

# WILL WE MAKE PEACE IN 1989?

by Sanderson Beck

## Personal Peace

Peace begins within the heart of each one of us. To find this peace we must look into our hearts and others'. How do we see into the heart? Perhaps we can begin by accepting ourselves as we are and others as they are in order to understand the present reality. As we accept what is, we can then examine it without the distorting illusions of what we would like it to be or what we fear it might be. We may not like everything that we see. Yet if we do not see it clearly for what it is, how well can we change it to something better? Deep in the heart everyone wants to love and be loved and to find peace. However, many motives of security, desire, greed, anger, ambition, etc. lead people into actions that cause conflict. Because of freedom of choice, people may decide one thing and then later change their minds and do something different. Therefore it is wise for us to evaluate the actions but not to judge the person. Actions have their consequences which affect us. We are each responsible for our own actions and their consequences.

In our relationships we are affected by the actions of others, but we are always responsible for our part of the relationship. The best way to improve relationship is to communicate and love people. Communication is a two-way process of expressing ourselves while listening and observing. With more understanding and shared awareness we can better love others and be loved by them also. By recognizing each other's freedom, we can encourage change and improvement. We can point out to others what bothers us. When others tell us what upsets them, we can examine our own actions to see what changes we could make that would be better for everyone. This process of learning how to live together in harmony may apply to the most intimate personal relationships and to interactions between nations.

Peace in human relations depends on this harmony and justice. If we use a different standard of behavior for others than we do for ourselves, then we will be in conflict with others. Reciprocity acknowledges the rights of others as being equal to our own rights. Those individuals and groups who do not resolve their conflicts by means of mutual understanding and respect may need the assistance of other people to help them see what is in the best interests of everyone concerned. Conflicts not resolved peacefully may erupt into violence. Others also may be affected by the conflict. Remaining neutral can prevent the conflict from spreading, but it may not help to diminish the violence. Our first responsibility is to examine our own role in the conflict to see what we can do to change our own actions to improve the situation. The natural human tendency is to be biased toward our own position. To see clearly we must see beyond our own self-interest to understand the situation as a whole and what is best for all. Ultimately what is in the best interest of everyone is going to be in our best interest also, because the situation will then be stable and just. Perhaps we are the ones not listening to what others are requesting. Perhaps we are the ones who are not giving the same respect and equal treatment that we are demanding for ourselves. Perhaps we are the ones who are trying to force our will on others and take advantage of them. The easiest way to resolve a conflict of which we are a part is to change our own attitudes and behaviors. If we

demand that others change without changing ourselves, then they are likely to maintain the same stubborn position as we. Yet if we are willing to adapt ourselves to their concerns, they usually will reciprocate by responding to our needs as well.

When individuals resort to violence, society usually steps in with the legal system, which has been designed to be fair and equal to everyone by providing a process of decision-making by qualified and neutral people who can determine what is just. This system is enforced by agents of the government representing the entire society. Most people are able to resolve their conflicts by themselves. The force of law is only brought in when they have failed and one person has seriously violated another.

## Political Peace

Now what happens in the world when nations come into conflict with each other? Throughout history these disputes have often erupted into war. Yet does war determine what is just or simply who is more powerful and able to kill and destroy with greater skill? If one nation is more powerful than another nation, how can the smaller country receive justice from the larger? If diplomatic negotiation fails to resolve disagreements and the smaller nation is being threatened by force of arms, then it may turn to another powerful nation for support. In order to protect themselves many nations may join together with other nations with similar value systems to increase their collective power and security. When there are two superpowers with their respective allies, as there are today, then they will want as many nations as possible to join their own alliance and as few as possible to join the alliance of the rival. Many nations are pressured and bribed by one side or the other or both, when in fact they would like to be left alone and remain nonaligned. How are these nations to decide what kind of social and political system they want for their countries? How can these conflicts be resolved without violence? Democratic elections allow people to use an intelligent process to decide how they want to live as a society. However, if the force of arms is used instead, then the might of power may inflict itself against the will of many people. When other nations give or sell arms to governments or rebels, then they feed the flames of violence and discourage real democracy. Therefore if we respect the human rights of people, we will stop sending arms for repression and killing.

In the case of the superpowers, we must negotiate and come to agreements so that both sides can de-escalate the militarization of the world in a way that both sides can trust. Neutral parties can assist this process, and treaties that have the force of international law and world public opinion behind them can be applied to everyone equally. What is the alternative? Conflict between the superpowers escalating into a nuclear war could destroy most of civilization, and the resulting nuclear winter could mean the extinction of the human race. This is one possible end of the arms race. The other possible end of the arms race is to go back to the beginning by decreasing instead of increasing arms. To do this we must draw upon the peace in our hearts, our commonality as human beings, our intelligence as problem-solvers, and our friendship and mutual respect.

### Current Problems

As the most powerful and richest nation in the world, the people of the United States today have a great opportunity and responsibility to lead the world toward peace. The current military capabilities of the United States of America are by far the most powerful and extensive that the world has ever known. At the same time, of course, the Soviet Union has weapons and armed forces of comparable power, although most military analysts would agree that the capability of the USSR to intervene anywhere in the world does not match that of the USA. Under the Reagan Administration the United States has greatly built up its military power. During the Brezhnev era the Soviet Union was intent on catching up in the nuclear arms race with the United States. However, since Mikhail Gorbachev came to power in 1985, he has made several concessions in arms negotiations, particularly the unilateral test-ban moratorium, that indicate a real willingness to agree on major arms reductions with the goal of eliminating all nuclear weapons from the earth by the year 2000.

The people of the United States, like the people in the Soviet Union and people all over the world, are desperately afraid of nuclear war and want very much to see both the superpowers begin the process of disarmament and stop meddling with military intervention and arms shipments to other countries. The meeting between Reagan and Gorbachev in Iceland raised the hopes of the world that a real process of disarmament is now possible, if the United States would change its policy in order to refrain from a new arms race in space. Since the United States has democratic processes for changing the leaders of the government through regular elections, in 1988 the prospects for nuclear disarmament will be in the hands of the citizens of the United States. Also the wars in Central America have continued, because the Contadora peace process has been blocked by the belligerent policies of the Reagan Administration. In the war in Afghanistan the Soviet Union has been the aggressor. However, if the United States were to take major steps for peace, the Soviet Union very likely would reciprocate there, especially if the United States in exchange for a pull-out of all Soviet troops would agree to stop supplying the Afghan rebels with weapons. (The U. S. already has supplied several hundred million dollars worth of arms to these rebels through Pakistan.)

What is the current condition of the United States? In the 1980s the more than doubling of the federal government's debt from one trillion dollars to well over two trillion has been caused by a reduction of tax rates, especially for higher income brackets, and by a doubling of the military budget to approximately three hundred billion dollars per year. Unemployment is high; health care, education, and social services are inadequate; small farmers are going bankrupt; the trade balance is running unprecedented deficits, turning the United States from the largest creditor nation in the world to the largest debtor nation in the world; record numbers of banks are failing; and the entire international banking system may be on the verge of collapse, because the greatest economy in the world has joined the huge indebtedness of the third-world countries.

By achieving major disarmament peace treaties, human, material, and financial resources could be redirected into constructive activities instead of being wasted on military spending

that does nothing to improve the quality of living. Gorbachev is eager to accomplish this, because he is having trouble bringing about the economic reforms and improvements the Soviet economy desperately needs. The United States has been financing this arms race with enormous borrowing, and future generations will have to pay for it. Only three percent of the U. S. military budget actually is used to defend the national borders. Some people are afraid that if nuclear weapons are eliminated, then the Soviet Union will have a conventional military advantage in Europe. However, the Soviet Union and the Warsaw Pact nations are also eager to agree on conventional force reductions in the European theater. Thus a treaty on nuclear disarmament could be accompanied by an agreement that would assure balanced reductions of conventional forces in Europe. Americans often ask, "What about verification? How can we trust the Russians?" Actually the Soviets are just as mistrustful of Americans. Under Gorbachev the Soviet Union has radically altered its policy to accept thorough on-site inspection so that disarmament agreements can be trusted by both sides. Which makes us more secure? To rely on the good will of the Soviet Union not to attack any American "vital interest" out of fear that the U. S. will then trigger a nuclear war, or to rely on a team of U. S. and international experts to make sure that weapons are not hidden? The American paranoia of the Soviet Union, the irrational fear and hatred that is used to justify the arms race and military intervention in other nations, must be faced and resolved by therapeutic understanding. Both superpowers think the other is imperialistic; but if a final war is to be avoided, both sides must agree to decrease their military power and coexist on this planet peacefully.

Let us briefly examine two policies that are currently major obstacles to disarmament and peace—the escalation of the arms race into outer space and the wars in Central America.

### Strategic Defense Initiative (SDI)

President Reagan's speech on October 14, 1986 about the results of the Iceland summit with Mikhail Gorbachev attempted to justify his refusal to agree to any arms reductions or controls by arguing for the development of a strategic defense system. Only Mr. Reagan and a few of his advisors and selected scientists believe that a comprehensive system against nuclear weapons is even feasible. He stated that SDI is "non-nuclear" when in fact the laser-beam weapons involved are nuclear-powered. The testing of this new technology may be why he is so adamant about not stopping nuclear testing now. The idea that SDI is needed to "protect against cheating or the possibility of a madman sometime deciding to create nuclear missiles" defies common sense. It would be absurd to spend a trillion dollars as an "insurance policy" when intelligent methods of verification could much more directly prevent the development and deployment of new nuclear weapons after they have all been carefully disarmed and dismantled under the same thorough verification scrutiny. As for the madman fear, the building of missiles is such a large undertaking that it could easily be detected; and if a madman did build a nuclear bomb and put it in a suitcase, the SDI would hardly be able to shoot it down. The President argued that the reason the Soviets are bargaining seriously is because of the tremendous building of American military power and SDI plans. The USSR



wants to negotiate an end to the arms race before it gets even worse, but that does not mean that they would not have negotiated arms agreements prior to the worsening of relations by Reagan policies. For seven years now the Soviet Union has been in favor of a complete freeze on the testing, production, and deployment of nuclear weapons as a reasonable first step toward reductions.

In the same speech Mr. Reagan asked the American people to reflect upon this question: "How does a defense of the United States threaten the Soviet Union or anyone else?" The answer to this is rather complicated because of the convoluted nature of deterrence strategy. Nuclear deterrence is based on the MAD idea of Mutually Assured Destruction. Because neither side has any effective defense against nuclear weapons, which are clearly offensive, each side is hostage to the fear of retaliation. This assumes that moral self-restraint has been abandoned, when actually this moral restraint works in combination with the fear. Nonetheless the fear could be overcome if one side believed that they had a defense adequate to withstand a retaliatory attack following a massive first-strike. In other words, the combination of defense with offense could destroy the deterring offensive defense. Since recent U. S. weapons, such as the MX, Trident II, Pershing 2, and cruise missiles, are already perceived as first-strike weapons because of their accuracy and targeting on Soviet missiles, the Soviets are naturally afraid that this combination with a defensive shield would give the United States an overwhelming strategic advantage, which could be used as blackmail in power politics if not for an outright attack. For these reasons the United States and the Soviet Union agreed to the Anti-Ballistic Missile Treaty in 1972, a treaty the United States would have to abrogate in order to test and deploy SDI. Secondly, the research and development into space weapons and other "star wars" technology could very easily develop new offensive weapons, resulting in a whole new generation of weaponry even more sophisticated than traditional nuclear weapons. Thirdly, the development of this technology would mean an escalation of the arms race from a weapons-infested earth into the heavens, and the eventual cost of this contest could be a trillion dollars or more for the United States alone and whatever the Soviet Union would need to spend in order to counter these developments. Once money gets into the pipeline for SDI, the momentum and power of the interests in the military industrial complex make these programs very difficult to stop. Will the American people stand up and say, "No!" in order to stop this rash new stage in an already insane arms race?

### Central America

Americans include not only the citizens of the United States but also those of Canada and Latin America. Many of those people, indeed most of the people in the world, oppose the militaristic policies of the Reagan Administration. The U. S. policy of aiding militarily the contras (counter-revolutionaries) who are attempting to overthrow the democratically elected government of Nicaragua has been condemned by the International Court of Justice and confirmed in the United Nations Security Council by a vote of 11-1 and in the General Assembly by a vote of 94-3. Since the revolution of 1979, under the

Sandinista leadership the people of Nicaragua have reduced illiteracy from 50% to about 10%. Their health care programs have won awards from the World Health Organization. Yet with military assistance from the Reagan Administration and private mercenaries the contras have been killing, kidnaping, and raping the citizens of Nicaragua, while U. S. policy is attempting to strangle the Nicaraguan economy. Faced with this overwhelming hostility from a superpower, Nicaragua has had to turn to Cuba and the Soviet Union in order to try to sustain and defend itself. American anti-Communist policies exclude any middle ground by essentially demanding of them, "Say uncle and accept our capitalist system, or we will drive you into the enemy orbit of the Soviets and force you to militarize your society, lest you become a successful example for other Latin American countries." For the facts are that the Communist Party in Nicaragua is very small and unpopular, the government has declared itself a nonaligned nation, and the economy is mixed between socialism and free enterprise. When the first draft of the Contadora Treaty was completed in September 1984, Nicaragua was the first nation to declare its willingness to sign it. However, pressure from the Reagan Administration on the other Central American nations coerced them into demanding unreasonable changes in the treaty. Nicaragua is willing to reduce its armaments but not while it is still being attacked by illegal forces supplied by the United States. Surely the small country of Nicaragua does not pose a security threat to the United States! However, it apparently threatens the "insecurity" of capitalist interests paranoid of Communism spreading.

The situation in El Salvador is even worse. There the United States has been giving hundreds of millions of dollars of military aid, enabling the army, security forces, and death squads to terrorize the poor people in the country. Tens of thousands of civilians have been killed by these forces, and the same thing has been happening over many years in Guatemala also. In 1980 the University in San Salvador was shut down, as were the opposition newspapers after they were violently attacked and several people were murdered. Thus there is no opposition press in El Salvador. The Democratic Revolutionary Front (FDR), which U.S. Ambassador Robert White said had the support of 80% of the people in 1980, was not able to participate in the elections of 1982 and 1984 because of the civil war being waged against them. People were intimidated into voting in these so-called "democratic" elections by the threat of losing their jobs or worse. The attempted land reform of 1980 was cancelled after two months and was actually used by the military to reward those who accepted the government's policy and to kill those who did not. The wealthy people whose land was appropriated were paid for it by the United States Government. This so-called "land reform" was designed by the same people who imposed similar "reforms" on the people of Vietnam during that war and in the Philippines with the institution of martial law. While the United States has poured several hundred million dollars into this tiny country, well over one billion dollars of capital has fled El Salvador. As long as the United States continues to give repressive governments weapons, training, and economic gifts to bolster their regimes and oppress their people, will there be peace or justice in this region?

### A World Peace Plan for 1989

The models for disarmament have already been laid out in the Contadora Treaty and at the Iceland summit. In Central America the people there can best solve their own problems if all outside military influences are withdrawn by Cuba, the Soviet Union, and the United States. If the superpowers wish to compete for allegiance and cooperation with their respective ways of living, let them do so only with economic aid and development, not with the weapons of repressive militarism and rebellious terrorism. This same principle can apply to the entire world. Will the peoples of the world rise up and demand a stop to this militaristic adventurism and killing? Will the people of each nation be responsible for restraining their own government? Because the superpowers do not trust each other, they must enter into bilateral treaties with secure verification so that the disarmament process can be carefully and fairly controlled. Ultimately these principles may be applied to every nation in the world in multi-lateral agreements and international laws. The process must be one that everyone can trust to work effectively and that is also carefully safeguarded so that no repression of human rights occurs. Will we learn to tolerate the diversity of humanity and the various social systems as long as they respect human rights and are not aggressive against others?

The proposal nearly negotiated in Iceland between the United States and the Soviet Union on nuclear weapons could be agreed to by a new American President and Mr. Gorbachev in 1989. This would call for an immediate freeze on the testing, production, and deployment of nuclear weapons and of missiles and new aircraft designed primarily to deliver nuclear weapons. Extensive and thorough verification by on-site inspection would take a detailed inventory of all nuclear weapons and delivery systems as well as monitoring that no new weapons are being tested, produced, or deployed. Then starting in 1990 ballistic missiles of all types would be proportionately disarmed, dismantled, and destroyed over five years so that 20% are eliminated each year. This treaty would need to include the nuclear weapons of Great Britain, France, China, India, and Israel also. At the same time conventional forces in Europe would be bilaterally reduced by the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) and the Warsaw Pact nations. Beginning in 1995 all other nuclear weapons, including tactical nuclear weapons and aircraft designed to carry nuclear weapons, would be proportionately disarmed, dismantled, and destroyed over the next five years so that again 20% are eliminated each year. During these years the international inspection teams would need to be very extensive so that precise inventories could be taken and carefully monitored. Thousands of experts and people of good will would be needed to implement this great undertaking so thoroughly that everyone in the world would be certain that no one could cheat or hide any nuclear arms. These treaties would need to be recognized as laws applicable to everyone in the world, and any suspected violators would be tried by the International Court of Justice, and if convicted, sentenced to imprisonment. This second five-year period would include even greater reductions of conventional forces so that no nation would feel threatened by any of its neighbors. In addition, the use of force outside one's territory, the threat to use such force, and the sale or transfer of military weapons outside one's territory must be prohibited by

international law. By the end of 1999 the nonviolent international inspection teams would be able to certify that there are no nuclear weapons in the entire world. From that time on inspectors would monitor all nuclear materials from the mining to the waste of nuclear power plants to make certain that none of these materials ever is used for a weapon. Also all chemical and biological weaponry must be eliminated during the same ten-year period. In the year 2000 all of humanity would be able to rejoice and celebrate that we have been able to use our wisdom and social skills of cooperation to overcome our fears, suspicion, and urges for power to establish peace in the world. Then our great economic and technological resources could be turned to improving the quality of living for all people on earth.

To bring about this vision of a truly peaceful world, we have much work to do. The most difficult part is changing the belief that these horrible weapons are the only way to keep the peace, when in reality weapons are used by those who are insecure and afraid that what is right cannot be attained by a nonviolent process. Weapons are resorted to by cowards and bullies. The courageous will trust their ability to attain what is just for everyone without trying to force it on people. By acting according to our ideals we can convince others that it is also in their best interest to do likewise. To use force to prevent force is hypocrisy. Using moral strength collectively we can and must insist on peaceful processes for resolving conflicts.

In the pragmatic political process which determines the course of events between nations, will we support those leaders who are truly working for peace and disarmament and will we find new leaders who will bring about this vision? The time has come for the United States Congress to hold hearings, establish commissions, and conduct detailed investigations to study how these processes of disarmament could be best brought about. One of the major concerns and benefits to the economy is how the various parts of the military industrial complex can be converted to productive enterprise. Detailed studies must be made for every defense contractor to indicate how those facilities, materials, and human resources can be redirected into constructive activities with new training and jobs for those workers. Education, health care, communication, transportation, consumer goods, and many other things can be improved greatly, while the federal budget is balanced, gradually paying off the huge debt that has accumulated from the human folly of war and militarism. We face the greatest challenge in the entire history of the human race. Will we with our love for each other accomplish these goals together?



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