THE PROGRESS REPORT

World Peace

By Fred E. Foldvary

To find the way to world peace, we need to understand the causes of war. The main causes of conflict are greed and ignorance. Greed means seeking to get more than one morally deserves. We deserve what we can earn or what is voluntarily given to us. We don't deserve what properly belongs to others. So greed involves getting gains by force rather than through voluntary means.

To eliminate greed as a cause of war, we need to know the moral standard by which to judge what one morally deserves. This morality must be universal if we are to have a universal peace. Humanity needs to understand the universal ethic that endows us with liberty and natural human rights. Its two basic principles are

- that it is morally wrong to invade and coercively harm others, and
- that to do moral good is to provide wanted benefits to others.

Human equality is a premise of the universal ethic, which endows each person with the morally proper ownership of his own life, time, and body. Our labor and fruits of labor are morally the property of the producer. But no human being created land, so equality implies an equal benefit from land, achievable by all sharing the economic rent from land.

War is usually a conflict for land and the persons in the land. A world at peace would let each individual person live as he chooses so long as he did not coercively harm others, harm being an invasion rather than a mere offense. The economic market rent from natural resources, including land as nature made it, would be shared globally. Grabbing territory would have little payoff if the land holder has to compensate all the rest of humanity for excluding it from that territory.

Peace, peace, but there is no peace! There is massive ignorance about the universal ethic and the economics of land rent. Yet suppose humanity did recognize the u.e. and shared the rent. There would still be some greedy aggressors ready to steal and kill. The peaceful folk would still need defenses. Locks and guns will be needed to secure the peace until that utopian day comes when all human beings are raised to want to live in harmony.

We need governance to secure the peace, but we need to also protect ourselves from government. "Bottoms up" should be the motto for voting for and funding government. All power to the neighborhoods. Confine voting to small groups which elect ever higher levels of government. That keeps the top from grabbing excessive power.

Sometimes war is necessary for liberation against dictator oppressors, but when a democratic government professing moral values is the oppressor, civil disobedience works best. It got independence for India and crushed US racial segregation. This is a lesson yet to be learned by the Palestinians, for example. Their violence will only hurt them and strengthen their opponents.

Had they just refused to pay taxes and disobeyed laws, nonviolent resistance would have gotten them their state long ago.

With vicious wars in Sierra Leone, Rwanda, Kosovo, and Timor, a global army may be the only solution. The UN has often tried to be helpful, but an overhaul is needed. Perhaps a second UN could be started with member countries truly committed to peace with justice. All countries need to clean their own houses, but world peace can't wait; we must meanwhile prevent further massacres.

Few people really want peace. Even many claiming to want peace willingly use force to get their way. They use the power of the state to extract wealth from those who earned it, and ignore the gains from landed privilege. These peace seekers seek their own privilege, forcing others to live by their values and cultures.

The truly enlightened, who embrace libertarian ethics, geoist economics, harmony with nature, a common world language, and governance so decentralist it almost kisses anarchism, these are the tiniest of the enlightened remnant. Long may they live, and may others seek and find this synthesis for peace.