Another Look at Achieving Peace
by the Year 2000*

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Abstract

Three key developments in global politics since the end of the Cold War tha
have bearing on the issue of world peace are identified, and three actions are
suggested as a necessary response by humanity. The first development has beer
the continuing process of globalization in terms of international trade,
communications and culture, multinational corporations, migrations,
environmental issues, and international crime. The second has been the
experience of maintaining peace in a new environment of reduced immediate
risk of a global holocaust, lower military expenditures, and fewer regiona
conflicts on the one hand, and major weaknesses in peacekeeping procedure:
and looming major risks in the longer term on the other. The third has been the
failure of the world's leaders to seize the opportunity of the fiftieth anniversary
of the United Nations to implement effective strategies for maintenance of peace
in the coming century. The three responses proposed are: to strengthen the
institutional framework for peace by restructuring the United Nations as a
democratic federal world government; to urge the United States to provide
positive leadership in achieving this goal; and to underpin the whole enterprise
with systematic education of all humanity in the principle of "The earth is bu
one country and mankind its citizens."

Résumé

L'auteur identifie trois développements dans la politique mondiale qui ont jou
un rôle clé dans la question de la paix mondiale depuis la fin de la guerr
froide, puis il suggère trois actions que l'humanité se doit d'entreprendre
Ainsi, le premier développement correspond processus continu de globalisatio,
en ce qui a trait, sur le plan international, au commerce, à la culture et au
communications, aux corporations multinationales, aux migrations, au
questions environnementales et au crime international. Le secon,
développement porte sur le maintien de la paix dans un nouvel environnemer,
où, d'une part, les risques immédiats d'un holocauste global sont réduits, le
dépenses militaires restreintes et les conflits régionaux moins nombreux et oi

d'autre part, les procédures de maintien de la paix souffrent d'une grande impuissance alors que d'importants risques nous menacent à long terme. Le troisième développement a été l'incapacité des dirigeants du monde de saisir l'occasion que présentait le cinquantième anniversaire des Nations-Unies et d'adopter des stratégies efficaces pour le maintien de la paix dans le siècle à venir. Dans ce contexte, l'auteur propose donc les trois actions suivantes: renforcer la structure institutionnelle pour la paix en restructurant les Nations-Unies en tant que gouvernement fédéral mondial; presser les États-Unis d'assumer un leadership positif dans l'accomplissement de ce but; et étayer l'entreprise en entier de l'éducation systématique de toute l'humanité quant au principe que. «La terre n'est qu'un seul pays et les hommes ses citoyens».

Resumen
Se identifican tres acontecimientos claves de la política global ocurridos desde el final de la Guerra Fría que tienen relación con el tema de paz, y se sugieren tres acciones como reacción necesaria de la humanidad. El primer desarrollo ha sido el proceso continuo de la globalización en lo referente al comercio internacional, las comunicaciones y la cultura, las corporaciones multinacionales, migraciones, temas ambientales, y crimen internacional. El segundo ha sido la experiencia de mantener paz en un ambiente nuevo de riesgo reducido de holocausto global inminente, menos gastos militares y, por un lado, menos conflictos regionales, y por el otro, procedimientos de paz irresolutos de consideración, acompañados de riesgos mayores de largo alcance que surgen amenazadoramente. El tercero ha sido el fracaso de los líderes mundiales en no valerse de la oportunidad, en el cincuentenario de las Naciones Unidas, de implementar estrategias efectivas para el mantenimiento de paz en el siglo venidero. Las tres reacciones que se proponen son: fortalecer el marco institucional de paz reestructurando las Naciones Unidas como un gobierno federal democrático mundial; urgir a los Estados Unidos de adelantar un liderazgo positivo para lograr esta meta; y sostener la empresa en su totalidad con la educación sistemática de toda la humanidad en el principio de que "La tierra es una sola patria y la humanidad sus ciudadanos."

This article presents some further thoughts on the themes discussed in *Achieving Peace by the Year 2000,* taking account of the major changes in the global political and economic situation which have occurred since that book was first published in 1988. It should be added that *Achieving Peace by the Year 2000* was inspired by *The Promise of World Peace,* a statement of the Universal House of Justice addressed to the "peoples of the world" and issued in connection with the United Nations Year of Peace, 1985–86. This statement represented the Bahá'í community's position that establishment of world peace must be the first priority of humanity. It is not unreasonable to assert that the Bahá'í community, which began more than 150 years ago, is the oldest "global"

peace movement. The basic writings of the Bahá'í Faith not only argue the high desirability of peace but also provide practical guidelines on how peace can be achieved. They contain a vision and sense of direction that follows logically from the past evolution of human society from earliest times to the present, from infancy in terms of spiritual understanding and intellectual capacity through to adolescence and now the beginnings of adulthood. The vision is of a step-by-step approach to an ultimate "Most Great Peace" when humanity will be united emotionally at the spiritual level as well as politically at the intellectual level, a time when the teachings of Bahá'u'lláh have been accepted by the generality of humanity, including, most importantly, absolute dedication to true justice for all.[1] The early steps leading to this ultimate reality constitute the period of the "Lesser Peace" and start with the establishment of a political peace among nations that 'Abdu'l-Bahá promised would occur by the end of this century:

"Are there any signs that the permanent peace of the world will be established in anything like a reasonable period?" Abdu'l Baha [*sic*] was asked.

"It will be established in this century," He answered. "It will be universal in the twentieth century. All nations will be forced into it."[2]

Achieving Peace was intended to be simply a minor personal footnote to *The Promise of World Peace.* One of its principal themes was the connection between "soft" approaches to peace "such as the promotion of general values relating to the idea of the oneness of humanity" and "hard" approaches "such as international treaties and other diplomatic initiatives." "Experience . . . strongly suggests that both approaches are necessary and that the work of establishing peace will not be effective until the two are closely linked" (Huddleston, *Achieving Peace* xi).[3] The book contained twelve proposals. On the one hand, emphasis was given to the need for greater unity in the peace movement, for a cooperative rather than confrontational style, and for the teaching of peace studies in all education institutions around the world. On the other hand, several

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1. Some of the principal Bahá'í writings directly addressing the peace issue are: Bahá'u'lláh, *The Proclamation of Bahá'u'lláh;* 'Abdu'l-Bahá, *Foundations of World Unity;* Shoghi Effendi, *Citadel of Faith* and *World Order of Bahá'u'lláh;* Universal House of Justice, *Promise of World Peace;* Bahá'í International Community, *The Turning Point for All Nations.* Two useful commentaries are: Tyson, *World Peace and World Government;* Lee, *Prelude to the Lesser Peace.*

2. Extract from interview with newspaper reporter, quoted in *'Abdu'l-Bahá in Canada* 51.

3. This view seems to be gaining acceptance as indicated by the following quotation: " . . . religious figures can make strong contributions to the peacemaking process . . . they are also better tuned to dealing with basic moral issues and spiritual needs. . . . A careful examination of the major world religions reveals the existence of specific theological warrants within each that support the dual concepts of peacemaking and conflict resolution. . . . This suggests a need to move toward a new model for international relations . . . that reaches . . . to recognize and reinforce the contribution of non-governmental organizations. . . . Religious communities should bring their considerable, but largely underutilized, assets to bear on the task of peacemaking" (Douglas Johnston, Center for Strategic and International Studies, "Resuscitating Peace: Religious Service to the Political World," *Washington Post* 4/16/95).

of the proposals addressed ways to reduce the threat of large numbers of offensive mass destruction weapons and to strengthen the institutional framework for world peace. The latter focused on moving the United Nations forward from a confederate to a federal structure with specific suggestions regarding the legislative, judicial, and executive functions, including most particularly its ability to apply effective military and nonmilitary sanctions against any violent aggressor attacking the commonweal.

Building on this book, the current article has two parts. First, it will briefly review three global developments in the last decade that seem to be of particular relevance to the discussion of establishing world peace. Second, it will suggest three broad actions that would logically follow from this review.

Before beginning the discussion, it is perhaps useful to comment on what is meant by "peace" in the phrase "achieving peace by the year 2000." Peace at a minimum means the absence of war. Traditionally, the term "war" has been applied to armed conflicts between sovereign states or civil wars within states. Today, however, the term is often used more broadly. Many see any violence, whether it involves criminal gangs, street muggings, or beatings in the home, as war. Others talk of trade and environmental wars. An even broader interpretation is that war is at hand in any situation when some group is imposing its will on others outside the orderly and democratic rule of law.

Clearly, it is totally unrealistic to talk of ending war as defined in such broad terms in the foreseeable future. For practical purposes, what is meant in this discussion is the establishment of much stronger global peacekeeping institutions that will make war in the conventional sense (and later all forms of violence) increasingly unattractive and costly as a means of resolving grievances or for achieving any other purpose. In short, it is concerned with creating conditions that will result in a significant reduction in the incidence of violence.[4] This seems to be a reasonable understanding of the above-quoted promise of 'Abdu'l-Bahá.

Three Important Global Developments Since the End of the Cold War
Further Globalization
The first development that is of significance in this context is the continuing process of globalization, which, in effect, is making all humanity part of one "village" community where we are all increasingly interdependent and affected by the actions of others. There are several aspects to globalization that require comment.

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4. Some are of the view that the end of the Cold War in 1989 was itself the first step of the Lesser Peace.

Most important is the continuing growth of international trade as a proportion of the total economy.[5] In recent years, this has included a number of nations that had previously limited their participation for ideological reasons. It is a development associated with the apparent triumph of the consumer market philosophy. It has been given formal recognition in the new World Trade Organization.[6]

Also of great significance has been continuing improvement and intensification of international communication, facilitated most notably in the last few years by the evolution of such technology as the facsimile machine, high-capacity fiber-optic wiring, the personal computer, the computer-based Internet system, and the wireless telephone. This communications revolution is being compared to the Industrial Revolution in terms of its impact on global society. It is said that the revolution has already resulted in the "fastest innovation any business has ever experienced,"[7] and clearly the potential for further advance is immense, especially in the economically less developed regions of the world.

Associated with these trends has been the continued rise in importance of multinational and international corporations with their own cultures and a position increasingly outside the control of national governments. Such corporations represent a strong force pushing for further globalization. They are playing a leading part in the transfer of capital, ideas, and technology from one country to another as prospects for business and profit present themselves, particularly when there are large numbers of poor people willing to work for relatively low compensation. At the same time, there is a constant pressure for migration of peoples from poor to wealthy countries in response to the drive to escape from absolute poverty.

Another aspect of the process has been a resurgence of concerns about the impact of a rapidly growing world economy on the global natural environment, concerns such as global warming; thinning of the ozone layer; reduced biodiversity; pollution of air, water, and land; loss of forest cover; erosion of productive soils; shortages of fresh water; decline of ocean fisheries; and a growing acceptance that the problem affects not only the wealthy countries

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5. Between 1990 and 1995, international trade grew 30 percent in real terms, compared with an increase of 10 percent in the gross world product (GWP). In 1950, international trade represented less than 9 percent of the gross world product. By 1995, it was more than 20 percent (based on data in *Vital Signs*). *The World Bank Atlas* for 1997 shows that in 1995, of 168 countries reviewed, 162 (with 93 percent of the total population) had international trade equal to 20 percent or more of gross domestic product (GDP). In eighty-eight of these countries (with 12 percent of the population) international trade was 70 percent or more of the GDP.

6. It is a sign of progress toward globalization that an attempt some forty years ago to establish an institution with similar functions, the International Trade Organization, was rejected by the nations of the world.

7. *Economist* 9/13/97.

(which, after all, have the resources necessary to take protective measures) but also poor countries (that currently do not have such resources) pressing ahead with industrial development.[8] The need for cooperation to deal with these issues was acknowledged at the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, 1992), which, because of the attendance of a large number of voluntary and popular grassroots organizations as well as the usual official representatives of national governments, came close to being a pioneer meeting of all the peoples of the world.[9]

A sinister side of globalization has been the continuing growth of increasingly sophisticated international criminal organizations dealing in drugs, prostitution, theft, money laundering, and all forms of corruption, particularly in the Americas, Asia, and Europe, including Russia. This development can be attributed partly to the collapse of the tight control once exercised by Communist authoritarian governments and partly to the general decline in moral standards around the world under assault from the temptations of the consumer society. Such criminal organizations are now so powerful that in several regions of the world they are undermining the very foundations of government and civil society itself.

What do these developments toward globalization mean in terms of war and peace? One obvious consequence is that greater economic integration means that nations have a growing self-interest in maintaining peace because war, even at the local or regional level, is increasingly likely to have an adverse effect, directly or indirectly, on international commerce and thereby cause losses to all, not just the immediate parties to a conflict. Another positive consequence is that greater communication means that different peoples come to know each other better and have greater mutual understanding and empathy as fellow human beings.[10] This should make it more difficult for destructive politicians to demonize foreigners, long a technique for persuading people to go to war.

Globalization does, however, bring some real risks, especially in the short term. Thus, though globalization of the economy should in the long run lead to greater equality among nations and reduce poverty, in the period of transition it

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8. See, for instance, the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) projection of greenhouse gases for the period 1990 to 2100, as reported in the *Washington Post* 10/6/97.

9. Within the Bahá'í Community, such meetings of the peoples of the world have occurred at two World Congresses, in 1963 and in 1992, the latter just a few months after the UN Conference on Environment and Development.

10. One important indicator of this process is the union of peoples through intermarriage. Thus, a 1969 study of the United States showed that some 50 percent of all Americans had such diverse backgrounds that they could not identify with any particular immigrant ethnic group. Fifty percent of married women of European descent had spouses of a different ethnic background. Forty percent of Catholics, some 30 percent of Jews, and 7 percent of Protestants married outside their religions. At that time, 25 percent of married Native Americans had interracial marriages, as did 12 percent of married Chinese Americans. However, only 1 percent of African Americans had interracial marriages (*Harvard Encyclopedia of American Ethnic Groups*). Since then, the latter number has increased to 3 percent, but this is far behind experience in the United Kingdom, where some 25 percent of married British persons of Caribbean descent under age thirty-four have a spouse of another race (*Economist* 2/8/97).

can cause disruption and increased extremes of wealth and poverty if there is not corrective action by the global community.[11] This in turn induces suspicion, bitterness, and envy—all emotions that can easily explode into conflict and war.

Furthermore, in the short run, mixing with people of a different culture can be highly disturbing and irritating. Immigrants are often seen as a threat to jobs and to sheer physical security. Tourists flaunting wealth and showing lack of respect for local customs can provoke resentment and anger. The rapid spread of Western consumer culture and associated liberal social attitudes, so attractive to the young in particular, is widely seen as a threat in more traditional societies and is easily portrayed as the latest round of Western imperialism, especially in regions that experienced colonialism under the global empires of nineteenth-century Europe. The intensity of that feeling is captured by Samuel Huntington in his recent book *The Clash of Civilizations and the Remaking of a World Order,* in which he suggests that in the coming century the world will be divided into half-a-dozen or so mutually hostile cultural regions.

Peacekeeping

During the post–Cold-War period, a second development of clear importance in the context of this discussion has been the experience of trying to maintain peace. The first and most obvious positive aspect of this experience has been a significant reduction in the risk of a major global war. The confrontation of two ideological blocs of nations, each led by one of the two superpowers in possession of numerous weapons of mass destruction, has come to an end. There has been a large reduction in arms, both conventional and nonconventional, by most nations of the world,[12] and associated regional

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11. In a speech to launch the International Year for the Eradication of Poverty (12/18/95), the UN Secretary-General, Boutros Boutros-Ghali, said, "In 1990 the per capita income of the wealthiest twenty percent of the world's population was 60 times greater than that of the poorest twenty percent. Thirty years earlier, it was only 30 times greater."

12. Annual world military expenditures fell from 5.6 percent of gross world product (GWP) in 1986 to 3.0 percent in 1994. During the same period, United States military expenditures as a percent of gross national product (GNP) fell from 6.7 to 4.3. International arms transfers, which peaked at $60 billion in 1987, had fallen to $18 billion by 1994 (Sivard. *World Military and Social Expenditures*). Between 1990 and 1995, total world military personnel fell by about 20 percent, as did deployment of major conventional weapons such as tanks, artillery pieces, combat aircraft, surface warships, and submarines (*Vital Signs*, 1996 and 1997).

As for weapons of mass destruction, the two superpowers together possessed some 70,000 nuclear weapons in the mid-1980s. That number fell to about 50,000 by 1990 mainly because of decommissioning of obsolete weapons by the USA. At that time, it was estimated that the two powers had 20,000 strategic weapons (on intercontinental land-based missiles, bomber aircraft, and nuclear powered submarines), 2,000 intermediate-range weapons (mostly in Europe), and around 20,000 tactical weapons (battlefield bombs, mines and artillery shells, and shipborne anti-ship, anti-submarine, anti-aircraft, and anti-missile ordnance). In addition, there were reserve stocks that were not deployed for immediate use. It is estimated that in 1997 Russia and the United States still had some 35,000 nuclear weapons though decommissioning of many is in progress. In addition, the other three "official" nuclear powers (China, France, and the United Kingdom) are each believed to

conflicts in the Americas, Africa, and Asia, many of which have been brought to a conclusion,[13] although, of course, there are still on going a few such conflicts, including new ones in Yugoslavia, Somalia, and Rwanda.

Giving greater impact to this experience has been the strengthening of democracy, both in terms of quality and extent. The end of the security imperatives of the Cold War has encouraged grassroots demand in many of the established democracies for the rooting out of corruption and for more accountable government.[14] This demand for "good governance" has even

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possess a few hundred such weapons. To complete the picture, it is thought that Israel has in excess of 100 and that both India and Pakistan are capable of quickly manufacturing a dozen or so if desired. Finally, a word on chemical weapons. In the mid-1980s, it is estimated that the superpowers had some 100,000 tons of poison gas. That figure is now down to about 70,000 tons, and decommissioning is in progress. A few other powers have admitted to holding such weapons but have agreed to destroy their stocks. As noted below, three others may have secret stocks.

The main disarmament treaties in the post–Cold-War period have been as follows:

1988 Intermediate Nuclear Forces Treaty (INF), between the USA and the Soviet Union, which eliminated about 2,000 short- and medium-range nuclear missiles. This was the first treaty that actually reduced the number of nuclear weapons (about 4 percent of the total at that time) as the preceding treaties (SALT I of 1972 and SALT II of 1974) had only put a partial cap on existing numbers. Later, there were some agreements on reduction in the number of tactical nuclear weapons.

1991 Conventional Forces in Europe, between NATO and the Warsaw Pact, which eliminated about 53,000 conventional weapons (aircraft, tanks, artillery pieces, etc.). Later it involved massive reductions in military personnel in Europe, including the withdrawal of Soviet/Russian armies from Eastern Europe.

1991 Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty (START I), between the USA and the Soviet Union, which eliminated about 8,000 strategic nuclear missile weapons (about half the total at that time).

1993 UN Registry of Conventional Weapons: a voluntary agreement to provide data on major conventional weapons imported and exported in the previous year.

1995 Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty (START II), which will eliminate another 6,000 strategic nuclear weapons by 2003 (about half the number left after START I). It would leave the USA and Russia with about 3,500 each. This treaty has not yet been ratified by the Russian Duma. Discussions are now in progress regarding a START III, which would reduce the number of such weapons to about 2,000 for each of the two powers.

1995 Comprehensive Nuclear Test Ban Treaty. This tightens up the earlier Limited Test Ban Treaty of 1963, and Threshold Test Ban Treaty of 1974.

1995 Permanent Renewal of the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty. This treaty, signed by 175 nations, continued recognition of the right of 5 nations (USA, Russia, China, France, and the UK) to possess such weapons on the understanding that they would gradually work towards eventual elimination. All other nations would not have such weapons. Among the few nations not signing were three known to be nuclear capable: Israel, India, and Pakistan.

1995 Chemical Weapons Convention, signed by 167 nations, but not by several suspected of possessing such weapons: Libya, Iraq, and North Korea. This treaty, which complements the 1972 Biological and Toxin Weapons Convention (signed by about the same number of nations), is the first to wipe out an entire class of existing weapons.

1997 Banning of anti-personnel mines. The fast-track Canadian initiative has gained the support of over 100 nations but not yet that of the United States and some other principal users. About 100 million such weapons buried in the lands of some 60 countries cause some 25,000 accidental civilian injuries and deaths each year, about one-fifth of whom are children under age 15.

13. The end of the civil war in South Africa had particular world significance because it was about the immensely divisive issue of racism.

14. Two of the most striking early examples occurred in Japan and Italy, where there was popular reaction against the inevitable corruption associated with single parties being in power more or less continuously since the end of the Second World War.

become a part of the procedure of international organizations such as the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund in negotiating terms for assistance with member countries. Democracy has also, to a considerable extent, replaced authoritarian government in much of Latin America, Asia, Africa, Eastern Europe, and the former Soviet Union. The result is that today, for the first time in history, the majority of nations, together containing well over half the world's population, have democratic credentials, imperfect as some may be.[15] That is important in this context, because it is the general historical experience that democracies are less prone to war against each other than are authoritarian states. This difference is attributable to a basic belief in the principle of the rule of law and to political leaders understanding that the voting public rarely likes to send its young off to war.[16] In the heady days at the close of the Cold War and the apparent victory of the democratic-market system, Francis Fukuyama, an American philosopher, gave expression to the significance of this view in his book *The End of History and the Last Man.*

Another aspect of the post–Cold-War experience of maintaining peace has been the critical role of the remaining superpower, the United States, in acting as the world's policeman, i.e., in imposing a *Pax Americana*, somewhat following the precedent of *Pax Britannica* in the nineteenth century, and perhaps of the regional *Pax Romana* in ancient times.

The United States is not the only nation with global interests, but it is the only one with an effective military and diplomatic global reach.[17] During the Cold War, the United States acquired the habit of acting like a global power. This policy had its roots in a central aspect of the United States's cultural inheritance: a commitment (going back to the American Revolution itself) to the building of a just global society, based on democracy and human rights. It has been manifested, for example, in the United States's contributions to the creation of the World Court, the League of Nations, the United Nations, and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. Nearly every effort to halt violent conflict in the world in recent years has involved the United States in a leadership role, either acting with a few selected allies or through the United Nations, most notably in the case of the 1991 Gulf War to repel armed aggression against Kuwait.

The obvious wish of the United States to limit its military commitments, as shown by public insistence on plans for an "exit strategy," has clearly eased the

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15. One recent indication is given in a 1996 report of the Inter-Parliamentary Union showing that 179 out of 192 sovereign states (93 percent) now elect their legislatures. In the last decade, 69 nations have held multiparty elections for the first time.

16. ". . . since democracies are demonstrably more likely to maintain their international commitments, less likely to engage in terrorism or wreak environmental damage and less likely to make war on each other" (Strobe Talbot, US Deputy Secretary of State, *Economist* 11/23/96).

17. "America is so obviously the world's leader, its biggest economy, its most powerful warrior and . . . its only remaining super power . . . the most important quality America brings to the world scene is its sheer capacity to get things done" (*Economist* 11/23/97). The same article quoted President Chirac of France addressing the US Congress: "Today, as yesterday, the world needs the United States."

concerns of other nations about its leadership role. The latter policy, of course, reflects America's long tradition of aiming to keep free of foreign entanglements, a tradition sometimes in tension with commitment to global democracy, as well as the general reluctance of democracies to put citizens at risk in foreign war, a sensitivity particularly strong in the United States since the Vietnam War.

Useful as the concept of *Pax Americana* has been, it clearly is not a long-term formula for establishing a permanent peace. On the one hand, the United States is likely to be selective in its peacekeeping activities, as it has already demonstrated, and will be reluctant to become involved in situations where it does not perceive an immediate and important national interest. Sometimes the government will be forced by popular pressure to intervene when information provided by the media leads to outrage concerning particular atrocities, e.g., in Somalia and Rwanda, but this is not a reliable and consistent factor, as shown in both these cases. On the other hand, other nations, especially those harboring grievances and hostility against the United States, will inevitably (and sometimes with good reason) see American action as prompted more by self-interest than the general interest of humanity, and they will therefore work to undermine the process.

An even more important limitation on the concept of *Pax Americana* is the fact that power relationships among nations are constantly changing, especially on account of differing degrees of success in promoting economic growth, and therefore American preeminence in international relations may not last. Indeed, there are already signs that in the coming century new superpowers with authoritarian governments may arise which could seriously challenge *Pax Americana* and thereby increase the risk of war rather than reduce it.

This then leads logically to the only practical alternative: the United Nations, an institution that its founders believed to be necessary because of the clear lesson of history that such *realpolitik* practices as dominance by one power or bloc of powers, or trying to manage a forever shifting balance of power, are simply not viable in the long term for guaranteeing a lasting peace.

During the Cold War, of course, the United Nations could barely make any contribution to the peace process—its primary function—because it was paralyzed by the confrontation between the United States and the Soviet Union, particularly in the key institution, the Security Council. Since then, the Security Council has begun to function approximately as its founders intended, and the United Nations has been able to mount more peacekeeping operations in seven years than in the first forty-five years of its existence. One consequence has been growing demands that the Security Council be reformed so that its membership, currently heavily weighted in favor of the powers victorious at the end of the Second World War, would be more representative of the global community and the reality of power today.

United Nations peacekeeping operations have undoubtedly had some success. However, they have been gravely hampered by total reliance on military units seconded from national forces. Such reliance involves a multitude of drawbacks. First, it takes time to negotiate for such units to be sent to the needed location, a significant handicap when speed is often the critical factor in preventing a conflict from spiraling out of control. Second, there is the reluctance of governments, especially those of democracies, to see their citizens put in harm's way when their immediate vital interests are apparently not at risk, and as a result action is likely to be excessively cautious—again, hardly a formula for military success. A third problem is that sometimes, as in Yugoslavia and Somalia, there is lack of unity in command, and individual national units do not fully support one another. A fourth problem is lack of accountability, which can result, as in Cambodia and Somalia, in ill-disciplined national units, acting on behalf of the United Nations, abusing the country they are supposed to be assisting.[18] Yet another problem is that some national units may be sent on assignment without proper equipment, as happened in both Somalia and Bosnia. Finally, but most importantly, political considerations will sometimes outweigh common sense, and a national unit will be assigned to a United Nations peacekeeping operation, even when it is clear that it is likely to follow the bias of its own government in favor of one or the other party to a dispute.

Fiftieth Anniversary of the United Nations

These experiences in working to maintain world peace since the end of the Cold War lead to a third topic that should be mentioned in this discussion: the fiftieth anniversary of the United Nations in 1995. This was an opportune moment for the world's leaders to review the challenges of the coming fifty years and to improve present peacekeeping institutions so as to be adequate to meet these challenges. This psychological opportunity was reinforced by the coming of the third millennium of the Christian calendar and by the end of the Cold War itself, the third global conflict of the century.[19] At the end of the previous two global conflicts, in 1918 and 1945, political leaders had had a vision that resulted in such historic and progressive innovations as the League of Nations and the United Nations. The present time calls for similar courage and vision.

The United Nations anniversary has indeed prompted a large number of reports and papers on the subject. One of the most notable was the report of the

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18. Even such exemplary defence forces as those of Canada and Italy have had such experiences while serving with a UN peacekeeping force.
19. During the period of the Cold War, 1945–1990, it is estimated that some 22 million were killed in some 130 local conflicts. This figure might be compared with the estimated loss of life in World War I (about 20 million) and World War II (about 60 million) (from Sivard, *World Military and Social Expenditures*).

Commission on Global Governance, jointly chaired by Ingar Carlsson, the former prime minister of Sweden, and by Shidrath Ramphal, the former Secretary-General of the British Commonwealth.[20]

The Commission's report, called *Our Global Neighbourhood,* included fifty-seven specific recommendations, of which twenty-three dealt with security, twenty-three with economic and related matters, and eleven with strengthening of the rule of international law.[21] They included proposals to amend the United Nations Charter to allow for a more representative Security Council and for a broadened mandate to intervene in civil wars and to strengthen the military staff commission, as well as other proposals to recruit a small voluntary military force, to establish a new Economic Security Council, to reform the Bretton Woods institutions (the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund), and to broaden the powers of the World Court so that it would have compulsory jurisdiction and the support of a new permanent criminal court. Most important, the report stressed the role of values in underpinning peace and suggested that the Universal Declaration of Human Rights should be matched by one defining the responsibilities of all members of civil society:

- To contribute to the common good;
- To consider the impact of our actions on the security and welfare of others;
- To promote equity, including gender equity;
- To protect the interests of future generations by pursuing sustainable development and safeguarding the global commons;
- To preserve humanity's cultural and intellectual heritage;
- To be active participants in governance; and
- To work to eliminate corruption. (*Our Global Neighbourhood* 57)

The Commission called for a World Conference to be held in 1998, along the lines of the UN Conference on Environment and Development, with full representation by nongovernmental organizations (NGOs), as well as official government representation.

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20. This report addressing global issues was the latest in a series to come from an international commission in recent years. Others included: *Our Common Future,* a report of the World (Bruntland) Commission on Environment and Development; *North-South: A Program for Survival,* a report of the Independent (Brandt) Commission on International Development Issues.

21. The report included suggestions that had been made by the UN Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali in *Agenda for Peace.*

A large number of voluntary organizations also offered proposals, often along similar lines.[22] Of special interest for Bahá'ís was the submission by the Bahá'í International Community called *The Turning Point for All Nations*,[23] which, like *The Promise of World Peace* and *Our Global Neighbourhood* called for "a convocation of world leaders before the turn of this century to consider how the international order might be redefined and restructured to meet the challenges facing the world" (*Turning Point* 4).

The statement contained nineteen specific proposals grouped around four broad topics: (i) the United Nations General Assembly; (ii) the United Nations Executive Function; (iii) the World Court; and (iv) "releasing the power of the individual" with regard to economic development, fundamental human rights, advancing the status of women, and moral development. It was proposed that member countries should:

1. Raise the minimum requirement for membership in the United Nations with respect to human rights;[24]
2. Appoint a commission to study borders and frontiers*;
3. Search for new financial arrangements;
4. Make a commitment to a universal auxiliary language and common script*;
5. Investigate the possibility of a single international currency*;
6. Limit the exercise of the veto power in the Security Council;
7. Institutionalize current ad hoc military arrangements: "an International Force should be created";
8. Apply the notion of collective security to other problems of the global commons, e.g., international drug trafficking, food security, and new global pandemics;
9. Retain successful United Nations institutions with independent executive function (e.g., the United Nations Children's Fund, the International Civil Aviation Organization, the Universal Postal Union, the International Telecommunications Union, the International Labor Organization, and the World Health Organization);
10. Extend the World Court's jurisdiction, e.g., United Nations organs, as well as member countries of the United Nations, should have the right to bring cases before the World Court;

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22. It should be noted that the theme of reform and strengthening of the United Nations has been advocated for many years by such organizations as the World Federalists, the United Nations Association, and the Campaign for United Nations Reform. There are a huge number of publications on the subject. Some of the most well known and noteworthy are: Clarke and Sohn, *World Peace through World Order;* Ferenz, *Planethood* and *Commonsense Guide to World Peace;* Mische and Mische, *Towards a Human World Order;* Miller, *Global Order;* Hofman and Hofman, *A New Order;* Laurenti, *Peace and Security in a Changing World;* Yunker, *World Union on the Horizon.*

23. See footnote 1 above.

24. This proposal is reminiscent of former United States President Woodrow Wilson's thought that membership of the proposed League of Nations should be limited to democracies. Unfortunately, this was not practical at that time as democracies were a distinct minority. Most recently, the Organization of American States has amended its charter to permit ostracism of any government that came to power in a coup (*Washington Post* 9/26/97).

11. Coordinate the thematic courts, including the proposed International Criminal Court and the Chamber of Environmental Matters;
12. Launch a determined campaign to implement Agenda 21, the action plan of the UN Conference on Environment and Development at Rio;
13. Strengthen the machinery of the United Nations for monitoring implementation and follow-up of human rights;
14. Encourage universal ratification of international conventions on human rights;
15. Assure respect for the monitoring organs of the United Nations involved in human rights;
16. Increase the participation of women in member state delegations;
17. Encourage universal ratification of international conventions that protect women's rights and improve their status;
18. Plan ahead for implementation of the Beijing Conference Platform of Action with regard to women;
19. Promote the development of curricula for moral education in schools.*

* Principles specifically mentioned in the Bahá'í writings.

The practical response of governments of member nations to the proposals in these and other presentations has been virtually nil. Of particular significance has been the almost total lack of interest in the United States.[25] This merits at least some brief comment in the context of this discussion.

In general terms, polls have suggested that, in principle, Americans are supportive of the United Nations.[26] However, this support has been eroded by numerous stories about the bloated and inefficient nature of the United Nations Secretariat and the programs that it administers, as well as criticism of management of United Nations peacekeeping operations.

There is receptiveness to such one-sided presentations due to a whole series of factors. Thus, many still deeply resent the harsh anti-American rhetoric in the United Nations General Assembly during the later stages of the Cold War,[27] often coming from nations that had received American economic assistance. Many Americans are cool to the outside world because of (a) immigration, legal and illegal, which is widely portrayed as a threat to jobs, public safety, and

25. It should be noted, however, that the present United States administration does apparently support more equitable regional representation on the Security Council, standby national units for UN peacekeeping purposes, and establishment of a permanent international war crimes court. There is some doubt, however, as to whether such positions are supported in the US Congress.

26. For instance, a recent poll conducted for UNA-USA by the Wirthlin Group found that 71 percent would vote for a presidential candidate who would strengthen the UN and only 19 percent for one who would weaken it (*The Independent,* the newsletter of UNA-USA, spring 1996).

27. A low point in this process was the anti-Zionist resolution of 1975.

welfare budgets, and (b) free trade, which is seen as a threat to both jobs and protection of the environment. There is a subculture of conspiracy theories which allege that the United Nations is plotting to invade the United States and that mysterious troop movements and black helicopters, supposedly belonging to the United Nations, have been seen. These stories link with longstanding assertions by vocal groups in the United States that world government would be world dictatorship[28] or a sign of the Antichrist.

This phenomenon is a good example of the weakness of democracy, which Winston Churchill once described as the "least bad" form of government. While the general experience seems to be that although in a democracy ordinary voters (even if often shortsighted and parochial in perspective), tend to be more sensible than authoritarian governments, there are occasions when they will be overwhelmed by irrational emotions, particularly during times of stress, for example, the Weimar Republic in the Great Depression, or when there is cultural prejudice, especially against foreigners or minorities. This is the reason why true religion is necessary to make democracy function properly. It alone teaches a clear morality based on the principle of the family of humanity, as well as providing a long-term spiritual perspective that moderates short-term selfish material obsessions.

Conclusions: Lessons and Future Directions

Lessons from Recent International Experience

In reviewing these developments in the period since the end of the Cold War, at least four conclusions appear to be evident: (i) that war is still a major threat to humanity, (ii) that ad hoc peace measures are inadequate, (iii) that the United States must take a leadership role, and (iv) that voluntary organizations have a significant role to play in furthering the peace process.

I. War is still a Major Threat to Humanity. The issue of war and peace remains a very serious issue for humanity despite the reduced immediate risk of a global nuclear war. There are still large numbers of nuclear weapons in existence even after implementation of the START disarmament treaties (see footnote 12 above). Control of such weapons is not reliable; small portable weapons could easily fall into the hands of terrorists, and the trend in technology is likely to make such weapons cheaper and more easily available. This also may be true of chemical and biological weapons. The breakdown of ethical standards and the rise of international crime further increase the risk that such weapons could be

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28. This was the experience of United States President George Bush when he used the term "New World Order."

used,[29] and greater economic integration means that any war is likely to have greater reverberations all around the world than in the past. Last, but certainly not least, changing power relationships could lead to a revival of a risk of major war between new superpowers: in other words, the present *Pax Americana* may well be a window of opportunity that could close.

II. Ad Hoc Peace Measures Grossly Inadequate. It is surely clear that present reactive and ad hoc approaches to maintenance of peace are grossly inadequate even to handle relatively minor outbreaks of violence and would certainly be utterly powerless to contain and stop any major conflict. It is only rational to ask that a start be made in thinking seriously about a systematic approach, which inevitably involves moving forward from world confederation to world federation.

III. Leadership Role of the United States. It is evident that a major leadership role is required of the United States. This depends not only on its material strength—its enormous economy and its military and diplomatic might—but also on its moral authority derived from its spiritual inheritance. When America is true to itself as shown, for instance, by President Woodrow Wilson in 1918, President Franklin D. Roosevelt in 1941–45, President John F. Kennedy in 1961, Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. in 1963, the peoples of the world admire and respect the United States and are ready to follow its lead. When it bullies others and generally acts like a traditional *realpolitik* power, as it did too often during the Cold War, it is hated and opposed by much of the world. Such policies also frequently fail simply because they are not true to the real spirit of America, and in consequence they are not carried out with conviction and competence. Bahá'í writings make it clear that the United States has a very special spiritual destiny in the achievement of both the "Lesser Peace" and the "Most Great Peace"[30]

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29. *The Washington Post* (10/2/97) reported FBI Director, Louis Freeh, as saying "there is now a greater danger of nuclear attack by some outlaw group than there was by the Soviet Union during the Cold War. . . . The size of this problem is really immense . . . and it requires immediate attention." It also reported that a study of the Center for Strategic Studies in Washington, D. C., has warned that "Russian organized crime constitutes a direct threat to the national security interests of the US by fostering instability in a nuclear power . . . Russian organized crime groups hold the uniquely dangerous opportunity to procure and traffic in nuclear weapons."

30. Bahá'í writings make it clear that it is the destiny of America to lead the nations of the world in achieving both the Lesser Peace and the Most Great Peace: " . . . a government and people . . . will find itself purged of its anachronistic conceptions, and prepared to play a preponderating role, as foretold by 'Abdu'l-Bahá, in the hoisting of the standard of the Lesser Peace, in the unification of mankind, and in the establishment of a world federal government on this planet" (Shoghi Effendi, *Citadel of Faith* 126). "Confirm this revered nation to upraise the standard of the oneness of humanity, to promulgate the Most Great Peace, to become thereby most glorious and praiseworthy among all the nations of the world" ('Abdu'l-Bahá, "Prayer for America" in *Bahá'í Prayers* 25).

and that the Bahá'í community itself has a role to play in fulfilling that destiny.[31]

IV. Role of Voluntary Organizations. There is now general recognition of the vital importance of voluntary organizations including, but not restricted to, nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) with accredited relationships with the United Nations, in furthering the peace process. The most recent example is the award of the 1997 Nobel Peace Prize to the International Campaign to Ban Landmines. These organizations provide many innovative and constructive ideas; they perform a valuable role as independent monitors of the behavior of governments; and they generally act as a spur on governments to work for the common good rather than some narrow, national constituency.

Future Directions

So what does all this mean in terms of the original twelve points of *Achieving Peace* and the whole direction of planning for peace in the coming years? Bahá'ís now have from the Bahá'í International Community a detailed program for reform of the United Nations in the immediate future as outlined in *The Turning Point for All Nations.* Reform of the United Nations and the peace issue do, of course, overlap to a great extent, but not totally. On the one hand, in a general sense, all nineteen points in *The Turning Point* have bearing on the peace issue, although some are more indirect than others, for instance, an universal auxiliary language (no. 4), retention of successful UN agencies (no. 9), implementation of Agenda 21 (no. 12), and increasing participation of women in member delegations (no. 16). On the other hand, there are some important issues pertaining to the achievement of peace that are additional to United Nations reform, such as the role of the United States and of voluntary organizations, especially religious communities.

Accordingly, perhaps the most useful contribution that can be made in this article is to focus on this broad view, including the logical sequence of argument for reform of the United Nations. Three broad lines of action seem to be necessary: (i) to reform the United Nations in the direction of a world federal democracy; (ii) to urge the United States to be true to its own spiritual inheritance by taking a strong leadership role in such reform; and (iii) to develop and implement a systematic and effective program to teach all peoples that they are first and foremost world citizens.

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31. " . . . we cannot fail to perceive the workings of two simultaneous processes . . . each clearly defined, each distinctly separate, yet closely related and destined to culminate, in the fullness of time, in a single glorious consummation. . . .

One of these processes is associated with the mission of the American Bahá'í Community, the other with the destiny of the American nation" (Shoghi Effendi, *Citadel of Faith* 32).

From World Confederation to World Federation. The first suggestion for action is that all reform of the United Nations should be considered in the explicit context of a goal of rapidly moving toward a democratic federal world government. The confederate model for international institutions, a great advance when first introduced in 1918, is totally inadequate for present and future needs. In this respect, the global experience in the last eighty years has been similar in important ways to the experience of the fledgling United States in the 1780s. While the discussion here is in terms of the importance of federation for the establishment of a lasting peace, it should be added that world federation is also needed to provide more democratic, effective, and efficient management of the various other services that are now administered by autonomous agencies of the United Nations. From the perspective of the peace issue, the logic of the argument for the key elements of a world federation can be discussed as follows.

As in most democratic experience, the first step should be to call a "constituent" assembly representing the peoples of the world—"a mighty convocation," as called for in *The Promise of World Peace* (34) and by the Commission on Global Governance, the World Federalists, and many others—to consult on how best to strengthen global institutions. Such an assembly would be the forerunner, as in democratic nations, of a world legislative assembly that would give legitimacy and moral authority to a world commonwealth representing the interests and well-being of all humanity.

The second need with regard to a world federal democracy, in terms of logical sequence of argument, is to strengthen the judicial branch, to broaden the authority of the World Court so that it has compulsory arbitration power in international disputes brought to it by other branches of the United Nations as well as by individual member nations. It should be supported by a permanent war crimes court and by a highly developed mediation service that could be used in advance of arbitration. Adding credibility to the argument is the fact that the World Court and its predecessors have, over nearly one hundred years, established a record of professionalism, objectivity, and fairness. Greater authority for the World Court is a critical need in establishing peace because it is the only systematic, universal, and reliable way of providing an effective alternative to violence and war as a means for solving deeply felt group grievances.

The third need regarding world federation is to strengthen the executive branch so that it has the power to carry out the will of the collective world community as expressed in the decisions of the world legislature and the World Court. At the first level, this means (a) an array of effective nonmilitary

sanctions targeted especially at those individuals and groups directly responsible for violence and aggression,[32] and (b) equally importantly, a strong military force capable of crushing any aggressor force disturbing international peace. To be effective, such a force cannot be reliant solely on seconded national units and must, therefore, have at its core an organization of directly recruited personnel, together with an independent command structure and necessary equipment and supplies. Initially, such a core force might be small and simply capable of intervening swiftly and effectively in small peacekeeping and peacemaking operations of the size experienced since the end of the Cold War. Ultimately, however, the goal must be to have a force that would deter any form of armed aggression, no matter how powerful. Policing powers would also have to include authority to hunt down ruthlessly all legally defined terrorist groups and purveyors of weapons of mass destruction, no matter where they may be.

Such a force could only be effective if it had reliable financial backing, and its creation would increasingly depend therefore on mandating income sources not subject to the political whims of the present "assessment" process, perhaps along the lines suggested in *Achieving Peace:* a tax on all minerals and natural resources, or a sales tax applied uniformly in all countries (*Achieving Peace* 78–79). Strict auditing procedures should be applied, of course, to the expenditure of such income. The establishment of an effective and reliable international force would give nations the confidence to reduce their defense expenditures further and the size of their armed forces to the minimum necessary to maintain internal order. Total world military expenditures, now running at about 3 percent of gross world product (see footnote 12 above), could be reduced to a fraction of that amount.

As such a force became significant in international affairs, there would be increasing need to ensure that it was used properly in the general interest. This suggests that, in turn, there is a need to make the Security Council not simply

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32. Including, for instance: (i) an economic blockade which would focus on an absolute ban on all items that could be used for military purposes and on all luxury items that are attractive to the ruling elite, but with controlled concessions to permit the general population access to necessary basic foodstuffs and medical supplies; (ii) the severance of all communications, such as airlines, railways, road transportation, ships, telephones, Internet, other than what would be required to fulfill item (i) above; (iii) the closing of all national embassies and consulates (with all diplomatic contact being channelled through the UN Secretary-General); (iv) the seizure of all overseas assets of the aggressor government and of the overseas private assets of individual members of the aggressor government (such assets would be used as a down payment for the cost of sanctions to the international community); (v) the detention of all representatives of the aggressor government who are overseas, other than those with temporary diplomatic immunity; (vi) the systematic broadcasting to the people of the aggressor nation, via radio, television, Internet, etc., of the point of view of the international community; and (vii) the expulsion of the aggressor nation from the United Nations and its agencies.

more representative of the regions and nations of the world but also more global in its perspective. Deeper reform than simply expanding the membership will be needed, perhaps along the lines suggested in *Achieving Peace:* a nine-member Peace Council elected by the United Nations Security Council, and assuming most or all of the functions currently performed by the Security Council (pages 70–72 and ix of the 1992 edition).

If reform of the United Nations in the direction of world federation is to be achieved and made effective, there are two supporting actions that are also of immense importance: to place the United States in a world leadership role and to teach world citizenship.

Implementation of the Spiritual Destiny of America. The first of these supporting actions is that the United States has to be persuaded, with all speed, to take up its natural leadership role in promoting a world *federal* democracy, just as it did, in a limited fashion, in 1918 and then, more thoroughly, in 1945, with regard to establishment of a world *confederation.* Americans would benefit enormously from such a development, as would the peoples of every other nation, large and small alike.[33] The argument has several levels.

First, such a federation would immensely increase America's military security over the long run. It would eliminate the expense of the less reliable role of playing the world's policeman (today America still spends a significantly higher percentage of its GNP on defense than do other wealthy countries). It would offer much increased protection overseas for American citizens and commerce, and it would create an environment conducive to the growth of democracy and the decline of authoritarian-style governments with their built-in penchant for use of force to get their way.

Second, Americans need not have fear that such a world government would be a dictatorship, because the United States, together with democratic allies, would have overwhelming influence in shaping its constitution: essentially on the principle of subsidiarity, i.e., the passing down of authority to the lowest level of community government compatible with effective governance, so that the world level would be focused solely on global issues, including, most importantly, the maintenance of world peace.[34]

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33. "In an increasingly interdependent world, Americans have a growing stake in how other countries govern or misgovern themselves. The larger and more close knit the community of nations that choose democratic forms of government, the safer and more prosperous Americans will be" (Strobe Talbot, US Deputy Secretary of State, *Economist* 11/23/96).

34. Fears of world government have always seemed pretentious and exaggerated considering the overwhelming influence the United States and its democratic allies would have in drawing up the constitution of any world body. In any case, it is a less persuasive argument today than in the past because of the worldwide movement toward democracy in the last decade or so.

Third, such an approach would be in keeping with America's spiritual inheritance and experience, including federal democracy and social unity in diversity, and indeed it would be a fulfillment of its spiritual destiny.

A fourth consideration, which gives the matter some urgency, is that America needs to act while it does indeed have unchallenged leadership of the world—a position it may not always have—so that it is able to ensure that world democracy and the rule of law become the permanent governing principles of global society.

In light of such considerations, the two alternative approaches to conduct of American international relations—retreat into a Fortress America, or muddle through on the basis of self-styled hard-nosed bargaining to gain short-term advantage—fall into proper perspective.

It is easy for opponents of a world federal democracy to draw up a list of problems with the approach suggested. That is legitimate, but it is not sufficient. What is needed is solutions: the "can do" spirit so strong in American history. Personal experience suggests that Americans of all backgrounds respond positively and enthusiastically when the subject of America's spiritual inheritance and destiny is raised, not least because it is uplifting, inspiring, and in accordance with 'Abdu'l-Bahá's teaching that one should always put emphasis on the positive.

Teaching World Citizenship. Most fundamental of all is the education of all humanity in the principle of "The earth is but one country, and mankind its citizens" (Bahá'u'lláh, *Gleanings* 250). In religious terms, we are all the children of one God and made in God's image. This is the bedrock on which any lasting peace has to be built. Development of such an awareness will help people to follow their spiritual destiny and world federal democracy to achieve its full potential. This is a moral and spiritual issue, and therefore it is clearly suitable for a role by religion. There is a very special role for the Bahá'í World Community, which has two gifts to offer humanity in this context: unambiguous teachings on world peace, and adherents at the grassroots level in every country of the world who are committed to the establishment of world peace.

To conclude, experience in the last decade, since the end of the Cold War, has shown that the tide of history moving humanity toward increasing interdependence has continued to flow strongly and that this is almost certainly a process which will become even stronger in the coming century. This process brings great opportunities to improve the lives of all humans in a way never previously possible. At the same time, it brings enormous risks. It therefore calls for action on the part of the peoples of the world that incorporates the vision and courage shown in 1918 and 1945 at the end of the first two of the three great global conflicts of this century. Dull and conventional policies of just muddling through or trying to turn the clock back to an earlier time, as promulgated by a self-congratulating establishment of politicians, the media, and academia that shouts down any serious public discussion of the issues, are not just boring, but an irresponsible abandonment of duty to promote the well-being of all humanity.

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