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NOR IS IT
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THE PROBLEM WITH
THE UN IS THE VERY
DESIGN OF THE UN...

*Author/War & Peace
Scholar
Tad Daley*

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EDITOR'S NOTES

by CHARLES ROSENBERG

REGRETFULLY, WE INFORM YOU THAT THE ISSUE IN YOUR HAND WILL be the last for now, due to a loss of donor support. *Disarmament Times* represents the range of disarmament, peace, and security matters to a readership of some influence, so our succumbing is unfortunate. As we go to press, news items highlight both the risks of new low-yield precision nuclear weapons (that they minimize civilian casualties makes their use more “thinkable”), as well as, in nearly 20 countries, the alarming lack of government-mandated safeguards against cyberattack on nuclear installations. We can only hope that sister publications, and more and more leaders throughout civil society, intensify their voices and cut through the baffling apathy about the nuclear threat.

In this final number we present a selection of key perspectives. Educator/activist Tad Daley alerts us to an exciting new effort to re-envision and transform the governance of our United Nations, the “flawed but indispensable institution (Richard Holbrook).” Ambassador Douglas Roche of Canada squarely questions the morality of nuclear weapons, underlining recent judgments of our most eminent religious leaders. Our Book Brief urges your attention to the wonderful work *Altruism*, by Matthieu Ricard. He provides a philosophical/scientific tour of the best in human character—a well-founded infusion of hope. For myself, it has been an honor, a pleasure, and a precious education to edit *Disarmament Times*. Jesus advised his disciples, “Be ye wise as serpents, and harmless as doves.” Let us respectfully consider that the strategic analyst at the war college may burn with moral concerns, and that the most ardent values-based peace activist needs to cultivate real-world expertise. Together, we can find, not just a tipping point in our agendas, but a turning back to embrace true peace. Comments invited at chuckrrose2@gmail.com. ■

The logo for Disarmament Times, featuring a small icon of a person with arms raised above the word "DISARMAMENT" in all caps, and the word "times" in a large, lowercase, serif font below it.

Editor
CHARLES ROSENBERG

NGO Committee on Disarmament,
Peace, and Security

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WE ARE WELL INTO PERHAPS THE MOST IMPORTANT UN GENERAL ASSEMBLY IN decades, with member states grappling with today's most critical human rights and environmental issues. On global climate change, the follow up to COP21 in Paris under President Ségolène Royal has set three top priorities for her term's remainder: ensure the swift ratification and implementation of the agreement; accelerate climate action coalition-building among governments and private sector; and strengthen the climate change/sustainable development link. There is no time to waste. In New York, the Organisation will work towards its most open Secretary-General election ever, even as it deals with the mounting refugee crisis caused by conflicts in the Middle East.

A MESSAGE

from NGOCODPS
PRESIDENT BRUCE KNOTTS

**“WE THE PEOPLES OF THE UNITED
NATIONS” NEED TO WORK
TOGETHER TO SUCCEED...**

Concurrently, the GA will struggle to address superpower conflicts and the dangerous conditions in Ukraine and Syria. The Security Council deals with recurrent provocations from the DPRK. Post-Ebola, the global body works to build better health-crisis response capacity. And as reported by the High Commissioner for Human Rights, the picture of human rights around the world remains dark. With agreement on the 2030 Sustainable Development Goals, the great challenge of implementation begins.

The United Nations has no power to realize any of its objectives alone. The robust engagement of civil society and of member states is essential. As per the UN Charter, it is “We the Peoples of the United Nations” that need to work together to succeed, with our very survival at stake. Time to roll up our sleeves and get to work! ■

REIMAGINING THE UNITED NATIONS: A 2020 VISION

by TAD DALEY

COMMISSION ON A NEW GLOBAL GOVERNANCE

”DOES THE UNITED NATIONS STILL MATTER?” THIS RECENT cover story in *New Republic* points to the persistent perception of irrelevancy. Seven decades since the UN’s creation our multiple planetary crises present dramatic differences from those that confronted the generation emerging from the rubble of the Second World War. Isn’t it time to devise architectures of global governance intended not “to avoid the mistakes of the 1930s,” but rather to focus on the intertwined predicaments of our own century?

IF SO, A NEW GUIDE INSTRUCTS THE FIRST STEPS OF OUR journey. The report of the Commission on Global Security, Justice, and Governance, co-chaired by former U.S. Secretary of State Madeleine Albright and former UN Under-Secretary-General Ibrahim Gambari, focuses on three broad areas: climate change, the intersection between cross-border economic shocks and various cyber nightmares, and intrastate violence in “fragile states.”¹ We can applaud many of their findings and recommendations. Climate? They propose an “International Carbon Monitoring Entity” and a “Climate Engineering Advisory Board,” as well as atmospheric modification and climate adaptation efforts—a welcome move beyond the exclusive focus on emissions reduction.

A “hyperconnected global economy?” Vastly increasing Internet access and strengthening cybersecurity in the Global South will both help prevent cybercrime and advance the UN’s Sustainable Development Goals. Repeated eruptions of intrastate bloodshed? They propose a significantly stronger Peacebuilding Commission, designated national peacekeeping units, improved early-warning capabilities, rapid-response mediation teams, and “particular attention to inclusion of women in peace processes.”

The Commission’s nuanced approach threads the needle of contemporary political reality between the current undermanaged

global status quo and what might be an ideal menu of optimally effective global governance structures. But voices beyond the Commission can begin to explore the action implications of some of their carefully parsed recommendations, and to embrace their transformative goals.

1. ON THE SECURITY COUNCIL, THE COMMISSION CALLS FOR creating a new kind of “dissenting vote ... (that would) not block passage of a resolution,” for expanded membership, and “restraint in the use of the veto.” Imposed or not, the veto still dominates Council decision-making. The initiatives that get advanced are only those agreeable to all five permanent members: an extreme case of what eminent political scientist Walter Dean Burnham calls “the politics of excluded alternatives.” If the UN is ever to become truly democratic and effective, the veto doesn’t need to be “restrained,” but eliminated.* The Commission recommends the creation of a “UN Parliamentary Network ... to raise greater awareness and participation in UN governance.” Today’s UN represents member states only, not people. An analogy might be if every single member of the US Congress were to be appointed by state governors. The revised concept would have individuals already elected to national legislatures be further selected to sit in a parallel intergovernmental body. They would advise the UN, increase public engagement with its work, and form transnational political parties to engage in collaborative political action.

The international “Campaign for a UN Parliamentary Assembly” has been promoting that very idea for many years. 127 national legislatures have endorsed it. Both this international campaign, and many similar efforts, foster the further hope that someday representatives could be directly elected to serve in a new transnational chamber, rather than selected from national parliaments. That’s not so far-fetched. After all, an American woman living in Los



“A WORLD CONFERENCE ON GLOBAL INSTITUTIONS DURING THE UN’S 75TH ANNIVERSARY YEAR COULD PROVIDE A ONCE-IN-OUR-LIFETIME OPPORTUNITY TO REINVENT THE ARCHITECTURES OF WORLD ORDER.”

» Angeles elects particular individuals to represent her in the LA City Council, the California State legislature, and the U.S. Congress. Why shouldn’t she be able to cast a vote for someone to represent her at the global level as well?

2. In addition to restricting its forum to national government executive branches only, the structure of the General Assembly perpetuates two other fundamental flaws. First, the principle of “one nation one vote,” for large and small states alike, could hardly be more undemocratic (or absurd). The framers of the U.S. Constitution solved the problem of large versus small states by inventing the bicameral legislature. The U.S. Senate represents each state equally, while the U.S. House provides states with larger populations with a proportionally larger voice. But how democratic or legitimate would a national legislature be if the “upper house” were its only chamber? How long would legislation emerging from such a chamber be tolerated by the citizens of the largest states? One might argue that there’s really nothing wrong with, say, Trinidad & Tobago (Pop: 1.35m) being granted the same voice as Japan (Pop:127m) in the UN General Assembly, since GA votes are mostly advisory. But as we peer into the future it is perhaps more useful to invert the proposition: what emerges from the GA can never become more than advisory as long as the very small country wields the same power and authority as a large country with a significant budgetary assessment. Secondly, once those votes are cast, GA decisions serve only as polite requests. There is no power to make actual world laws. The often-advocated remedy is establishment of some kind of weighted voting system (perhaps accounting for both population and budgetary contributions), and then sanctioning the results with the force of international law (as Security Council decisions).

3. Finally, the Commission does not put forth what could be the single most promising measure to prevent genocide and crimes against humanity: a permanent, directly-recruited,

IN 2020: A “WORLD CONFERENCE ON GLOBAL INSTITUTIONS”

all-volunteer UN Rapid Deployment Force (UNRDF). The first UN Secretary-General, Trygve Lie, initially proposed such a “UN Legion” in 1948. Its *raison d’être* would be to protect not the national interests of any particular state, but the shared human interest in eliminating genocide for all time. Moreover, a UNRDF would give citizens of the world the opportunity, bravely and at mortal risk, to serve not just their country, but the whole of humanity. It is the total lack of such incisive organizational innovations, 70 years on, which leads so many to consider the UN so ineffectual and irrelevant. The problem with the UN is neither “Council deadlock” nor “bureaucratic timidity.” The problem with the UN is the design of the UN.

FORTUNATELY THE COMMISSION’S PRINCIPALS ATONE FOR SUCH omissions with their overarching proposal. They call for convening in 2020, the UN’s 75th anniversary, an official meeting of both governments and significant non-governmental actors, which they designate a “World Conference on Global Institutions” (WCGI). They even spell out a detailed calendar leading toward 2020, starting with a series of “multi-stakeholder” foreign minister meetings and PrepComs in early 2018. The Commission emphasizes that most of their recommendations could be accomplished without revising the UN Charter. But they do acknowledge that “consideration could be given to ... Articles 108 or 109.” That first is the provision for making individual Charter amendments, while the second provides for summoning “A General Conference of the Members of the United Nations for the purpose of reviewing the present Charter.” Indeed, Article 109(3) indicates that the framers intended for such a conference to be held no later than “the tenth annual session”...1955!

A World Conference on Global Institutions during the UN’s 75th anniversary year could provide a once-in-our-lifetime oppor-

- » tunity to reinvent our architectures of world order. Civil society activists on such issues as climate and environment, human rights, the education of girls, poverty and inequality, migration, and peace and war could all pursue agenda-driven global institutional reforms through WCGI. A reinvigorated student activism could be directed toward a wide scope of planetwide upgrades. NGOs could engage their constituencies on a substantial menu of global governance proposals. Indeed, the NGO Citizens for Global Solutions is intent on mobilizing a broad organizational coalition to press governments to commit now to convene a 2020 conference.

AND WHAT COMES AFTER THAT?

ON NOVEMBER 12, 1946, THE PRIME MINISTER OF THE UNITED Kingdom, Clement Attlee, announced to the House of Commons that world government was “the ultimate aim of Great Britain’s foreign policy,” echoing his predecessor Winston Churchill on that point. What strikes one about this forgotten vision is not just that few world leaders would say anything similar today, but how rarely our global governance thinkers speak of any “ultimate aims” whatever. As we approach 2020, our agenda ought not be limited to what we might practically try to achieve in that year. We need also to talk about what we might hope to enact by the UN’s 100th anniversary year, in 2045, and the conditions of life we might hope for our great-grandchildren as the century comes to its close. That leads to some Very Big Questions.

What kind of United Nations would we set out to create if we were designing it from scratch today? If the League of Nations was the first version, and the United Nations the second, can we now begin to envision a “World Organization 3.0?” Can we dream that some distant day the human race might eliminate national military establishments and their endless international arms races, through what the University of Chicago’s Committee to Frame a World Constitution, back in 1948, called a “Federal Republic of the World?” Is something like such a world state—endorsed over many centu-

ries by geniuses like Einstein, Wells, Hugo, Tennyson, Kant, Penn, and Dante—in fact a desirable goal, or might the costs and risks exceed the actual benefits? If desirable, will it ever be achievable? If neither desirable nor achievable, can we hypothesize any other models of world order that might someday move the human race beyond Hobbes’s “bellum omnium contra omnes,” the war of all against all? Must we resign ourselves to succeeding generations being haunted forever by the scourge of war? If our current state sovereignty system endures indefinitely, what are the likely costs, benefits, and risks of that future? Almost certainly, no kind of irreversible next step in the social evolution of our species will bless the year 2020. And while politics, as every freshman learns, is “the art of the possible,” given such deepest, most stubborn constraints, shouldn’t campaigns for global change, for that very reason, shatter limitations? Can’t we at long last break through the numbly accepted “givens” that stifle our political imagination and cripple our common future? Isn’t it finally time to embrace our infinite historical possibilities?

Tad Daley, J.D., Ph.D., author of Apocalypse Never: Forging the Path to a Nuclear Weapon-Free World from Rutgers University Press, directs the Project on Abolishing War at the Center for War/Peace Studies (www.cwps.org). Please follow him on Twitter @TheTadDaley. ■

ENDNOTES

1. The Commission on Global Security, Justice, and Governance (Madeleine Albright and Ibrahim Gambari, *Co-Chairs*), *Confronting the Crisis of Global Governance*, The Hague: The Hague Institute for Global Justice and the Stimson Center, June 2015. <http://www.globalsecurityjusticegovernance.org/publications-resources/report/>.

NUCLEAR ABOLITION: THE MORAL CASE

by DOUGLAS ROCHE

NUCLEAR WEAPONS ARE THE ULTIMATE EVIL.

This is a view I have held since the 1997 publication of my book, *The Ultimate Evil*, in which I appealed for public recognition of the moral bankruptcy of nuclear weapons. The phrase was not mine. I took it from the statement issued by Judge Mohammed Bedjaoui, then the President of the International Court of Justice, who said: “Nuclear weapons, the ultimate evil, destabilize humanitarian law...” Judge Bedjaoui honored me by writing the Foreword to my book. He excoriated the doctrine of nuclear deterrence for driving the development of ever-more sophisticated nuclear weapons. “Fear and madness,” he warned, “may still link arms to engage in a final dance of death.” For decades, media and political processes ignored the centrality of the nuclear weapons issue: evil. When they did deal with nuclear weapons, it was usually in terms of deterring an “enemy.” The Cold War language has continued into the new era: the old euphemisms of “nuclear preparedness” and “collateral damage” continue to hide the real issues of extermination by the millions, incineration of whole populations of cities, genetic deformities, inducement of cancers, destruction of the food chain, and the imperiling of civilization. And so the calamity awaiting humanity has been obscured.

For too long strategists have defended the possession of nuclear weapons on the grounds of security, and marginalized the moral argument. Now, with the rise of the humanitarian movement — the basis for the recent series of international conferences in Oslo, Nayarit and Vienna — the moral argument is coming into better focus. The Austrian Pledge emerged out of these consultations, citing “profound moral and ethical questions that go beyond debates about the legality of nuclear weapons.” The powerful personality of Pope Francis has underscored the moral argument. The Pope sent a

MESSAGE

to the 2014 conference in Vienna, hosted by the Austrian government and attended by more than 150 governments, to advance public understanding of what is now termed the “catastrophic humanitarian consequences” of any use of the 16,300 nuclear weapons now possessed by nine countries. Pope Francis stripped away any lingering moral acceptance of the military doctrine of nuclear deterrence: “Nuclear deterrence and the threat of mutually assured destruction cannot be the basis for an ethics of fraternity and peaceful coexistence.” The Pope’s rigorous stand was supported by a remarkable Vatican document, “Nuclear Disarmament: Time for Abolition,” also put before the conference. The document did not mince words: “Now is the time to affirm not only the immorality of the use of nuclear weapons, but the immorality of their possession, thereby clearing the road to abolition.”

The nuclear powers would not be able to so blithely carry on with their nuclear weapons programs if world consciousness, raised to a new recognition of this evil, demanded abolition. But world consciousness has been dulled. We have lived with the bomb so long that it has insinuated itself into our thinking. Hiroshima and Nagasaki seem so long ago, they are but a blur in memory. The Oslo-Nayarit-Vienna processes seek to re-open the eyes of society to the “catastrophic humanitarian consequences” of this evil. Society is not impervious to evil: the Holocaust and genocide in places like Cambodia and Rwanda have been recognized as the evils they are. But the ultimate—last, final, most remote in time or space—evil appears to be too far removed from daily life to engage public attention. It is almost as if the reality is too big to handle. Nuclear weapons assault life on the planet, they assault the planet itself, and in so doing they assault the process of the continuing development of the planet.

» This is an affront to God, the Creator of the universe, an

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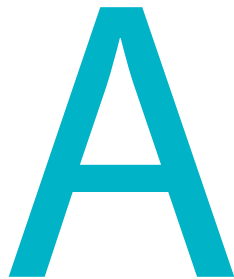
» affront to the mysterious process of creation that makes a connection to an unfathomably distant past that the present generation has no right to interrupt. Nuclear weapons rival the power of God. They challenge God. They lure us into thinking we can control the destiny of the world. They turn upside down the natural morality that flows from the relationship between God and humanity. Nuclear weapons are evil because they destroy the process of life itself. They invert order into disorder. The covenants of humanitarian law are supposed to govern nuclear weapons. In fact, as Judge Bedjaoui noted, a nuclear war would destroy the very basis of humanitarian law. The structure of our civilization would disappear. Nuclear weapons, with no limitation or proportionality in their effect, make a mockery of old “just war” theories. How can self-defense be cited as justification for the use of nuclear weapons when their full effect destroys the “self” that is supposed to be defended? Nuclear weapons will only be abolished when the moral consciousness of humanity is raised, just as it was raised by the moral re-assessment and rejection of slavery, colonialism, and apartheid.

This renewed focus on the immorality of nuclear weapons comes just at the time when their utility is being severely questioned. The military effectiveness of nuclear weapons is coming under increased challenge. They cannot be used against military targets as such without enormous civilian damage. Terrorism is the biggest threat today to security, but how can a nuclear weapon be used against terrorists hiding in urban populations without also killing most, if not all, of the area’s residents?

The proponents of nuclear deterrence theory—with concomitant modernization programs soaking up vast amounts of money needed for economic and social development—seem not to care that there is no logic to support their case. Nuclear weapons have become the currency of power, and the five permanent members of the Security Council retain their status in no small measure due to

their continued possession of nuclear weapons.

These adherents are essentially pessimistic about the future of humanity. They believe that, since history is filled with accounts of warfare, war will continue to characterize human relations. Thus they have, to date, been successful in painting nuclear abolitionists as well-meaning but naïve in the ways of the world. The moral objection to nuclear weapons is consistently depicted as idealism. Even President Obama, rewarded with the Nobel Peace Prize largely for his idealistic Prague speech against nuclear weapons in 2009, soon reverted to political realism and accepted the Pentagon's plans for a \$355 billion nuclear modernization program over the next decade.



A cursory assessment suggests that neither the moral argument, nor even the utility argument, can stand up against the lobbying power of the military-industrial complex. But if we look more deeply at what is happening to the world as a whole, in moving from the old culture of war to the new prospect of a culture of peace, we can take some hope. The multi-faceted work of the United Nations gradually defines a new caring for the wholeness of life. Humanity is learning how to understand all our human relationships, our relationship with the Earth, and how to govern for the common good. This is the stirring of a global conscience.

Through the United Nations and its systems we possess, for the first time in the history of the world, a catalogue of information about how our planet works, and we have developed treaties to protect the rights of individuals and the environment itself. Both people and governments are learning that they must cooperate for a host of purposes—to maintain peace and order, to expand economic activity, to tackle pollution, to halt or minimize climate change, to combat disease, to curb the proliferation of weapons, to prevent desertification, to preserve genetic and species diversity, to deter terrorists, to ward off famines. All of this work flows from the recognition of the inherent dignity and rights of every individual.

WE ARE LIFTING

- » ourselves up as a species that is moving, despite the headlines of the day, toward a state where non-violence can become the global norm. But we have not yet arrived at a non-violent world. And the global conscience has not yet infused enough strength in the voting public to overturn the prophets of doom. Nonetheless, the moral case against nuclear weapons, built on humanity's growing rejection of violence as a means of resolving conflict, is gathering strength. Fortified by a reaffirmation of the moral case, the international community now has an opportunity to build the legal framework to accomplish the prohibition and elimination of nuclear weapons. The abolition of nuclear weapons, then, is a natural consequence of enlightened realism.

Douglas Roche is a former Canadian Senator and Ambassador for Disarmament. His latest book, The United Nations in the 21st Century, will be published in September, 2015. ■

“PEACE CANNOT BE BUILT ON EXCLUSIVISM, ABSOLUTISM, AND INTOLERANCE. BUT NEITHER CAN IT BE BUILT ON VAGUE LIBERAL SLOGANS AND PIOUS PROGRAMS GESTATED IN THE SMOKE OF CONFABULATION. THERE CAN BE NO PEACE ON EARTH WITHOUT THE KIND OF INNER CHANGE THAT BRINGS MAN BACK TO HIS “RIGHT MIND.”

~Thomas Merton

BOOK NOTE

by CHARLES ROSENBERG

Altruism: The Power of Compassion to Change Yourself and the World
by Matthieu Ricard
First North American Edition: June 2015 by Little, Brown and Company, Hachette Book Group, New York, New York. Originally published in France as *Plaidoyer pour l'altruisme* by Nil editions, September, 2013. Hardcover ISBN: 978-0-316-20824-6

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ATTHIEU RICARD, BUDDHIST MONK AND FORMER CELLULAR geneticist, brings a unique point of view and research mastery to this definitive take on altruism. Evidently his decades of study in Tibet had its taxonomic rigors: he defines terms and makes fine distinctions that would draw praise from

Aristotle or the Jesuits.

The first section escorts us through the meanings and implications of “altruism,” “compassion,” and “empathy”, as well as such relations/subspecies as “benevolence,” “solicitude,” “kindness,” and “fraternity.” More than a triumph in academic clarity, in so doing he disentangles our mixed motives and best behaviors. Ricard draws on psychological experiments directed by Daniel Batson to show that true altruism is identified by a process of elimination. We can rescue others to relieve our own resonant distress, to avoid punishment or guilt, to avoid social or self censure, or in the calculated hope of a reward. When all such motives fall by the wayside or are subordinated, we are left with unconditional altruism.

The second and third sections deal with altruism in biological evolution and in cultures, and with its cultivation by meditation and other means. Ricard examines science’s assessment of meditation as a foundation of health and as a vehicle for transforming areas of the brain associated with compassion.

The author also sees a great opportunity for altruism to be a prime mover in public affairs, so the book then explores first the forces that counter altruism, then the prospects of building a more altruistic society. Ricard the monk celebrates the power of loving kindness; Ricard the scientist foresees a virtuous cycle of transformation, with “cultures and individuals...influenc(ing) each other mutually. Individuals who grow up in a new culture are different, because their new habits transform their brain through neuroplasticity, and their gene-based conduct through epigenetics.” And he sees those individuals driving their culture and their institutions to evolve, steadily, into a world governed by altruism writ large and deep. ■

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