike capability. That is an ability to destroy the military of another country in a first strike without itself suffering in return. This could so destabilize the situation that it might even lead to a so-called preemptive war, in this case against the U S. by other nuclear powers.

The U. S. has long attempted to prevent the acquisition or development of nuclear weapons by other nations insofar as it possible and has with difficulty kept many nations as signers of a nuclear non-proliferation treaty. They signed only with the promise that those nations already possessing nukes would reduce their stockpiles of nukes as a step toward their elimination. India and Pakistan and possibly others have acquired nukes since. But other nations could develop their own nuclear capabilities. It becomes a much more dangerous world as more nations seek national security this way. Nukes cannot protect any nation. They only

permit it to destroy others. But more proliferation is likely if major nuclear powers do not give up their nukes.

As Einstein said, the atomic bomb changed everything except our way of thinking. Nations are still seeking national security in the same old ways through military establishments as though nukes were just the best weapons. Einstein meant that there is now no defense against nuclear war's total destructiveness, and that needs to change our thinking about how to protect national security of nations in ways that cannot lead to wars but that prevent wars from developing.

A few important people have called for the elimination of nukes from the world's military. The advice to eliminate nukes from military forces has come since World War II even from the most unexpected sources: leading military men. Most notable is General George Lee Butler who had the major responsibility during part of the cold war for targeting our nuclear weapons on Soviet targets. Other major military people from different countries signed what is called The Canberra declaration (named after an Australian town) calling for world nuclear disarmament. These people cannot be accused of being pacifists. They are well aware that the world has turned a corner by developing nuclear bombs, that these bombs can not protect any nation but can only destroy others, and that in the hands of warring powers they can make nuclear war suicidal.

Calls even from the generals for moving toward nuclear disarmament are being universally ignored. But suppose that they are later heard and nukes are abolished. Would they stay abolished? Could nuclear weapons be abolished by an international agreement, combined with both national and international inspection? That would be much the better course to try. Some people argue that abolition of nuclear weapons is not possible since knowledge of how to make them remains. Indeed any nation might hide a few and use them for blackmail. If an arms control agreement abolished nuclear weapons, of course a few might be hidden despite both national and international inspection systems. Indeed it has long been said that a terrorist or foreign agent could plant a bomb in a locker or somewhere else, so that is nothing new. But the threat of the vast destruction that would result from nuclear war does not arise out of a few hidden or threatened terrorist bombs, bad as that present and permanent danger might be.

As for a nation resuming production on the scale needed to threaten nuclear war, that cannot be done in secret, given any inter-national inspection scheme of the sort that could now be required. And one can be sure that a real inspection system would be insisted upon by every nation, with unannounced inspections, and with inspectors from any worried nation present among the international inspectors.

Without nukes, war could still be terribly destructive with other modern military technology. Although vast destruction is easy, control of an enemy country still requires soldiers to slug it out with tanks and ground forces. Is that any consolation? Or is war still hell on earth? All in the name of seeking something exceedingly important--national security.

It should be obvious by now that no nation can, with modern military technology, achieve national security for itself unless other nations also have national security. We can't get it by militarily threatening each other or seeking military invulnerability for ourselves alone. We need a way of guaranteeing all nations security or none will have it. Now none have it, despite huge world military expenditures.

The military security illusions must be seen for what they are: illusions. National security has to be sought some other way than by arming against each other. That sounds like simple-minded idealism. The much maligned idealists have fewer illusions than the self-styled realists, however. It was the realists who brought nations to the brink of total destruction by nukes. Their own militarism had already destroyed any possible national security by military means.

The fact of the matter is that real national security is not possible so long as any nation has enough modern military technology to harm or destroy another even from a distance. So if it is national security the world wants, and it obviously does, the minimum requirement is an arms control system in which nations have stripped themselves and each other of the military weapons that make another nation's destruction possible. Giving up the power to destroy an enemy nation is now the only way to avoid the possibility of an enemy nation destroying us.

We should long since have been making every effort to develop an international system in which no nation can destroy or invade another. The need for such a system should have been obvious before now, but it is certainly obvious now if we give serious thought to the alternatives. Is there not a way to restrict the military to what is needed in each country for internal purposes but not sufficient to enable it to invade or destroy another country?

Where there is the will, there is a way, or a way can be found. The will is there if people make their wishes known and pressure national leaders to develop a peace system to replace the war system in which we are all still trapped. People the world over have seen enough of the results of this mass murder we call war. Nobody wants to be threatened by war or to have to engage in killing on a vast scale. Human nature is not that bad. People want

to live in peace. The few inherently violent people must not be allowed to have positions of government power, but must be rendered as harmless as possible by a system that reduces the military to what is needed for internal purposes and insufficient for any aggression.

There is a way. The way does involve world disarmament to levels required by internal policing but inadequate for war. It requires some strengthened world institutions able to resolve international conflicts peacefully. Potential conflicts of interest, due to such things as natural resource shortages in the future, can really be resolved only through legal channels and peaceful trade relationships in any case.

The World Federalist Association is the main organization contributing to the development of a world system in which law and peaceful conflict resolution can replace war. Our own national security can be regained only this way. We are slow in seeing it and acting upon it. Leadership, if it means anything, certainly means starting to move in the direction that the circumstances require, and bending one's efforts to getting others to follow. The big powers need to take that sort of leadership today. Other nations fear each other today, and they also fear the big powers. They would gain greatly by going along.

We are all in the same need of moving into the sort of peace system in which that fear is made groundless because all nations have given up the power to threaten one another. All need to become part of a world order in which there are adequate methods to handle disputes peaceably, and nations can do no other than use them. In the U. S., the individual states do not have to arm against each other; indeed they cannot, and no one conceives of civil war between our states now.

The ideas for such a peace system to replace the war system in which we have been trapped are not new. What is new is the fact that modern military technology now robs us of our national security instead of protecting it. So it is necessary to abolish the war making machinery of others, and that is possible only as a joint endeavor with mutual inspection.

That idea takes some getting used to, for some people. They still fear giving up the power to wage war more than they fear war. They think they would be insecure in a world peace system, as it is being called here. But none of the systems of world security through disarmament and world law that have been proposed could possibly put us and the world in as much danger as we have been in since other nations acquired nukes and missiles. It is high time for more people to realize that peace is both necessary now, and possible. We only have to overcome our outdated ideas so that we can support efforts to work for a peaceful world system and the demilitarization and world institutions that are required.

How does an individual have any effect on such a big but vital issue as this? How can anyone help the world move out of a system that generates one war after another to a peace system in which international wars are impossible? It should be done before another war breaks out, especially one that might affect you, the reader, or might even be suicidal for the nation.

One can do only so much, but it is important to do what one can. The peace system will come only as more and more people become convinced of its necessity and possibility. They need to join peace organizations such as the World Federalist Association and the Council for A Livable World (established by worried atomic scientists) to press the nation to work toward a peace system. Even reducing the military budget could reduce your taxes significantly, so it would pay right in the pocketbook. That might be inducement enough, apart from its help on the big issue of developing a peaceful international system.

Unfortunately, this country from which such leadership is needed, is now moving in the opposite direction. The Administration is eschewing all international commitments as worthless, is seeking to develop new nuclear weapons, has announced it will use nukes if it thinks it necessary even against non-nuclear nations, and it seeks control of outer space. Possible military intervention in all sorts of situations all over the world is now contemplated. We propose to wage pre-emptive war against a small Muslim nation lest it develop nukes or any other weapons of mass destruction to threaten any nation. That is taken to require us to increase our already overblown military establishment.

For a nation that always condemned aggression to itself undertake unprovoked aggression in a so-called pre-emptive war establishes a very dangerous precedent.

The attack on Afghanistan was rationalized as a reply to the 9/11 attack on the Twin Trade Towers in New York on the ground that Afghanistan harbored the alleged and likely mastermind of that attack.

It is more difficult to rationalize naming three other countries as enemies, especially since in one of them (Iran) there is a continuing struggle between modernizers and fundamentalist Islamic clerics.

The U. S. in particular has become the target of Muslim terrorists though various types of terrorists are a threat in many countries. Even before the recent unilateralism and belligerence of the Administration, U. S. foreign policy had begun to make this country the object of widespread hatred throughout the world even while Americans themselves were not. This was due largely to U. S. uncritical support of Israel's policies toward Palestinians, even before any suicide bombers attacks against Israelis. The

U. S. attack on Afghanistan, threatening Iraq, and including Iran in its axis of evil embittered Muslims worldwide. Many of them, not just the extremists, now see U. S. policy as attacking their religion and thus as justifying their attacks on Americans.

It can only be hoped that Israel and some Palestinian authority will reach a mutually acceptable peace settlement, even though some extremists will continue to resist with violence on both sides. Demanding an end to violence first will prevent any peace from ever being reached.

Terrorism needs to be dealt with by cooperation among law enforcement agencies of all nations. Even for a nation on the receiving end of much of it, it is far from the equivalent of being attacked by another nation in a war, and cannot rationally be responded to by a series of wars against other whole nations. Widespread foreign sympathy for the U.S. after the 9/11 attack on NY Trade towers was reversed when Bush arrogantly announced that hereafter nations will either be for us or against us in any of our actions against terrorists.

To reverse the hatred against the U. S. in the Muslim world may take generations but may never occur unless we undertake a Marshall plan to help both Muslim and other less developed countries to develop higher standards of living for their masses of poor people. To date, our efforts at globalization are enriching further the rich here and elsewhere and ignoring or worsening the status of many of the world's poor.

Americans need to do a lot of thinking about all such matters if the world is to get better rather than worse in the 21st century.