OMNI NEWSLETTER PREVENTING AND STOPPING WARS #1, March 6, 2013. Compiled by Dick Bennett for a Culture of Peace.

My blog: The War Department and Peace Heroes
http://jamesrichardbennett.blogspot.com/

Newsletters on Peace, Justice, and Ecology:
http://www.omnicenter.org/newsletter-archive/

Index:
http://www.omnicenter.org/omni-newsletter-general-index/

For example: Compassion, International Law, Language, Literature, Love, Negotiation, Nonviolence, Nuremberg Principles, OMNI Center.org, OMNI National/International DAYS Project, Public Opposition, Resistance, Toleration, United Nations, see Index for more.

Schroeder, Steven. “Mother of All Battles.” PMLA (October 2009). “The pervasiveness of the assumption that war is necessary calls attention to the question that guides this essay: whether and how we might cultivate judgment that is intuitively opposed to war rather than intuitively resigned to it. This question calls for an argument that is, first and foremost, an argument about language: the way we use language controls our assumptions about what is possible. . . .” (p. 1690).

Of course, all of OMNI’S newsletters are about ending war.

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The End of War by John Horgan

[To prevent and end wars we must first know that wars are not inevitable and permanent.—Dick]

War is a fact of human nature. As long as we exist, it exists. That's how the argument goes. But longtime Scientific American writer John Horgan disagrees. Applying the scientific method to war leads Horgan to a radical conclusion: biologically speaking, we are just as likely to be peaceful as violent. War is not preordained, and furthermore, it should be thought of as a solvable, scientific problem—like curing cancer. But war and cancer differ in at least one crucial way: whereas cancer is a stubborn aspect of nature, war is our creation. It's our choice whether to unmake it or not.

In this compact, methodical treatise, Horgan examines dozens of examples and counterexamples—discussing chimpanzees and bonobos, warring and peaceful indigenous people, the World War I and Vietnam, Margaret Mead and General Sherman—as he finds his way to war's complicated origins. Horgan argues for a far-reaching paradigm shift with profound implications for policy students, ethicists, military men and women, teachers, philosophers, or really, any engaged citizen.

Praise for The End of War:

"The best book I've read in a very long time is a new one: The End of War by John Horgan. Its conclusions will be vigorously resisted by many and yet, in a certain light, considered perfectly obvious to some others."
--David Swanson

"I'm heartened by this thoughtful, unflappable, closely argued book. The End of War gives us new ways to understand and resist the specious arguments of inevitabilists and professional weaponeers."
—Nicholson Baker

"Winsomely and persuasively, John Horgan suggests that the world may be headed toward peace. This book is straightforward, drawing on the best scientific evidence available, examining the writings of the best scholars on both sides of these issues. Horgan believes human destiny is not predetermined. Human choices matter. We are encouraged not because of pious idealistic hopes, but because the best evidence demonstrates that the prospects for peace are eminently realistic."
—Dr. James C. Juhnke

"This is a heartfelt and important book, one that largely succeeds: at least, in making its point. Whether it is comparably successful in its deeper goal—changing peoples' minds—is another matter, although let's hope that it is."
—David Barash, The Chronic

SEE REVIEW BY BILL GRIFFIN IN THE CATHOLIC WORKER (Jan.-Feb. 2013, 6-7).
“John Horgan has written an incisive and fact-filled book about the possibility of ending the plague of war, if we choose to do so. –Dick

RETREAT FROM DOOMSDAY: THE OBSOLESCENCE OF MAJOR WAR by John Mueller


For further information: bbbb@osu.edu

An outline of the argument

Major war--war among developed countries--seems to be becoming obsolete.

War is merely an idea. It is not a trick of fate, a thunderbolt from hell, a natural necessity, or a desperate plot device dreamed up by some sadistic puppeteer on high.

Therefore it can be supplanted--rendered obsolete--if people come to embrace another idea: one holding that, as an institution, war is abhorrent and, on balance, methodologically unwise.

Two notable ideas that have undergone such a transformation are the ancient institution of slavery and the popular and romantic problem-solving device of formal dueling. Both died out because people came to regard them as undesirable, not because they had ceased to be objectively viable or economically effective.

At least in the developed world, war seems to have followed a similar trajectory. Europe, once the most warlike of continents, has now been substantially free of international war for the longest period of time since the Roman empire.

This does not seem to have come about because war became physically more destructive. There have been many instances in the past of wars or patterns of warfare that were essentially annihilative, but this did not cause an effective revulsion against the institution itself.

In fact, despite such experiences, until 1914 war was commonly viewed in the developed world as ennobling, virtuous, glorious, beautiful, holy, manly, redemptive, beneficial, progressive, necessary, natural, and inevitable.

In the late 19th century--only about 100 years ago--this notion was actively challenged on a wide basis for the first time in history by various peace organizations which effectively propagated the view that war was repulsive, immoral, uncivilized, and futile, particularly economically.

World War I--the Great War--played perfectly into the hands of this gadfly peace movement. At its end, its notion that war--or at least wars of that type--should be abolished came to be commonly accepted in the developed world.

World War II in Europe came about not naturally or inevitably, but largely because of the atavistic--if lucky, fanatically dedicated, and remarkably skilled--machinations of one man, Adolf Hitler. He was allowed considerable leeway in part because other European leaders desperately wanted to believe that no one could possibly desire another major war and because he continually assured them, and the
German people, that he abhorred war.

Whether one accepts that argument or treats World War II as simply an additional learning experience for Europe (and as a terminal one for the distant Japanese who had largely missed the lessons of World War I), the developed world came overwhelming to reject the notion of major war at its conclusion.

The international Communist movement--the chief source of international instability since 1945--has embraced the idea that violence is necessary to overthrow the capitalist enemy. It has, however, rejected major war as a sensible device for carrying out this mission even while fearing--and preparing for--the possibility that the capitalist world might launch such a war against it.

Since neither side in the Cold War ever saw major war as a remotely sensible device for pursuing its agenda, nuclear weapons have not importantly affected history: things would have turned out much the same if they had never been invented. They furnish dramatic reminders of how destructive a major war could become, and they could conceivably be useful in the future, for example if another Hitler should arise. But they have not been necessary to inspire caution among the war-sobered people who have actually led the major countries since World War II. Even at times of crisis, major war has never really been in the cards.

While eschewing major war, the international Communist movement was willing to experiment, somewhat cautiously, with a direct military probe in a neglected corner of the world, Korea, as a method for advancing the revolution in 1950. The West's forceful opposition seems permanently to have discredited this device and may have been an important stabilizing event in the Cold War.

The Communists have also at times been enamored of crisis as a desirable method for advancing the cause and for enhancing disagreement and conflict among the capitalist enemy. After the traumas of the Cuban missile crisis of 1962, however, they substantially abandoned the device as too dangerous.

Revolution and revolutionary civil wars continued to be romantically embraced by the movement--particularly by the Chinese--as natural, desirable, and inevitable devices. The United States entered the "test case" war in Vietnam principally to demonstrate to the Communists that this method was unproductive and unwise. The war was lost not because the United States had no effective military plan, but because the Vietnamese Communists were willing and able to accept casualties at a rate that is all but unprecedented in modern warfare.

In the meantime, however, and in the midst of a dangerous ideological clash with the Soviet Union, China turned inward and, by the 1970s, substantially abandoned its support of the movement. As it dropped out of the Cold War, it was quickly, if somewhat cautiously, embraced by its former capitalist enemies.

The Soviet Union continued to support violent revolutionary movements around the world, and at the end of the 1970s it gleefully welcomed several new countries into the camp--only to see each become mired in economic and military chaos while looking to the Soviets for maternal warmth and sustenance.

Burdened by such questionable adventures (including one in Afghanistan that became militarily as well as economically costly), by foolish overexpenditures on defense, and by a severely mismanaged economy and empire, the Soviet devotion to international revolution faded, often replaced by a distinctly unideological cynicism. As Mikhail Gorbachev recognized this change and began to abandon the international revolution, the essential ideological cause of the Cold War faded. As the book went to press at the end of 1988, the Cold War seemed to be on the verge of terminal demise. As it turned out, it was.

Major war, like slavery and formal dueling, remains physically possible, and it could come about if
some aggressive Hitler-like world leader came to believe (quite possibly correctly) that large crises and military ventures need not necessarily escalate to massive war.

However, major war has been substantially discredited over the last century. Moreover, two important ideas have substantially taken hold: prestige and status principally derive from economic prowess (a quality often disparaged as debased and disgustingly materialistic by warlovers in the past); and war is a singularly ineffective and undesirable method for attaining wealth.

As a result, major war may be becoming truly obsolete--subrationally unthinkable. Countries like the once perennially hostile France and Germany reject war as a method for resolving their difficulties not so much because they determine it to be unwise after mulling over their options. Rather it is because--like dueling for quarreling aristocrats--war no longer occurs to them as a option to be considered.

War remains rather common outside the developed world--indeed the book was written while a war between Iran and Iraq was raging there, not to mention some 30 civil wars in the last few hundred years, however, most major ideas have tended to flow from the countries we now call "developed" to the rest. It seems possible--particularly with the Cold War out of the way--that war aversion will follow a similar path.

Even if peace--the absence of war--comes to infuse the world, conflict, disharmony, turmoil, trouble, and contentiousness will likely continue in fulsome measure. Unlike war, these qualities do seem truly to be natural and inevitable.
United Nations
Declaration for a
Culture of Peace and
Nonviolence

1. Nonviolence Education
2. Sustainable Development
3. Respect for Human Rights
4. Gender Equality
5. Participatory Democracy
6. Tolerance
7. Open Communication
8. International Security

2013 Annual Meeting - Center for Nonviolence

The 2013 Annual Meeting of the Center for Nonviolent Solutions will be held at the Worcester Public Library, 3 Salem Square, Worcester, MA. The Keynote Speaker will be a consultant and trainer on gang violence prevention and youth leadership development. The Keynote Speaker is a consultant and trainer on gang violence prevention and youth leadership development. The Keynote Speaker is a consultant and trainer on gang violence prevention and youth leadership development. The Keynote Speaker is a consultant and trainer on gang violence prevention and youth leadership development. The Keynote Speaker is a consultant and trainer on gang violence prevention and youth leadership development. The Keynote Speaker is a consultant and trainer on gang violence prevention and youth leadership development.

Three Peacemaker Awards will be presented at the Annual Meeting. The winners are:

- T. Lee Associates (Rob Jones “Creating Positive Change Through Action”)
- Patti Ryan (Sullivan Middle School teacher) for the Community Peacemaker Award
- Sean Minahan (Student Volunteer for Education Programs) for the Participation Peacemaker Award

Friday, May 10, 2013 at Shaker Hills Golf Course, 146 Shaker Road, Harvard, MA 01451. Join us for a great golf tournament! Registration 11:45 AM. Shotgun Start 1:00 PM. Entry fee $125 per player. Fees cover 18 holes with cart, use of driving range, and post tournament party. Raffles! Prizes! Contests! All proceeds support the work of the Center for Nonviolent Solutions.

Center for Nonviolent Solutions Teaches Conflict Resolution to City Students

Read about the Conflict and Cooperation Program in Worcester’s Sullivan Middle School, one of the education initiatives of the Center for Nonviolent Solutions. Click on the link above to read the article from the February 1, 2013.

POWER OF PEACE


The Worcester nonprofit founded in 2009 is on quieter paths, including one
Announcement: **JOB OPENING AT CENTER FOR NONVIOLENT SOLUTIONS**

If We Don’t Teach Peace, a 16-minute documentary video, talks about the education mission of the Center for Nonviolent Solutions. Board Member, Michael Langa says, “...I have learned early in life, if you don’t teach peace, somebody is teaching war. There are more advocates of violence than peace, so we need to get out there and teach peace.”
Claire Shaeffer-Duffy, and Christa Drew, and Sam Diener from The Center for Non Violent Solutions, were guests of Mauro DePasquale, WCCA TV13 Executive Director, and host of Soapbox. Click on the pictures above or here to view the video. Learn about the Center’s programs and how to be C.L.E.A.R. in resolving conflicts.

The Way of Nonviolence 2012
A Luncheon Honoring Michael D. True
Saturday, October 20, 2012

This event honored CNVS Founder Mike True's numerous contributions to the study of nonviolence and peacemaking as a Professor, activist and writer. Guest speaker was Eileen F. Babbitt, PhD, Professor of Practice in international Conflict Analysis and Resolution, Tufts University.
If you're not outraged, you're not paying attention!

Read what Public Citizen has to say about the biggest blunders and outrageous offenses in the world of public health, published monthly in Health Letter.
“Court Allows Big Tobacco to Hide the Graphic Dangers of Smoking”


Studies have proven the effectiveness of warning labels and pictures on cigarette packaging to deter people from smoking. All over the world this method is being employed to save lives and money. But in the US the tobacco industry used the First Amendment to persuade a judge to deny FDA regulation requiring similar graphic illustration. A bizarre interpretation of the First Amendment, similar to the catastrophic Citizens United decision, trumps public health. For the article:


US leaders and the corporate media must agree with the judge, for realistic combat pictures are seldom shown. The Bush Administration even forbade photos of caskets. Photos of the effects of bullets and bombs will surely produce the same revulsion as photos of the effects of smoking. Agitate for truthful, full reporting of US wars. --Dick

WARS UNNECESSARY, CONVERT TO HUMAN NEEDS

[haw-info] Jobs-Not-Wars Campaign

haw-info-bounces@stopthewars.org on behalf of Marc Becker
[marc@yachana.org]

To:

haw-info@stopthewars.org

Attachments:

ATT00002.txt (571 B)

Inbox

Send President Obama and Members of
Congress a Strong Clear Message

On Election Day, the American people made their voices heard.

We rejected austerity schemes to reduce the deficit at the expense of working people, the middle class, the poor, children, and the elderly.

We want those who caused the economic crisis to pay to fix it. We rejected more tax breaks for large corporations and the wealthy. We want the super-rich and giant corporations to pay their share and government to stop coddling the greedy and neglecting the needy!

One of the best ways to reduce the deficit is to put people back to work. It’s time to invest in our people and our communities to create stable jobs at living wages, rehabilitate our nation’s infrastructure, repair the social safety net, restore government services and programs that serve the needs of people and communities, and develop a sustainable planet for future generations.

We want the war in Afghanistan to end now and for substantial cuts to be made to runaway Pentagon spending.

We want an economy, government and nation that work for ALL of us, not just some of us.

Keep the pressure on – remind Congress and President Obama that they work for the American people.


AND SEND THIS MESSAGE TO WASHINGTON!

We will present the Jobs-Not-Wars Petition to Congress & President Obama around the time of the Inauguration.

Forward this email to everyone you know – ask them to join you in signing the Jobs-Not-Wars Petition. Post it to your Facebook page and Tweet about it to your social network. There is strength in numbers. Don’t let our elected officials forget who they represent.

We can, and must do better for all Americans.

Thank you.

The Jobs-Not-Wars Campaign
Participating Organization:
Historians Against the War

IT’S TIME FOR PEACE AND JOBS!

The full text of the petition:

Mr. President and Members of Congress:

During this period, when people of faith and secular people alike reflect on the year that is ending and look forward with hope to the year ahead, it is a time to put aside differences and enmities to celebrate our universal values.

It is in this spirit of humanity and hope that we call upon you to redirect your efforts and federal resources to:

- End the war in Afghanistan now, bring all our troops home, and care for and support them upon their return;

- Create good jobs at living wages: invest in our communities and our people to
grow the economy and put people back to work;

- In communities devastated by hurricane Sandy, assure that reconstruction is performed in the public interest with full transparency under the direction and control of local, state and federal governments and accountable to the people.

- Train and hire veterans, the unemployed, and youth from historically disadvantaged communities to perform cleanup and reconstruction as a part of a broader national jobs program to rehabilitate inner cities, build affordable energy-efficient homes, repair/replace public infrastructure, and develop sustainable manufacturing for the 21st Century.

- Redirect our nation's resources from war and uncontrolled Pentagon spending to fund social programs and public services, protect and improve Social Security, Medicare and Medicaid, repair the social safety net, meet the challenge of climate change, and reduce poverty and inequality.

- Rely foremost on determined diplomacy and patient negotiation, rather than military power to respond to international disputes, differences or conflicts;

- Require those at the top of the income ladder, giant corporations and financial speculators to pay their fair share of taxes.

We ask that you summon the personal courage and moral fortitude to transcend partisan differences to serve the common good and public interest.

Give peace a chance!

We need jobs not cuts! Work not Wars!

SIGN THE PETITION: http://

THE ACTIVISTS, anti-war film, see the trailer if you are short of time right now, and full film when you have time. Dick

For a limited time, an hour-long documentary on the peace movement of the 2000s, The Activists, is available to anyone to download for free at this link: https://vimeo.com/49732898. Thanks to Michael Heaney for calling our attention to this film. (from HAW)

QUESTIONING, CRITICAL THINKING

“For the vine of ideas to truly grow, we must question ideas instead of blindly accepting them” (152).

“…one thing I can and must tell you is that we should always question and think critically when anyone advocates war” (15).

“…questioning is absolutely necessary to end war” (16).

Chappelle quotes diverse authorities:

General Omar Bradley: “Our only complete assurance of surviving World War III is to halt it before it starts” (16).

George Orwell: “One of the most horrible features of war is…the war propaganda…” (16).

His highest praise is for his West Point education.

“West Point emphasizes the importance of the Geneva Conventions” (14).

“West Point taught me to question every order I am given” (14).

“ In the army blind obedience is very dangerous. At West Point, I was taught to question every order I am given to determine whether it is lawful and to ensure that it does not violate the Geneva Conventions” (13).

“At West Point I was taught that torture is never justified…” (13).

(Unfortunately, Chappelle does not make a strong case for the ethical and legal education provided at West Point. His testimony is correct, the Geneva Conventions were taught there. But its effectiveness he fails to demonstrate. Two of his strongest examples of soldier rectitude—Capt. Hugh Thompson, who tried to stop the My Lai Massacre, and Marine General Smedley Butler, author of War Is and Racket—were not graduates of West Point. General Bradley was. Chappelle’s unsupported praise for West Point as the foundation for his argument for critical thinking among military officers as the chief prevention of war is a pitiful sand castle. Where is the record of West Point officers “questioning every order” and refusing to participate in torture all the way from privates to generals? Perhaps there is such a record, but he cites none. After his uncritical opening chapter, a reader might be disinclined to read more. Dick)
Below is a link to a World Federation of United Nations Associations survey about what priorities the UN should include in its next development campaign, now that the Millennium Development Goals of halving poverty, infant and maternal mortality, etc. by 2015 very clearly won't be met.

There is a long list of human needs among which you must choose 6, but at the end is a slot for your own addition, and I urge you to write in "Abolish war". Then after you finish the survey you will be given an opportunity to write in why you voted as you did, and I wrote that I added Abolishing war as my priority because war is the biggest destroyer of human society and the environment, and the biggest thief of funds to meet human needs.

There have been other attempts to persuade the UN that abolishing war must be included in development concerns. This is just one small way to push that effort a bit more. I hope you will participate.

Peace,

Ellen Barfield, Head VFP Representative to the UN Department of Public Information

Join the conversation and take part in this online UN survey to select the six priorities that you believe should set the next global development agenda.