NEW VISION FOR THE NUCLEAR AGE

by

Charles W. Jamison

Booklet 19
WAGING PEACE SERIES

NUCLEAR AGE
PEACE FOUNDATION
Peace through Informed Action
WAGING PEACE SERIES

As far as is known, the term "Waging Peace" originated with Warren Wells, late husband of Ethel Wells of Santa Barbara, in a letter to President Eisenhower. It was a long-standing practice of Mr. Wells to keep in close touch with key national figures and give them his views on peace issues as well as other vital matters. This series is dedicated both as a memorial to him and in gratitude to Mrs. Wells for her continued efforts in this cause.

Just as peace is more than the absence of war, waging peace is more than supporting arms reductions. In addition, it embraces positive steps toward genuine harmony. In this series the Foundation publishes and distributes short booklets stressing ideas for attaining peace. Concepts expressed will include views of many authorities, and will not necessarily be those of the Foundation.

Suggestions for topics and your reactions to this issue are welcome. Booklets in this series are available from the Nuclear Age Peace Foundation.

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Nuclear Age Peace Foundation
INTRODUCTION

Can there be any doubt that new vision for the nuclear age is needed? I think not. The old vision is dominated by national self-interest and "peace through strength" at a time when the global environment is deteriorating at an alarming rate and nations are continuing to pour their wealth into ever more destructive weapons technologies. Nations are now like castles at the end of feudalism. No addition to the thickness of the castle walls could preserve the feudal castle against the power of attacking armies to lay siege. Castles became quaint relics of the past, no longer functional for providing security. Today nations can no longer provide security against attacking missiles, terrorists, or environmental destruction.

Many national leaders have remained prisoners to an outmoded vision of national sovereignty, and still believe that they can solve national problems at a national level. They cannot. No single nation or national leader can prevent the destruction of the ozone layer, changes in the Earth's climate, the spread of acid rain, the destruction of the rain forests, the pollution of the oceans, the accidental or intentional use of nuclear, chemical or biological weapons, and the list goes on.

New vision for the nuclear age requires recognition of the fact that we live on one Earth, "Spaceship Earth" as Buckminster Fuller called it, and that survival demands common planning, management and action to maintain our planet as a healthy, life-supporting environment. And first among the challenges we confront is the dismantling of the terrible arsenals of nuclear weapons that have been created and deployed.

There is cause for hope that some national leaders have exhibited new vision, particularly Mikhail Gorbachev. Small steps have been taken in reversing the nuclear arms race and preserving the environment. These steps point us in the right direction, and for this we should be thankful while remaining vigilant that these steps continue at an accelerated rate.

New vision in the nuclear age is coming from men and women throughout the world. Frank K. Kelly, our senior vice president, has called for a Summit Meeting for Humanity. The United Nations University for Peace has convened a conference to draft a "Universal Charter of
Human Responsibilities for Peace and Sustainability.” Jacques Cousteau, the recipient of the Foundation’s 1989 Distinguished Peace Leadership Award, has advocated a “Bill of Rights for Future Generations.”

The new vision which is emerging is a global vision of peace, common security, environmental protection, and equity. It is a vision of one world, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all. It is a vision of a world preserved in all its natural magnificence, diversity and wonder. This is a positive and hopeful vision which will require the commitment and efforts of us all. We invite you to work with the Foundation to achieve this vision.

David Krieger
President
Nuclear Age Peace Foundation

NEW VISION FOR THE NUCLEAR AGE

By Charles W. Jamison

“Force cannot bring peace,” Albert Einstein warned. “It can only be achieved by understanding.” In this cryptic statement, Einstein points the way to our second stage in the nuclear age.

Definite second stage trends are now under way. Following World War II, the seizure of buffer states by Stalin and the continued production of atomic bombs by the U.S. caused deep distrust between the two superpowers. Then the USSR also discovered the secret of creating nuclear missiles. From the 1950s until 1985, the U.S. and the USSR strove relentlessly to surpass each other in an upward arms spiral.

Leaders of both nations believed they could fight and win a nuclear war. But the sobering thought that each nation could destroy every living person several times over, has led to the emergence of new attitudes and a surge for arms reduction. The goal of this booklet is to highlight trends toward a new era in world history.

FRESH IDEAS IN THE USSR

Soon after Gorbachev became the General Secretary of the Communist Party in March 1985, the Soviets unilaterally ceased atomic testing for 19 months. Next Gorbachev initiated talks for a 50% reduction of nuclear missiles. Both steps represented a vast shift from the views of former top Soviet leaders.

Then, at a summit in Washington, D.C. in December 1987, Reagan and Gorbachev signed an Intermediate Nuclear Forces (INF) Treaty for eliminating medium range missiles from Europe. As expected, the agreement was ratified by the U.S. Senate. Although involving only 4% of all superpower missiles, this treaty marked the first step in nuclear arms reduction—recognition that huge weapons stockpiles are not the answer to real security.

As we continue to use every effort in reducing armaments we must go deeper still. Progress requires a combination of arms reduction and also building bridges of better understanding between superpowers. Each constructive change etches its place in the panorama of events for a new stage in our Nuclear Age.

Radical Restructuring in the USSR

Let’s review some of the basic ideas expressed by Gorbachev in his

First, there could be no winner in a nuclear war.

Second, nuclear weapons create the danger of a nuclear holocaust due to computer failure or human error. "We must not wreck the ship," he wrote. "There will be no second Noah's Ark."

Third, even though the arms race cannot be won by either side, it blocks cooperative efforts between East and West.

Fourth, a conventional war in Europe would be disastrous due to the risk of setting off a nuclear war. Both nuclear and conventional forces should be cut to "reasonable sufficiency" for defense purposes only.

Fifth, restructuring in the Soviet Union includes a broad scope of social problems, some of which involve worldwide interdependence. For solving these problems, better cooperation between nations will be necessary.¹

What led to Gorbachev's advance to the highest office in the Soviet Union at the age of 54? He has often conceded that many of the 600,000 bureaucrats in the Soviet hierarchy oppose him with all their power. Gorbachev required strong backing to be elected to the highest office in the Communist Party. He and others saw that changes were urgently needed to meet the challenges of the nuclear age. They recognized that there were many deficiencies in Soviet ideology and that new approaches were necessary both internally and externally to reduce the struggle for military supremacy.

Gorbachev, before his election to the Politburo, served as Secretary of Agriculture for the Soviet Union. He saw the sharp contrast between collective farming and the results from small, back-yard plots where workers sold products at farmers' markets on a free enterprise basis. Here, 1% of the tillable land in the USSR produced 27% of all crops.²

Gorbachev was also influenced by Abel G. Aganbegyan, a noted Soviet economist. While still Secretary of Agriculture, Gorbachev met Aganbegyan who urged that Soviet leaders try to motivate the working people. Due to severe economic erosion, Aganbegyan argued strongly for restructuring. Later, he also spoke of a major defect in motivation. "We tried to introduce changes by giving orders from above," Aganbegyan said, "not by encouraging democracy at the grass roots level."³

Although self-supporting business enterprises were encouraged, employers were expected to fulfill goals outlined by the central authorities. Managers, to remain in business, were required to fully satisfy the material, social and "spiritual" needs of their employees.⁴

These idealistic goals, so difficult to attain, resulted in hesitance by managers to undertake independent operations. However, Gorbachev, by turning to more realistic approaches, continued his efforts to establish free enterprise projects. In addition, he encouraged business exchanges with Japan, Western Europe and the United States. Greater freedom of expression within the USSR and exchange of ideas with people of other nations helped to break down barriers of distrust.

Also, a drastic upheaval took place in the Soviet bureaucracy. Some old guard Politburo members were retired or shunted to less significant roles. Twenty departments were replaced by six commissions. "Radical change is needed," Gorbachev said, "in the party, in the state, in agriculture, industry, and most of all in people's mental attitude."

Gorbachev eliminated secrecy in party meetings. A plan was adopted for regular publication of a journal "to keep the people informed" on activities of the Central Committee.

In sharp departure from Marxism-Leninism, key Soviet leaders admitted that other systems including Western capitalism hold valuable lessons for the USSR. Vadim Medvedev, chief Soviet advisor on foreign policy and economics said, "In working out the socialist perspective... we cannot ignore the experience of mankind as a whole, including the non-socialist world." Both capitalism and socialism, Medvedev said, "will inevitably interact with the framework of the same human civilization."⁵

As part of the restructuring process, a sweeping change was made in the Supreme Soviet (parliament). New laws adopted by that body provided for a president and a two-tier parliament: a 2,000 member Congress of People’s Deputies which will meet annually, and a 442-member Supreme Soviet which will sit four to eight months each year. Unlike the Politburo that formerly made group executive decisions, the Soviet president will have exclusive power in such decisions.

The president will also appoint subordinate government officials, sign bills and treaties, and chair the Defense Council (the main military coordinating body of the Soviet Union). Subordinate officials must report directly to the president. To prevent tyrannical dictatorship, a president cannot serve more than two five-year terms.⁶

In accordance with this restructuring legislation, elections were held March 26, 1989. Voter turnout in most areas was 85 percent with defeat of 25 percent of the Communist Party candidates. Gorbachev said, "We must give greater support to needs of the working people."

**Progress in Human Rights**

Gorbachev, as the first General Secretary with legal training, has
placed more emphasis on the rule of law than any previous Soviet leader. In civil courts, he required that judges allow appeals from decisions involving infringement upon citizens' rights. Also, substantial reductions have been made in the arrests of dissidents, and fewer people are admitted to psychiatric hospitals. On a broader scale, in January 1989, 35 nations signed an East-West accord for the protection of human rights, including freedom of association, religion, travel and emigration. Both superpowers joined in this agreement to insure greater respect for human dignity.

Yet, some Americans still express fear that "Russia is an atheistic nation where Christian leaders are thrown into prison."

Marx and Lenin advocated atheism on the grounds that religion was a tool of the upper class. But the Soviet people have by no means abandoned God. The Russian Orthodox Church has some 50 million members, over twice the number of members in the Communist Party. Gorbachev, after meeting with church leaders, called for a more tolerant attitude toward religion and condemned past anti-religious repressions.

Formerly people were forbidden to discuss religion outside churches. Pastors of churches failing to register with the government were imprisoned or sent to labor camps. Now, freedom exists for outdoor evangelistic activities and churches are overflowing with religious revivals.

Although importation of Bibles was previously barred, the Finnish Bible Society has been allowed to send 150,000 Bibles to Soviet churches while Open Doors International has sent one million. Individuals are permitted to send Bibles directly to Soviet citizens, and a Soviet newspaper plans to print the New Testament in serial form.

To sum up major emerging trends in the USSR, I have selected comments by George F. Kennan. As one of the most highly respected U.S. authorities on the Soviet Union, his views deserve careful consideration. On two occasions he was interviewed on the MacNeil Lehrer TV Hour regarding trends in the USSR. A brief summary of his remarks follows:

Twenty years of Stalinism followed by an equal period of economic stagnation have taken a heavy toll within the USSR. After a series of five-year plans with repeated failures, Soviet leaders have finally admitted that they are not infallible in economic policies. They have realized that "the whole system is going downhill."

Due to the seriousness of the problems and strict central control, many years will be required for recovery. In addition to extreme economic sacrifices, the spirit of lower level workers has been severely stifled.

With intensive focus on internal problems the Soviets are no longer interested in world domination. However, they desire a voice in world affairs. They are concerned with improving relations with the U.S. and on a worldwide basis.

George Kennan believes that the cold war is over, and the arms race is being gradually replaced by mutual respect and cooperation, as exemplified by joint efforts in battling the environmental threat.

**UPDATING U.S. APPROACHES**

What changes are needed within the U.S. to achieve better understanding and cooperation with the USSR?

**Moving Beyond the Arms Race**

In contrast to Kennan's views, Dr. Stephen Cohen, a specialist in Soviet Studies at Princeton University, feels that militarized thinking continues to predominate in both the United States and the Soviet Union. Highlights of Cohen's views are as follows:

The basic conflicts between the two superpowers are ideological. However, both nations have focused primarily on military concerns. "Peace through strength" has continued to glamorize military power and rivet attention on the number, the type, and the destructive power of missiles.

During the 1980s, the U.S. and the USSR each produced some 3,700 warheads, more than a 25% increase. Affirmative methods for peaceful resolution of conflict have received little attention. Focus on military issues has disrupted the true priorities of the U.S. and has transferred decision-making to the Pentagon, away from our normal democratic processes.

Top military officials shift back and forth between positions in the Pentagon and executives in leading arms production firms. Each year, some 35,000 firms receive arms contracts with subcontracts to 135,000 additional companies. The top ten arms manufacturers include IBM, GE, Ford, and General Motors.

High profits generate heavy campaign contributions to induce special favors; arms manufacturers have one of the most powerful lobbies on Capitol Hill. We, at the grass roots level, must use far greater effort to encourage and assist in a conversion from military buildup to production for genuinely peaceful and beneficial purposes.
Avoiding "Global Overreach"

Paul Kennedy, a Yale professor, in his book *The Rise and Fall of Great Powers*, looks back 5 centuries and forward into the unpredictable future. He reviews economic shortages in relation to military power over the past 500 years in nations such as Spain, the Netherlands, France, and the British Empire. Highlights of Kennedy's views follow:

Decline in power has typically been directly due to excessive military ambitions in relation to the economic base required to support such efforts.

The United States is still in a class by itself, but in the last decade it has dropped from the strongest creditor nation to the largest debtor nation in the world. If it continues by the year 2000 the national debt will be $13 trillion.

The U.S. spends billions of dollars each year on its existing long term weapons contracts. Huge military expenditures, combined with loss of world trade, place the U.S. under two severe tests: (1) can it continue its widespread military role and still meet its domestic needs? (2) can it prevent technical and economic erosion in the face of an ever shifting pattern of global production?

Commitments to protect allied nations were undertaken many years ago when the political, economic and military power of the U.S. were much stronger than today. Now U.S. global obligations clearly exceed the capacity for policing them. The United States runs the risk of "global overreach" so familiar in the rise and fall of other great powers.

The U.S., of course, cannot suddenly abandon military support to its allies. But economic necessity demands three major changes. With long-range planning, other nations can assume responsibility for their own military needs. Greater emphasis can be placed on settlement of disputes by non-violent methods. Military expenditures should be reduced to obtain an equitable balance with domestic requirements.

The USSR is reducing its expenditures for military activities, rather than increasing them. Soviet withdrawal from Afghanistan, Cambodia and Mongolia give authenticity to the views expressed by Gorbachev and Kennan that the USSR is reversing its former aims of world expansion.

President Reagan, in his farewell address, likewise indicated a change in attitude from the recent past. Although he repeated a previous caution, "Trust, but verify," he also spoke of "a satisfying new relation with the Soviet Union."

During his inaugural speech, President Bush said, "While keeping our alliances and friendships around the world strong, we will continue the new closeness with the Soviet Union, consistent with our security and with progress."

THREEFOLD SECURITY REQUIREMENTS

In the past, "security" has been measured in terms of military power. Yet, economic and environmental security are just as important. Interrelated environmental problems are worldwide. Without immediate remedies, we may soon be faced with irreversible devastation.

*TIME* magazine, in a rare departure from its usual pattern of selecting the Man or Woman of the Year, chose the "Endangered Earth" as the most significant topic for 1988. Brief samplings from issues discussed in the first 1989 publication of *TIME* include: nuclear waste from the U.S., smoke from vast resources of coal in China and the USSR, gases from extensive landfills in West Germany, losses from destruction of rain forests in Brazil, and fumes from sewage in Calcutta.

Better education of the public is needed regarding environmental problems. Also, reduction of military expenditures would release funds severely needed for combating pollution. The Soviets are now urging stronger attempts to protect the environment and to integrate atmospheric research projects. We should join with them in combating global pollution in every possible way.

Turning to economic security, both superpowers have serious problems. The tremendous sums used for military purposes are sapping the industrial strength of both nations. Each dollar or ruble spent for the military reduces funds available for other purposes.

Where capital is invested for production in the civilian sector, improvement in equipment usually follows, increasing production. But huge sums used for producing missiles, battleships and long-range bombers, add nothing to the overall economy. As a source of productivity, capital invested for military equipment is lost forever.

Human resources are wasted in a similar way. An estimated 40 percent of the top scientists in both the U.S. and the USSR spend their lives in advancing military technology. This drains needed skills away from new developments in civilian enterprises. A large portion of the total labor force is trained for activities that produce nothing of economic value.

Military personnel are trained to ignore costs during combat. This
trait has continued in the peace-time pattern of the military establishment. The result is a major industry with a permanent war-time attitude regarding finances, leading to tremendous waste in expenditures.

Heavy sacrifices are made in the name of “military security.” The housing shortage in the U.S. is appalling. Some 3 million people are homeless and conditions are expected to grow worse. Families with children constitute the fastest growing segment among the homeless. Through lack of research personnel in the U.S., most of the high-tech components in the computer industry are imported from Japan, Korea and Taiwan. With annual expenditures in the range of $300 billion a year for the military, funds are not available for improving education, modernizing industrial plants, job training and combating drug traffic.

From the long-range standpoint, a nation cannot prosper based on a war economy. Other means must be found to successfully obtain security for each nation and internationally.

EXPANDING INTERNATIONAL AUTHORITY

International law, complied with to a great extent by most nations, includes:

(a) international treaties establishing rules recognized by the contesting states;
(b) international custom, generally accepted as law;
(c) principles of law recognized by civilized nations;
(d) judicial decisions and the teachings of qualified persons as subsidiary means for establishing rules of law.

Clearly, greater international controls are needed. The most severe obstacle is that of overcoming national sovereignty or supreme authority of independent states. President Wilson emerged as the leading sponsor of the League of Nations Covenant only to have the U.S. Senate reject the Covenant to protect American sovereignty. In recent years, to a marked degree, national sovereignty has become an illusion.

In ancient times, wars were fought to defend or to expand borders. Today, the significance of geography has declined for economic, environmental and social reasons. Fumes spiral upward from smokestacks in China, Russia and the U.S., destroying one common ozone layer. Acid rain, generated from U.S. factories, kills all life in Canadian lakes. Ideas more powerful than armies move with lightning speed to every section of the globe. Markets are no longer geographic locations. They are data on millions of computer chips, interlinked on a worldwide basis. Terrorists pierce the veil of national sovereignty. Hovering over national power, nuclear missiles could mean destruction of one superpower by the other, but only at the cost of self-destruction.

We repeatedly hear the statement that a nation will work for its own best interests. However, the best interests of all nations coincide in many ways. As this concept is better understood, international laws are strengthened. But international standards are sometimes almost meaningless for lack of power to enforce them. In the larger sense, greater contributions for the enforcement of international law provide the surest way to preserve national protection.

Renewal of the United Nations

Specialists on world issues often suggest that new international institutions are needed for adequate world controls. But the most effective way to increase international authority lies in expanding the powers of the United Nations. After years of difficulties, the prestige of the UN is again rising. In 1988, the UN Peacekeeping Forces received the coveted Nobel Peace Prize—a highly deserved award.

Both the U.S. and the USSR had formerly been unsupportive of the United Nations. They have now reversed their attitudes. In a dramatic talk before the United Nations on December 7, 1988, Gorbachev opened with the statement, “The United Nations has increasingly been manifesting its ability to act as a unique international center in the service of peace and security.”

This was the first appearance of a top Soviet leader before the UN General Assembly since 1960. As Gorbachev proceeded, he demonstrated an unusual spirit of support for the United Nations. A wide range of areas were emphasized for concerted action under the auspices of the UN. Gorbachev pledged full cooperation by the USSR. The following are selections from points discussed by Gorbachev:

Convinced that the realities of today’s world call for international dialogue and negotiations, Gorbachev stated, “We face the question of a new role for the United Nations.”

He invited those present to support the appeal of the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development for reducing Third World debts. The Soviet Union favors discussion of ways to settle the debt crisis at multi-national forums under the auspices of the United Nations.

The Soviet Union intends to expand its participation in the United Nations and in the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe on the human rights monitoring programs. Gorbachev pointed out that economic security is impossible unless related not only to disarmament,
but also to eliminating the threats to the world’s environment.

In this respect, he spoke of an international orbital station or space laboratory, staffed by scientists from the U.S. and the USSR. Soviet scientists are prepared to discuss with their foreign colleagues the conversion of the Krasnoyarsk radar station into an international center by “dismantling and refitting certain units,” to permit study and action for emergency environmental assistance. “The entire system could function under the auspices of the United Nations.”

These are all long-range proposals of practical significance which give impetus to the upward trend in renewal of spirit for strengthening the United Nations.

Although U.S. specialists in Soviet affairs anticipated a surprise from Gorbachev, he went far beyond their expectations. The high point in Gorbachev’s talk came when he announced that over a two-year period, the Soviet Union would reduce its conventional forces by 500,000 men, 10,000 tanks, 8,500 artillery systems, and 500 fighter planes.

This voluntary, unilateral step marks one more radical reversal from past Soviet attitudes. It marks one more step in new vision for the nuclear age.

CONCLUSION

The arms race, the first stage in the nuclear age, is still with us. Due to long-range military contracts, missile production still equals its former tempo.

Complete transition to the second stage of understanding and cooperation may take one more generation of young people moving into leadership positions. In the meantime, we must use every effort to educate people of all ages in order to accomplish this goal.

Seven closely related steps require concerted action:

- Safeguards against accidental war;
- A comprehensive test ban on nuclear weapons;
- Emphasis on peace-oriented work opportunities;
- Reduction of nuclear and conventional forces;
- Improvement in understanding between nations;
- Cooperation in settling international disputes; and
- Worldwide action for protecting the environment.

Vast changes in attitudes are already occurring. In October 1986, a Gallup poll revealed that only 37 percent of U.S. registered voters believed that relations between the United States and the Soviet Union were stable or improving, while 60 percent believed they were growing worse. Two years later, in July 1988, a combined poll by several organizations, coordinated by Brown University, showed that an astounding 94 percent believed that such relations were stable or improving.

Particularly significant, are the views of George F. Kennan, a longstanding authority on U.S.-Soviet relations, and Robert S. McNamara, former Secretary of Defense and former president of the World Bank. In a recent statement before the Senate Foreign Affairs Committee, Kennan said, “Whatever reasons there may have been for regarding the Soviet Union as a military opponent, the time for that sort of thing has clearly passed.” McNamara said, “A long-term, stable relationship between East and West is ...attainable. “Is a nuclear-free world desirable? I believe it is, and I think most Americans would agree.”

For building better relations with Soviet citizens, numerous programs are available. The Institute of Soviet-American Relations provides a handbook describing the activities of 232 organizations engaged in a wide variety of interchanges between U.S. and Soviet citizens.

In looking back, man’s brilliance in learning to split the atom led to a distortion in thinking that has bled world resources and created the danger of annihilating civilization. But new vision is emerging. The greatest benefits can be obtained by nations assisting each other, not by working against each other. Yet differences in viewpoint are bound to arise, and international means of setting disputes through the United Nations is an absolute necessity for maintaining peace.

True security for both individual states and on a worldwide basis requires economic well-being and environmental protection even more than military strength. The truth of the nuclear age is that national security can only be achieved by global security.

 SOURCES

15. Newsweek, April 17, 1989, p. 34.

THE AUTHOR

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He was a member of the Americal Division, the first army ground forces to enter combat in World War II, having served 2 1/2 years on Guadalcanal. A strong supporter of the arms buildup for 40 years, he completely reversed his position early in 1982.

Jamison is a co-founder and an Honorary Life Board Member of the Nuclear Age Peace Foundation. Among other publications, he is the author of the first booklet in the Waging Peace series.

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