CHAPTER 1

THE MEANINGS OF PEACE

A man releasing a dove, which is widely considered a symbol of world peace.

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> *We need an essentially new way of thinking if mankind is to survive. Men must radically change their attitudes toward each other and their views of the future. Force must no longer be an instrument of politics. . . . Today, we do not have much time left; it is up to our generation to succeed in thinking differently. If we fail, the days of civilized humanity are numbered.*
>
> —Albert Einstein

This text is based on a number of assumptions. War is one of humanity's most pressing problems; peace is almost always preferable to war and, moreover, can and must include not only the absence of war but also the establishment of positive, life-enhancing values

and social structures. We also assume, with regret, that there are no simple solutions to the problems of war. Most aspects of the war-peace dilemma are complex, interconnected, and, even when well understood, difficult to move from theory to practice. On the other hand, much can be gained by exploring the various dimensions of war and peace, including the possibility of achieving a more just and sustainable world—a way of living that can nurture life itself and of which all people can be proud.

Throughout this book, we maintain that there is good reason for such hope, not simply as an article of faith but based on the realistic premise that human beings are capable of understanding the global situation and of recognizing their own species-wide best interests. Humans can behave rationally, creatively, and with compassion. Positive steps can be taken that will diminish our species' reliance on violence in attempting to settle disputes and that will facilitate the development of a more just, sustainable, and truly peaceful world.

Most people think they know what *peace* means, but in fact different people often have very different understandings of this seemingly simple word. And although most would agree that some form of peace—whatever it means—is desirable, there are often vigorous, even violent, disagreements over how to obtain it.

The Meanings of Peace

Peace, like many theoretical terms, is difficult to define. Like happiness, harmony, justice, and freedom, peace is something we often recognize by its absence. Consequently, Johan Galtung, a founder of peace studies and peace research, has proposed the important distinction between "positive" and "negative" peace. "Positive" peace denotes the simultaneous presence of many desirable states of mind and society, such as harmony, justice, equity, and so on. "Negative" peace has historically denoted the "absence of war" and other forms of large-scale violent human conflict.

Many philosophical, religious, and cultural traditions have referred to peace in its positive sense. In Chinese, for example, the word *heping* denotes world peace, or peace among nations, while the words *an* and *mingsi* denote an "inner peace," a tranquil and harmonious state of mind and being, akin to a meditative mental state. Other languages also frame peace in its "inner" and "outer" dimensions.

The English lexicon is quite rich in its supply of terms that refer to peace. In *Webster's Third New International Dictionary,* for example, peace is initially defined as "freedom from civil clamor and confusion" and positively as "a state of public quiet."[1] This denotes negative and positive peace in their political or "outer" sense. *Webster's* proceeds further to define (political or outer) peace positively as "a state of security or order within a community provided for by law, custom, or public opinion."

The second definition of peace, according to *Webster's*, is a "mental or spiritual condition marked by freedom from disquieting or oppressive thoughts or emotions." This is peace in its personal or "inner" sense, "peace of mind," as well as "calmness of mind and heart: serenity of spirit" *(inner peace*). Third, peace is defined as "a tranquil state of freedom from outside disturbances and harassment." Peace also implies "harmony in human or personal relations: mutual concord and esteem." This is what we might call *interpersonal* or *intersubjective peace.*

Peace is then defined by *Webster's* as "a state of mutual concord between governments: absence of hostilities or war." This is the conventional meaning of peace, as "negative" peace, caused by "the period of such freedom from war." The sixth definition of peace is the "absence of activity

and noise: deep stillness: quietness," or what may be called *positive inner peace*. And in its seventh and final lexicographical meaning, peace is personified as "one that makes, gives, or maintains tranquility." This is what might be called *divine or perpetual peace*, with God as the ultimate cause of peace on Earth.

In some cases, the word *peace* even has an undesirable connotation. The Roman poet Tacitus spoke of making a desert and calling it "peace," an unwanted place of sterility and emptiness. Similarly, although nearly everyone seeks "peace of mind" or "inner peace," the undesired "peace" of a coma or even of death may not seem so desirable. To be *pacified* (derived from the Latin word for peace, *pax*) often means to be lulled into a false and misleading quietude. Indeed, *appeasement*—buying off a would-be aggressor—has a very bad name indeed. In the most notorious example, British prime minister Neville Chamberlain appeased Hitler in September 1938, famously declaring as he signed the Munich Agreement, which essentially gave in to all of Hitler's demands: "I believe it is peace for our time." (Less than a year later, Hitler invaded Poland, effectively starting World War II on the European continent.) By contrast, even the most peace-loving among us recognize the merits of certain martial and aggressive attitudes, acts, and metaphors, especially when they refer to something other than direct military engagements: President Lyndon Johnson's "war on poverty," for example, or the medical "war on cancer" and "battle against AIDS."

Some Eastern Concepts of Peace

The foregoing is not simply a matter of playing with words. Fighting, striving, and engaging in various forms of conflict and combat (especially when they are successful) are widely associated with vigor, energy, courage, and other positive virtues. Nonetheless, it is no exaggeration to claim that peace may be (with happiness) the most longed-for human condition.

Chinese philosopher Lao Tzu (6th century BCE), founder of Taoism and author of the *Tao Te Ching,* emphasized that military force is not the *Tao*, or "Way," for human beings to follow. He frequently referred to peaceful images of water or wind—both of them soft and yielding yet ultimately triumphant over such hard substances as rock or iron. The teachings of K'ung fu-tzu (or Confucius, approximately 551–479 BCE) are often thought by most Westerners to revolve exclusively around respect for tradition, including elders and ancestors. But Confucius did not hold to these ideas because he valued obedience and order as virtues in themselves; rather, he maintained that the attainment of peace was the ultimate human goal and that peace came from social harmony and equilibrium. His best-known collection of writings, the *Analects,* also emphasizes the doctrine of *jen* (empathy), founded on a kind of hierarchical Golden Rule: Treat your subordinates as you would like to be treated by your superiors.

The writings of another renowned ancient Chinese philosopher and religious leader, Mo Tzu (468–391 BCE), took a more radical perspective. He argued against war and in favor of all-embracing love as a universal human virtue and the highest earthly goal, yet one that is within the grasp of each of us. Mo Tzu said, "Those who love others will also be loved in return. Do good to others and others will do good to you. Hate people and be hated by them. Hurt them and they will hurt you. What is hard about that?"[2] In what is now India, Buddhist monarch Ashoka (3rd century BCE) was renowned for abandoning his successful military campaigns in the middle of his career and devoting himself to the religious conversion of his adversaries by nonviolent means.

The great Indian text, the Hindu epic *Maha-bha-rata* (written about 200 BCE), contains as perhaps its most important segment the *Bhagavad Gita.* This is a mythic account of a vicious civil

war in ancient India, in which one of the principal warriors, Arjuna, is reluctant to fight because many of his friends and relatives are on the opposing side. Arjuna is ultimately persuaded to engage in combat by the god Krishna, who convinces Arjuna that he must fight, not out of hatred or hope for personal gain but out of selfless duty. Although the *Gita* can be and has been interpreted as supporting caste loyalty and the obligation to kill when bidden by a superior party to do so, it also inspired the great 20th-century Indian leader Mohandas Gandhi as an allegory for the de-emphasis of individual self in the pursuit of higher goals. The *Gita* was also cited by the "father of the atomic bomb," J. Robert Oppenheimer, when he described the first atomic explosion as a contemporary incarnation of Krishna: "I am become Death, the Destroyer of Worlds."

Some Judeo-Christian Concepts of Peace

Peace per se is not prominent in the Old Testament. The God (Yahweh) of Abraham, Moses, and David is frequently portrayed as rather bellicose, even bloodthirsty, and the ancient Israelites were often merciless warriors. Exceptions to this norm exist, however, such as the prophet Isaiah, who praised the reign of peace and described war not as a reward or a route to success but rather as a punishment to be inflicted on those who have failed God.

Under the influence of Isaiah and later Hebrew prophets—and despite the ostensibly defensive violence of the Maccabees and Zealots (who opposed Roman rule in Palestine and have sometimes been called history's first recorded terrorists)—Jewish tradition has tended to strongly endorse peacefulness. On the other hand, it can also be argued that with the emergence of Israel as a militarily threatened—and threatening—state, this tradition has been substantially changed. In fact, Jewish, Christian, and Islamic traditions all have bellicose components and elements in their history. A key question is whether these militaristic activities—often quite persistent and widespread—are part of a pattern of faithfulness to, or a deviation from, their underlying religious worldview.

A deep irony underlies the concept of peace in these three great Western religious systems. Christianity, for example, gave rise to one of the great warrior traditions in the world, yet it is unique among Western religions in the degree to which it was founded upon a message of peace, love, and nonviolence. "My peace I give unto you," declares Jesus, according to the New Testament, along with "the peace of God, which passeth all understanding." Although definitions of peace often vary and hypocrisy is not infrequent, most human beings share a positive presumption in favor of peace, in accord with the stated aspirations of these great religions.

Positive and Negative Peace

Let us recall the important distinction between positive and negative peace. Negative peace usually denotes the absence of war. It is a condition in which no active, organized military violence is taking place. When the noted 20th-century French intellectual Raymond Aron defined peace as a condition of "more or less lasting suspension of rivalry between political units," he was thinking of negative peace.[3] Aron's is the most common understanding of peace in the context of conventional political science and international relations, and it epitomizes the so-called *realist* view that peace is found whenever war or other direct forms of organized state violence are absent. From this perspective, the peace proclamations of Pharaonic Egypt, the *Philanthropa,* were actually statements of negative peace, expressions of benevolence from a

stronger party toward those who were weaker. Similarly, the well-known *pax* of Roman times really indicated little more than the absence of overt organized violence, typically a condition of nonresistance or even acquiescence enforced by local arrangements and the military might of the Roman legions. The negative peace of the *Pax Romana* was created and maintained through social and political repression of those who lived under Roman law.

An alternative view to this realist (or *Realpolitik*) perspective is one that emphasizes the importance of positive peace and that has been particularly advanced by Norwegian peace researcher Galtung and others. Positive peace refers to a social condition in which exploitation is minimized or eliminated and in which there is neither overt violence nor the more subtle phenomenon of underlying *structural violence*. It denotes the continuing presence of an equitable and just social order as well as ecological harmony.

Structural and Cultural Violence

One commonly understood meaning of violence is that it is physical and readily apparent through observable bodily injury and/or the infliction of pain. But it is important to recognize the existence of other forms of violence, ones that are more indirect and insidious. This structural and cultural violence is typically built into the very nature of social, cultural, and economic institutions. (For example, both ancient Egypt and imperial Rome practiced slavery and were highly despotic, although they were technically in states of negative peace for long periods of time.)

Structural violence usually has the effect of denying people important rights, such as economic well-being; social, political, and sexual equality; a sense of personal fulfillment and self-worth; and so on. When people starve to death or even go hungry, a kind of violence is taking place. Similarly, when people suffer from preventable diseases or when they are denied a decent education, affordable housing, freedom of expression and peaceful assembly, or opportunities to work, play, or raise a family, a kind of violence is occurring, even if no bullets are shot or no clubs are wielded. A society commits violence against its members when it forcibly stunts their development and undermines their well-being, whether because of religion, ethnicity, gender, age, sexual preference, or some other social reason. Structural violence is a serious form of social oppression, which can also be identified with respect to treatment of the natural environment. However defined, structural violence is widespread yet often unacknowledged.

Under conditions of structural violence, many people who behave as good citizens and who think of themselves as peace-loving people may, according to Galtung, participate in "settings within which individuals may do enormous amounts of harm to other human beings without ever intending to do so, just performing their regular duties as a job defined in the structure."[4] Reviewing the role of "normal" people, such as Adolf Eichmann, who helped organize the Holocaust during World War II, noted philosopher Hannah Arendt referred to the "banality of evil," emphasizing that routine, workaday behavior by otherwise normal and decent people can contribute to mass murder, social oppression, and structural violence.

Structural violence, including hunger, political repression, and psychological alienation, often is unnoticed and works slowly to erode humanistic values and impoverish human lives. By contrast, direct violence generally works much faster and is more visible and dramatic. In cases of overt violence, even those people not specifically involved in the conflict may be inclined to take sides. News coverage of these events is often intense (as in the O. J. Simpson and Rodney King episodes, not to mention the Persian Gulf War, the war in Kosovo, and the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq). And because the outcome is often quite visible and undeniable (e.g., the forcible extraction of Iraq's

forces from Kuwait and of Serbia's troops from Kosovo or the violent removal of Chinese citizens from Tiananmen Square by Chinese Army troops), the viewer is more likely to pay attention to this tangible violence than to the underlying structural factors that may have led to the conflict.

The concept of *cultural violence* can be seen as a follow-up to Galtung's previously introduced idea of structural violence.[5] Cultural violence is any aspect (often symbolic) of a culture that can be used to legitimize violence in its direct or structural forms. Symbolic violence built into a culture does not kill or maim like direct violence or the violence built into the social structure. However, it is used to legitimize either or both, as for instance in the theory of a *Herrenvolk,* or a superior race. Cultural violence provides legitimizing frameworks for structural and direct violence, occurring at the levels of religion, ideology, art, language, and (pseudo-)science.

Structural and cultural violence are, however, contested concepts. Clearly, structural and/or cultural violence take place wherever there is slavery or gross political, cultural, and/or economic oppression; it remains debatable, on the other hand, whether social inequality constitutes structural violence and whether differing cultural norms and practices constitute violence. And what about skewed access to education, jobs, or medical care? Does simple social hierarchy (as, for example, in a family or classroom) constitute structural violence, and do culturally relative forms of life amount to cultural violence?

Achieving Positive Peace

Many cultural and spiritual traditions have identified political and social goals that are closer to positive peace than to negative peace. The ancient Greek concept of *eireinei* (see the related English word *irenic*) denotes harmony and justice as well as peace. Similarly, the Arabic *salaam* and the Hebrew *shalom* connote not only the absence of violence but also the presence of well-being, wholeness, and harmony within oneself, a community, and among all nations and peoples. The Sanskrit word *shanti* refers not only to peace but also to spiritual tranquility, an integration of outward and inward modes of being, just as the Chinese noun *ping* denotes harmony and the achievement of unity from diversity. In Russian, the word *mir* means peace, a village community, and the entire world.

Attention to negative peace, or the simple absence of war, usually results in a diplomatic emphasis on peacekeeping or peace restoring (if a war has already broken out). By contrast, positive peace focuses on peace building, the establishment of nonexploitative social structures, and a determination to work toward that goal even when a war is not ongoing or imminent. Negative peace is thus a more conservative goal, as it seeks to keep things the way they are (if a war is not actually taking place), whereas positive peace is more active and bolder, implying the creation of something that does not currently exist.

Moreover, just as there is disagreement about how best to avoid a war—that is, about how to achieve a negative peace—even among decision makers who may be well intentioned, there is at least as much disagreement about the best routes toward positive peace. Peace in its positive form is more difficult to articulate, and possibly more difficult to achieve, than its negative version. And although there is relatively little debate now about the desired end point in the pursuit of negative peace, most people agree that war in general is a bad thing. People may disagree, however, about the justification for any particular war. And when it comes to positive peace, there is substantial disagreement about specific goals and the means to achieve them. Some theorists have argued, for example, that peace should exist only as a negative symbol (the avoidance of war), because once defined as a specific ideal system to be achieved, peace becomes something to strive for, even perhaps to the point of going to war!

As Quincy Wright, one of the 20th century's preeminent researchers into the causes of war, put it:

> Wars have been fought for the sanctity of treaties, for the preservation of law, for the achievement of justice, for the promotion of religion, even to end war and to secure peace. When peace assumes a positive form, therefore, it ceases to be peace. Peace requires that no end should justify violence as a means to its attainment.[6]

Other notable figures, on the other hand, have maintained that a free society may justify—or even require—occasional violence. Thomas Jefferson, for example, wrote in 1787 that "the tree of liberty must be refreshed from time to time with the blood of patriots and tyrants." This apparent paradox—violence as a precondition for attaining its alternative—is a recurring theme in the study of and quest for peace.

There are other ways, however, in which peace can assume a positive form. And these are more than mere clichés: for example, cooperation, harmony, equity, justice, and love. Supporters of positive peace uniformly agree that a repressive society, even if it is not at war, should be considered at peace only in a very narrow sense. In addition, a nation at peace that tolerates outbreaks of domestic violence on a widespread level, despite an absence of violent conflicts with other nations, is not really at peace with itself.

Social Justice

Having recognized the importance and underdeveloped nature of positive peace, we now pay further attention to a related notion: social justice. Although almost everyone today agrees that a just society is desirable, widespread disagreement continues as to what, exactly, a just society looks like. For example, whereas capitalists and individualists tend to privilege economic freedom (from state intervention) and individual liberty—often at the cost of mass poverty, malnutrition, and homelessness—socialists and collectivists tend to value economic and social security, sometimes at the price of individual political freedoms. Also, many Western individualists assert that nations with capitalist economies and democratic political systems seldom if ever go to war with one another, whereas many non-Western and dissident Western critics of capitalism claim that capitalism by its very expansionistic nature is inherently predatory and militaristic, frequently impelling ostensibly democratic nations to invade and occupy undemocratic but economically and/or strategically important countries.

The Peace-War Continuum

"War is not sharply distinguished from peace," according to Quincy Wright. Moreover:

> Progress of war and peace between a pair of states may be represented by a curve: the curve descends toward war as tensions, military preparations, and limited hostilities culminate in total conflict; and it rises toward peace as tensions relax, arms budgets decline, disputes are settled, trade increases, and cooperative activities develop.[7]

Many people, if pressed, would agree that with respect to overt and direct violence, war and peace are two ends of a continuum, with only a vague and uncertain transition between the two. But the fact that two things may lack precise boundaries does not mean that they are indistinguishable.

For example, at dawn, night grades almost imperceptibly into day and vice versa at dusk. Yet when two things are very distinct, we say that "they are as different as night and day." The transition from war to peace may often be similarly imprecise (although the move from peace to war may be all too clear and dramatic, as was evident at the beginning of World War II, both in Europe and in the Pacific), but the characteristics of either state of affairs are often quite apparent.

Consider, for example, that the U.S. involvement in Vietnam and the rest of Southeast Asia began in the early 1950s with economic and military aid to French forces seeking to retain their colonial possessions in that part of the world. It progressed to include the deployment of relatively small numbers of "technical advisers" in the early 1960s to what was then called South Vietnam. Larger numbers of American "advisers" were then added, accompanied by combat troops in small numbers, followed by limited and eventually massive bombing of all of Vietnam (and its neighbors Laos and Cambodia). Finally, even though more than 500,000 American troops were committed to propping up a corrupt and autocratic South Vietnamese government engaged in a civil war with its own people and with what was then called North Vietnam, and even though more than 50,000 Americans died as did perhaps as many as 2 million Vietnamese, the United States never formally declared war! Yet there was no doubt that a state of war existed.

There is an increasing tendency—especially since the Vietnam War and notably during America's "War on Terror(ism)"—for nations to fight wars without formal declarations announcing their beginnings and, similarly, without solemn peace ceremonies or treaties signaling their end. The Korean War, for example, which began in 1950, was never officially declared and has never really ended (although there has been a prolonged cease-fire between North and South Korea lasting more than a half-century). One of the most destructive wars of the second half of the 20th century, the conflict between Iran and Iraq in the 1980s, which produced casualties that may well have numbered in the millions (and during which Iraq was believed to have used chemical weapons and to have been developing biological weapons), was never declared. In fact, most of the world's armed conflicts involve revolutionary, counterrevolutionary, genocidal, and/or terrorist violence with no declarations of war whatsoever, as in East Timor, Kashmir, Sudan, Congo (Zaire), Rwanda, and much of the rest of central Africa; in the former Yugoslavia and several independent nations spawned from the former Soviet Union; and in El Salvador, Nicaragua, Guatemala, Afghanistan, Angola, and Cambodia. By the same token, the U.S.-led invasions of Afghanistan and Iraq were not preceded by formal declarations of war and seem unlikely to conclude with official announcements of peace.

The reluctance of most governments to declare war, as opposed to their willingness to fight or promote wars, may also result from the fact that although wars continue to be fought and to break out, most citizens and politicians are not proud of that fact. And despite the potential for theoretical arguments over the precise transition points between different stages of conflicts, most people know at a gut level what is meant by war. There is also little doubt that, given the choice, most would prefer peace.

Measuring Peace

Defining and Redefining Peace

The concept of peace remains notoriously difficult to define, the foregoing passages notwithstanding. The difficulties in defining the concept of peace may partly explain why there have been so few attempts to measure states of peace across nations. Although scholars have made

numerous attempts to measure and operationalize "war," it is only recently that similar efforts have been made to measure peace.

Is it possible to identify the social structures and political institutions that create and maintain peace, however defined? The Global Peace Index (GPI) is a step in this direction: a measurement of peace as the "absence of violence" that seeks to determine what cultural attributes and institutions are associated with states of peace. [8]

The Global Peace Index

Unlike such things as Gross National Product or unemployment rate, the peacefulness of a country does not readily lend itself to direct measurement. However, the GPI, produced by the Institute for Economics and Peace in Sydney, Australia, and updated annually, has succeeded in generating a credible assessment. The GPI offers the promise of enabling researchers not only to rank countries with regard to their peacefulness, but—more importantly—to begin assessing what factors correlate with peaceful versus nonpeaceful societies. Toward this end, the 2012 GPI, for example, examined 158 countries, using 23 qualitative and quantitative indicators that reflect three broad themes, namely, each country's 1) level of internal safety and security, 2) involvement in domestic or international conflict, and 3) degree of militarization.

GPI Results

The GPI for 2012 shows the relative peacefulness of advanced industrial societies, primarily in Europe, compared with war-torn and impoverished nations, predominantly African and Asian. It also suggests that for the first time since 2009, the world improved in peacefulness overall. All regions, excluding the Middle East and North Africa, saw an improvement. This follows two consecutive years of overall decline in peacefulness, when many countries experienced heightened disharmony linked to rapid rises in food, fuel, and commodity prices and the global economic downturn.

Iceland is ranked as the country most at peace, followed by Denmark and New Zealand. Small, stable, and democratic countries are consistently ranked highest; most of the top 20 are western or central European nations. The Asia-Pacific region experienced the largest average rise in peacefulness, with the most significant gains in Sri Lanka, Bhutan, Philippines, and Nepal. Syria's descent into civil war caused its score to deteriorate by the largest margin. Africa became slightly more peaceful, with notable improvements in Zimbabwe, Madagascar, and Gabon and, for the first time since the GPI was launched in 2007, it is not the least peaceful region—that dubious honor falls to the Middle East and North Africa.

Qatar is the highest placed Middle Eastern country (and nondemocracy), in 12th position. Bhutan moved into the top 20 for the first time, mainly as a result of easing tensions surrounding ethnic Nepali refugees. Norway dropped out of the top 10 to 18th position, the result of a murderous rampage by a deranged white supremacist in July 2011. Sri Lanka experienced the greatest improvement in its overall peacefulness, following the apparent ending of decades of civil war. War-ravaged Somalia remained the country least at peace in 2012, with ongoing conflict in several regions (with the notable exception of Somaliland, a self-styled independent state). Afghanistan dropped to the second-lowest position. The United States ranks 88th, one notch ahead of China and below such countries as Jordan, Mongolia, Sierra Leone, and Vietnam. And Russia is number 153, just behind North Korea and three positions ahead of Israel.

Figure 1.1 GPI 2012 Rank Ordering of Nations

Rank Country Score

1. Iceland 1.113
2. Denmark 1.239
3. New Zealand 1.239
4. Canada 1.317
5. Japan 1.326
6. Austria 1.328
7. Ireland 1.328
8. Slovenia 1.330
9. Finland 1.348
10. Switzerland 1.349
11. Belgium 1.376
12. Qatar 1.395
13. Czech Republic 1.396
14. Sweden 1.419
15. Germany 1.424
16. Portugal 1.470
17. Hungary 1.476
18. Norway 1.480
19. Bhutan 1.481
20. Malaysia 1.485
21. Mauritius 1.487
22. Australia 1.494
23. Singapore 1.521
24. Poland 1.524
25. Spain 1.548
26. Slovakia 1.590
27. Taiwan 1.602
28. Netherlands 1.606
29. United Kingdom 1.609
30. Chile 1.616
31. Botswana 1.621
32. Romania 1.627
33. Uruguay 1.628
34. Vietnam 1.641
35. Croatia 1.648
36. Costa Rica 1.659
37. Laos 1.662
38. Italy 1.690
39. Bulgaria 1.699
40. France 1.710
41. Estonia 1.715
42. South Korea 1.734
43. Lithuania 1.741
44. Argentina 1.763
45. Latvia 1.774
46. United Arab Emirates 1.785
47. Kuwait 1.792
48. Mozambique 1.796
49. Namibia 1.804
50. Ghana 1.807
51. Zambia 1.830
52. Sierra Leone 1.855
53. Lesotho 1.864
54. Morocco 1.867
55. Tanzania 1.873
56. Burkina Faso 1.881
56. Djibouti 1.881
58. Mongolia 1.884
59. Oman 1.887
60. Malawi 1.894
61. Panama 1.899
62. Jordan 1.905
63. Indonesia 1.913
64. Serbia 1.920
65. Bosnia and Herzegovina 1.923
66. Albania 1.927
66. Moldova 1.927
68. Macedonia (FYR) 1.935
69. Guyana 1.937
70. Cuba 1.951
71. Ukraine 1.953
72. Tunisia 1.955
73. Cyprus 1.957
74. Gambia 1.961
75. Gabon 1.972
76. Paraguay 1.973
77. Greece 1.976
78. Senegal 1.994
79. Peru 1.995
80. Nepal 2.001
81. Montenegro 2.006
81. Nicaragua 2.006
83. Brazil 2.017
84. Bolivia 2.021
85. Ecuador 2.028
86. Swaziland 2.028
87. Equatorial Guinea 2.039
88. United States of America 2.058
89. China 2.061
90. Dominican Republic 2.068
91. Bangladesh 2.071
92. Guinea 2.073
93. Papua New Guinea 2.076
94. Trinidad and Tobago 2.082
95. Angola 2.105
95. Guinea-Bissau 2.105
97. Cameroon 2.113
98. Uganda 2.121
99. Madagascar 2.124
99. Tajikistan 2.124
101. Liberia 2.131
102. Mali 2.132

103. Sri Lanka 2.145
104. Republic of Congo 2.148
105. Kazakhstan 2.151
106. Saudi Arabia 2.178
107. Haiti 2.179
108. Cambodia 2.207
109. Belarus 2.208
110. Uzbekistan 2.219
111. Egypt 2.220
111. El Salvador 2.220
113. Jamaica 2.222
114. Benin 2.231
115. Armenia 2.238
116. Niger 2.241
117. Turkmenistan 2.242
118. Bahrain 2.247
119. Rwanda 2.250
120. Kenya 2.252
121. Algeria 2.255
122. Eritrea 2.264
123. Venezuela 2.278
124. Guatemala 2.287
125. Mauritania 2.301
126. Thailand 2.303
127. South Africa 2.321
128. Iran 2.324
129. Honduras 2.339
130. Turkey 2.344
131. Kyrgyz Republic 2.359
132. Azerbaijan 2.360
133. Philippines 2.415
134. Ivory Coast 2.419
135. Mexico 2.445
136. Lebanon 2.459
137. Ethiopia 2.504
138. Burundi 2.524
139. Myanmar 2.525
140. Zimbabwe 2.538
141. Georgia 2.541
142. India 2.549
143. Yemen 2.601
144. Colombia 2.625
145. Chad 2.671
146. Nigeria 2.801
147. Libya 2.830
147. Syria 2.830
149. Pakistan 2.833
150. Israel 2.842
151. Central African Republic 2.872
152. North Korea 2.932
153. Russia 2.938
154. Democratic Republic of the Congo 3.073
155. Iraq 3.192
156. Sudan 3.193
157. Afghanistan 3.252
158. Somalia 3.392

Source: Institute for Economics & Peace and Global Peace Index.

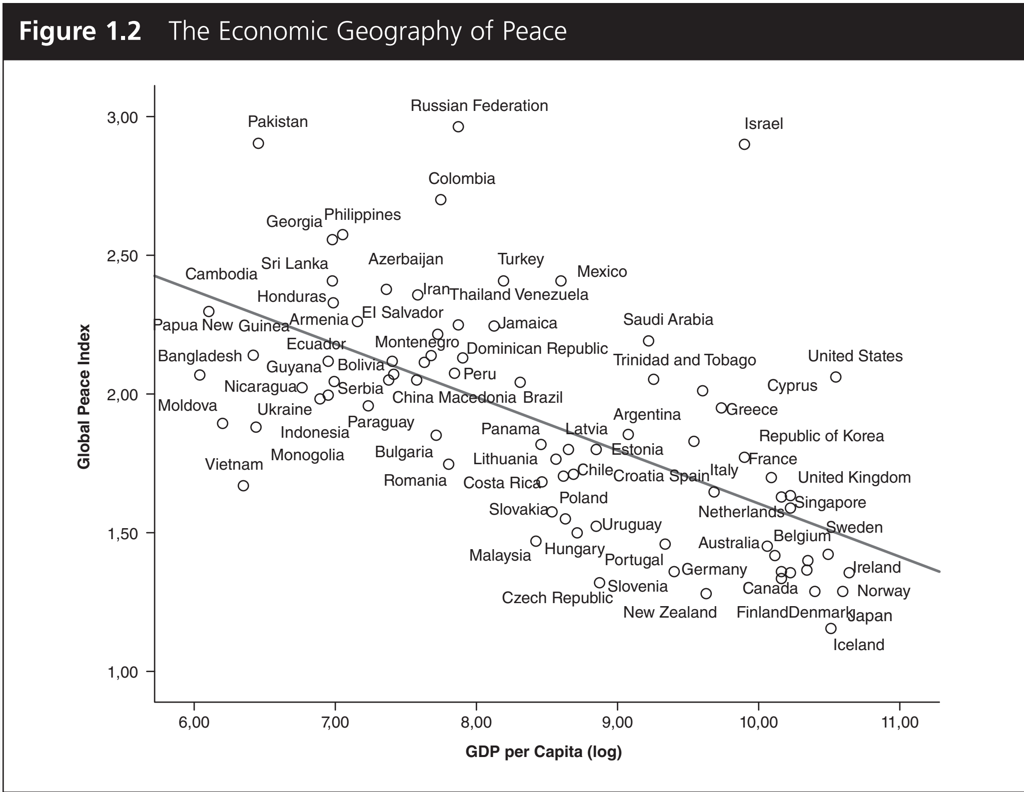
The GPI researchers explored possible correlations between the GPI and other economic and societal indicators—including measures of democracy and transparency, education, and material wellbeing. Among the GPI indicators, "Level of perceived criminality in society" showed a substantial overall deterioration. The five factors that diminished most substantially were all measures of the security situation, reflecting the turmoil that has roiled the Arab world and beyond. The Political Terror Scale showed the greatest improvement, although there were also gains in several indicators of militarization. (Since annual GPI findings are largely based on data accumulated during the prior 12-month period, they can be expected to fluctuate in response to current events.)

There is a statistically significant correlation, although not a dramatic one, between Gross Domestic Product (GDP) per capita and the peacefulness of a country.

The United States

The United States was selected for the first national peace index, principally due to the high quality of state-level data dating back to the early 1980s and the existence of a large literature of related studies, which estimate the various costs of violence as well as the costs associated with containing violence. Compared to other nations in the Global Peace Index, the United States is

Figure 1.2 The Economic Geography of Peace



Source: Institute for Economics & Peace and Global Peace Index.

midranking. The peacefulness of the United States can be further analyzed by comparing the internal U.S. peace score from the Global Peace Index with the average GPI score for each of the categories measured. The United States performs relatively well on the majority of these internal indicators when compared to the rest of the world and particularly well on measures of internal cohesion: low levels of organized internal conflict and a high level of political stability. The United States also performs well on citizen perception of crime within the country and on the likelihood of violent demonstrations.

However, as noted—and is worth repeating—the overall score of the United States ranks it a less-than-impressive 88th worldwide out of the 158-ranked nations, mainly due to its wars and defense expenditures. The United States is commonly characterized as having a higher rate of violence than many other developed economies, yet trends in crime over the past 20 years have fluctuated substantially, for reasons that have been much debated. At the beginning of the 1980s, the U.S. crime rate was comparable to that of other developed nations; violence then steadily increased to a peak in the mid-1990s and has since been falling. However, this reduction has been accompanied by a steadily *increasing* incarceration rate, which has significant economic consequences.

It is striking that the United States, with the largest economy in the world and one of the highest per capita GDP, nonetheless has a relatively low level of peacefulness compared with other

developed economies. This suggests that the potential economic gains of domestic peacefulness may well be considerable. In the context of the lingering effects of the Global Financial Crisis, this is especially pertinent, because the additional economic activity that would be created through improvements in peace can provide a powerful stimulus to aid economic recovery.

The opportunity to move expenditures from violence-containment industries to more economically productive industries is significant. This can be exemplified by the opportunity to build a highway instead of a jail or the expansion of employment in teachers rather than prison guards. Although such efforts would not necessarily generate additional economic activity in themselves, they would create the foundation for a more productive economy. The realization of such additional economic activity is defined as the “dynamic peace dividend,” which can result in a substantial lift in GDP and employment.

Compared to most other countries, additional data are available for the United States, permitting a more fine-grained analysis. The results indicate that states in the northern part of the United States are consistently more peaceful than those in the south, and also that the United States performs well on the majority of internal indicators compared with the rest of the world. These indicators are:

- Number of homicides per 100,000 people
- Number of violent crimes per 100,000 people
- Number of jailed population per 100,000 people
- Number of police officers per 100,000 people
- Availability of small arms

Source: Institute for Economics & Peace and Global Peace Index.

Key Findings of the U.S. Peace Index

1. **From 1995 to 2009, the United States became more peaceful**

   Peace improved by 8% from 1995 to 2009, driven by a substantial decrease in the rates of homicide and violent crime. However, these improvements were largely offset by increases in the incarceration rate, which, as of year-end 2010, stood at 0.7% of resident adults, the highest in the world.

2. **The five most peaceful states are Maine, New Hampshire, Vermont, Minnesota, and North Dakota**

   The Northeast is the most peaceful region in the United States., with all of its states ranking in the top half of the U.S. Peace Index. This includes the heavily populated states of New York, Pennsylvania, and New Jersey. The least peaceful states are Louisiana, Tennessee, Nevada, Florida, and Alabama.

3. **Peace is linked to opportunity, health, education, and the economy**

   Statistically significant correlations were found between a state’s peacefulness and 15 different social and economic factors. These related to health, education, demographics and economic opportunity but not to political affiliation.

Many of these factors can be seen as measures of opportunity. States that ranked higher on these social and economic factors tended to have higher scores in peace, which suggests that access to basic services including education, health care, and ultimately the opportunity to succeed are key prerequisites to a more peaceful society.

4. **Peace is not linked to political affiliation**

   Neither predominantly Republican nor Democratic states had a discernible advantage in peace. Although the top five states are largely Democratic and the bottom five states are largely Republican, once the mid-ranking states were included in the analysis, no overall political effect was found.

5. **The potential economic gains from improvements in peace are significant**

   Improvements in peace would result in the realization of substantial savings for both governments and society. If the United States reduced its violence to the same levels as Canada, for example, local governments would collectively save about $89 billion, while the same reductions in the level of violence would provide an economic stimulus of approximately $272 billion. The release of "trapped productivity" via a reduction of violence would create a stimulus that could generate an additional 2.7 million new jobs, effectively lowering the U.S. unemployment rate by 20%.

6. **On a per capita basis, the top five states with the most to gain from reductions in violence are Louisiana, Florida, Nevada, Alaska, and New Mexico**

   The total economic effect of violence tends to be greatest in the most violent states; however, several states have a structurally higher cost of violence because of the nature of that violence. For instance, lost productivity from assault and lost productivity from incarceration are the largest shares of the total cost of violence, so states with high levels of incarceration and assault tend to have a higher per capita cost. The large populous states with high levels of incarceration have the most to gain, such as California, Florida, and Texas.

7. **Growing incarceration is a drag on the economy and in recent years has not had a significant effect on violent crime**

   While homicide and violent crime rates have fallen, the economic benefits to flow from these decreases have been largely offset by the costs associated with the increase in the incarceration rate. In recent years, there has been no statistically meaningful relationship between increases in incarceration rates and decreases in violent crime.

8. **There is a strong correlation between people's satisfaction with their access to basic services and the peacefulness within each state.**

   The Gallup Basic Access sub-index is based on a survey in which 13 questions assess availability of basic needs for a healthy life, specifically, access to clean water, medicine, a safe place to exercise, and affordable fruits and vegetables; enough money for food, shelter, and health care; having health insurance, access to a doctor and a dentist; as well as satisfaction with one's community, which includes a sense that it is improving as a place to live, and that the respondents feel safe walking alone at night.

9. **Six of the 10 most populous states were also among the top 10 states whose peacefulness improved**

   These were New York, California, Texas, Georgia, Illinois, and Michigan.

10. **North Dakota, South Dakota, and Montana had the three most significant declines in peacefulness**

    This result stands out, since these three states all declined in peacefulness by over 40%; nonetheless, they are still relatively peaceful and in the top half of the states generally.

Culture of Peace

In 1999, the United Nations (UN) General Assembly launched a program of action to build a "culture of peace" for the world's children, which envisaged working toward a positive peace of justice, tolerance, and plenty. The UN defined a culture of peace as involving values, attitudes, and behaviors that

- reject violence,
- endeavor to prevent conflicts by addressing root causes, and
- aim at solving problems through dialogue and negotiation.

The UN proposed that such a culture of peace would be furthered by actions promoting education for peace and sustainable development, which it suggested was based on human rights, gender equality, democratic participation, tolerant solidarity, open communication, and international security. However, these links between the concept of peace and its all alleged causes were presumed rather than systematically measured. For example, while advocates of liberal peace theory have held that democratic states rarely attack each other, the ongoing wars in Iraq, Afghanistan, and elsewhere demonstrate how some democratic countries can be militant or belligerent—the justification for war often being that peace is ultimately secured through violence or the threat of violence.

A FINAL NOTE ON THE MEANINGS OF PEACE

Neither the study nor the pursuit of peace ignores the importance of conflict. Peace and conflict studies do not aim to abolish conflict any more than peace practitioners expect to eliminate rivalry or competition in a world of finite resources and imperfect human conduct. (Analogously, the field of medicine does not realistically seek to eliminate all bacteria or viruses from the world, although it is committed to struggling against them for human betterment.)

Where possible, peace and conflict studies seek to develop new avenues for cooperation, as well as to reduce violence, especially organized, state-sanctioned violence and the terrorizing violence perpetrated by and against nonstate actors. It is this violence, by any definition the polar opposite of peace, that has so blemished human history and that—with the advent of nuclear weapons, biochemical weapons, and other weapons of global destruction—now threatens the future of all life on this planet. And it is the horror of such violence, as well as the glorious and perhaps even realistic hope of peace (both negative and positive), that make peace and conflict studies especially frustrating, fascinating, and essential.

NOTES

1. *Webster's Third New International Dictionary*. 1993. Springfield, MA: Merriam-Webster, Inc., 1660.
2. Mo Tzu. 1967. *Basic Writings of Mo Tzu*. New York: Columbia University Press.
3. Raymond Aron. 1966. *Peace and War*. New York: Doubleday.
4. Johan Galtung. 1985. "Twenty-Five Years of Peace Research: Ten Challenges and Responses." Journal of Peace Research 22: 141–158.
5. Johan Galtung. 1990. "Cultural Violence." J*ournal of Peace Research, August 1990, vol. 27 no. 3, 291-305.*
6. Quincy Wright. 1964. *A Study of War*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
7. Ibid.
8. For the Global Peace Index and related documents, see: http://www.visionofhumanity.org/gpi-data/#/2011/scor. Tables reproduced with permission by Vision of Humanity.

QUESTIONS FOR FURTHER REFLECTION

1. Is peace an absolute, or are there degrees of peace, both outer and inner?
2. To what extent are peace and war, and nonviolence and violence, mutually exclusive?
3. Under which circumstances, if any, is conflict inescapable and perhaps even desirable?
4. Under which circumstances, if any, is violence inescapable and perhaps even desirable?
5. Assess the strengths and weaknesses of such empirical tools as the GPI for measuring peace and its absence.

SUGGESTIONS FOR FURTHER READING

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