

ENDING ALL WAR: An Idea Whose Time Has Come - For Our Children and All Future Generations

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If unnecessary suffering on an enormous scale is to be avoided, we must abolish war. Some 180 million people died in wars in the 20th century and, while we have not yet repeated a war on the scale of World War II, wars are not going away. Their enormous destruction continues, measured in terms of deaths, injuries, trauma, millions of people having to flee their homes, financial cost, environmental destruction, economic drain, and erosion of civil and political rights.

If humanity is going to survive, we must abolish war. Every war brings with it both massive destruction and the risk of uncontrolled escalation. We are facing a world of greater weapons proliferation, resource shortages, environmental pressures, and the largest human population the earth has seen. In such a turbulent world, we must abolish the organized violence by governments known as war, because its continuation risks our extinction.

If we abolish war, humanity can not only survive and better address the climate crisis and other dangers, but will find it far easier to prosper. The reallocation of resources away from war promises a world whose advantages are beyond easy imagination. Some \$2 trillion a year, roughly half from the United States and half from the rest of the world, is devoted to war and war preparation. Those funds could transform global efforts to create sustainable energy, agricultural, economic, health, and education systems. Redirection of war funding could save many times the lives that are taken by spending it on war.

There is a need and an opportunity for a campaign/movement focused specifically on

educating and organizing and developing momentum for the abolition of war. A great deal of organizing against particular wars, atrocities, weapons, tactics, and expenditures, could benefit from the existence of an abolition campaign, becoming seen as reasonable partial steps, and in the context of opposition to all war rather than as violations of proper norms of war. Some campaigns might, in fact, differ from what they would otherwise be; we might, for example, oppose the most effective weapons that kill most efficiently rather than the most defective weapons that expose the most corruption.

While abolition is a larger demand than partial disarmament, if the case for it is made convincingly it has the potential to create support for serious and even total disarmament among people who would otherwise favor the maintenance of a large military for defense -- something that we've learned generates pressure for offensive warmaking. The first step in such a campaign must be persuading people of the possibility of, and the urgent need for, abolishing war. Awareness of the effectiveness of nonviolent action, nonviolent movements, and peaceful resolution of conflicts is growing rapidly, creating the increased possibility of persuading people that there is an alternative to war. Anti-war sentiment, at least in some key parts of the world, is at a high point now, relative to other moments in recent decades. This sentiment should be channeled into an abolition movement that takes steps toward reduced warfare while creating an understanding of those steps, not as reforms to a flawed institution that will continue in an improved state, but as progress towards that institution's elimination.

The reduction and eventual elimination of war and of the military industrial complex could be of great benefit to sectors of the world economy and of public services to which that investment could be transferred. There exists the possibility of creating a broad coalition encompassing civilian industries and advocates for green energy, education, housing, healthcare, and other fields, including civil liberties, environmental protections, children's rights, and all over the world cities, counties, and states that have had to make major cuts in social programs for their people, and more. By making war's elimination

imaginable, an abolition movement could develop the allies needed to make it a reality.

Resistance, including by those profiting financially from wars, will be intense. Such interests are, of course, not invincible. Raytheon's stock was soaring in the fall of 2013 as the White House planned to send missiles into Syria -- missiles that were not sent. But war abolition will require defeating the propaganda of war promoters and countering the economic interests of war promoters with alternative economic possibilities. A wide variety of support for "humanitarian" and other particular varieties, or imagined varieties, of war will have to be countered with persuasive arguments and alternatives. Creating a resource center that puts the best arguments against various types of war support at people's fingertips will itself be a significant contribution.

By organizing internationally, we can use progress made in one nation to encourage other nations to match or surpass it without fear. By educating people whose governments make war at a distance about the human costs of war (largely one-sided, civilian, and on a scale not widely understood) we can build a broad-based moral demand for an end to war. By presenting the case that militarism and wars make us all less safe and decrease our quality of life, we can strip war of much of its power. By creating awareness of the economic trade-offs, we can revive support for a peace dividend. By explaining the illegality, immorality, and terrible costs of war and the availability of legal, nonviolent and more effective means of defense and conflict resolution, we can build acceptance for what has only relatively recently been made into a radical proposal and ought to be viewed as a common sense initiative: the abolition of war.

While a global movement is needed, this movement cannot ignore or reverse the reality of where the greatest support for war originates. The United States builds, sells, buys, stockpiles, and uses the most weapons, engages in the most conflicts, stations the most troops in the most countries, and carries out the most deadly and destructive wars. By these and other measures, the U.S. government is the world's leading war-maker, and -- in the words of

Martin Luther King, Jr. -- the greatest purveyor of violence in the world. Ending U.S. militarism wouldn't eliminate war globally, but it would eliminate the pressure that is driving many other nations to increase their military spending. It would deprive NATO of its leading advocate for and greatest participant in wars. It would cut off the largest supply of weapons to the Middle East and other regions. It would remove the major barrier to a reunification of Korea, and the major barrier to legal consequences for Israeli war-making. It would create U.S. willingness to support arms treaties, join the International Criminal Court, and allow the United Nations to move in the direction of its stated purpose of eliminating war. It would create a world free of nations threatening the first-use of nuclear weaponry, and a world in which nuclear disarmament might proceed more rapidly. Gone would be the last major nation using cluster bombs or refusing to ban land mines. If the United States kicked the war habit, war itself would suffer a major and possibly fatal set-back. For this reason, the war abolition movement around the world will need to be directed at U.S. military bases as well as local governments, and major U.S. wars as much as local militarism.

The structure and funding of this campaign to abolish war is yet to be determined. It could be independent or aligned with or under the auspices of an existing organization or group of organizations. We envision it establishing a decentralized network of various organizations following a common, coordinated strategy. In large part this would consist of adjusting and supporting work that groups are already engaged in to form part of a united front that advances war abolition while advancing smaller steps in war reduction or amelioration, economic conversion or counter-recruitment, nonviolent conflict resolution or the prevention or halting of particular wars.

The establishment of this campaign would begin by exploring possibilities with key people and organizations, a process that might include conference calls and possibly in-person gathering(s). The goal would be to begin the work of building this movement immediately, and to plan an international conference to publicly launch the campaign on or

around August 27th, the anniversary of the Kellogg-Briand Pact's signing. There are major peace gatherings planned for Sarajevo in June and South Africa in July that this campaign might soon want to propose to take part in. There is also the date of July 28, 2014, marking 100 years since the launch of the war that was to end all wars and instead brought more of them, a date that this campaign might want to make use of in some way.

The campaign would need a name, a website, an international advisory board, staff, and -- in one manner or another -- organizational and individual members. Such members might agree to a pledge to work for the abolition of war and never to support the waging of war. In developing the name and slogans for the campaign, careful thought and marketing research will be required.

Online and off, the campaign would develop a resource center on war abolition -- meaning, not every aspect of war, but specifically the case (moral, legal, economic, environmental, etc.) for total abolition, including how partial steps in war reduction or amelioration can lead toward abolition and not away from it, including how past wars can be best understood, and including effective peaceful alternatives to war and a peaceful vision of a post-war world. This resource center would eventually also include tools for petition gathering, local and organizational resolutions, legislation, materials for educational events including books and films, a speakers bureau, coordinated days of action, flyers, brochures, posters, creative action ideas, etc.

The abolition movement would develop volunteer and training programs to train organizers to build and strengthen the campaign.

The movement would work on strategies for outreach to a wide variety of constituencies globally.*

The campaign would develop and coordinate with its allies and members a communications strategy including our own media production, efforts to gain coverage by media outlets, and possibly advertising, school text-book reform, and other means of communication and education. We would work to

see our media productions used as educational tools. We would advance a vision of a transition to a renewable energy world in which there would be no "need" for wars over oil and in which we could end the danger of global warming and create a good life for every person on the planet.

The movement would work to coordinate with its members partial steps (and movement-building victories) toward abolition, including possibly such approaches as: economic conversion, disarmament, base closures, bans on particular weapons or tactics, promotion of diplomacy including possibly new structures such as Departments of Peace and reform and strengthening of the United Nations, expanding the development of peace teams and human shields into a global nonviolent peace force, promotion of nonmilitary foreign aid and crisis prevention, placing restrictions on military recruitment and providing potential soldiers with alternatives, legislation to redirect war taxes into peace work and meeting human needs, and/or promotion of international law. The campaign might work with key allies to develop concrete proposals for how to spend funding redirected from wars and militarism. All of these steps would be presented to the world, not as improvements in war or steps toward "smart wars" or "humanitarian wars" but as key steps in the direction of the end of all wars.

Steps in the direction of abolition that the movement might support include the development of a peace conversion taskforce to help communities make the transition from war making to working to meet human and environmental needs, and the building of global nonviolent peace teams of civilian, trained, international, nonviolent peacekeepers and peacemakers who could be available to protect civilians endangered by conflicts in all parts of the world and to help build peace where there is or has been violent conflict. These efforts would help the world to see that there are alternatives to war-making.

The movement would work with its allies or members to create a strategy for the legal abolition of war, possibly including the Kellogg-Briand Pact and the Nuremberg Principles.

The movement would work with relevant members to develop direct action strategies, including vigils, blockades, demonstrations, etc., with global coordination.

Each step along the way cannot be foreseen in any detail, but progress will be somewhat measurable in victories against particular war proposals, in the creation of particular educational or counter-recruitment programs, in disarmament, etc., and in the extent to which these measures are presented and understood as steps toward abolition, as well as in any measurable shifts in public opinion, and in the growth of the campaign, the signers of its pledge or petition, the readers and viewers of its materials, etc. There are always victories and set-backs in the struggle against militarism. Viewing them as part of a process toward abolition may better allow us to see the forest for the trees and determine whether in fact the victories are outpacing the defeats.

*Such constituencies might include people in many parts of the world, key organizers, well-known leaders, peace groups, peace and justice groups, environmental groups, human rights groups, activist coalitions, lawyers, philosophers /moralists / ethicists, doctors, psychologists, religious groups, economists, labor unions, diplomats, towns and cities and states or provinces or regions, nations, international organizations, the United Nations, civil liberties groups, media reform groups, business groups and leaders, billionaires, teachers groups, student groups, education reform groups, government reform groups, journalists, historians, women's groups, senior citizens, immigrant and refugee rights groups, libertarians, socialists, liberals, Democrats, Republicans, conservatives, veterans, student- and cultural-exchange groups, sister-cities groups, sports enthusiasts, and advocates for investment in children and healthcare and in human needs of every sort, as well as those working to oppose contributors to militarism in their societies, such as xenophobia, racism, machismo, extreme materialism, all forms of violence, lack of community, and war profiteering.