

BOUNDARY PEACE INITIATIVE

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UN International Day of Peace 2020 Theme: Shaping Peace Together

Each year the International Day of Peace is observed around the world on 21 September. The UN General Assembly has declared this as a day devoted to strengthening the ideals of peace, through observing 24 hours of non-violence and cease-fire.

This year, it has been clearer than ever that we are not each other's enemies. Rather, our common enemy is a tireless virus that threatens our health, security and very way of life. COVID-19 has thrown our world into turmoil and forcibly reminded us that what happens in one part of the planet can impact people everywhere.

In March, UN Secretary-General António Guterres called on all warring parties to lay down their weapons and focus on the battle against this unprecedented global pandemic. While the message is intended for armed parties, solidarity and cooperation across borders, sectors and generations are also needed to win this new fight against the worst public health crisis of our time.

For the United Nations, 2020 was already meant to be a year of listening and learning. To mark its 75th anniversary, the UN has invited millions of people worldwide to join UN75, the largest and furthest-reaching global conversation on building the peaceful and prosperous future that we want.

As we struggle to defeat COVID-19, your voice is more important than ever. In these difficult times of physical distancing, this International Day of Peace will be dedicated to fostering dialogue and collecting ideas. The world will be invited to unite and share thoughts on how to weather this storm, heal our planet and change it for the better. Even though we may not be able to stand next to each other, we can still dream together.

The 2020 theme for the International Day of Peace is "Shaping Peace Together." Celebrate the day by spreading compassion, kindness and hope in the face of the pandemic. Stand together with the UN against attempts to use the virus to promote discrimination or hatred. Join us so that we can shape peace together.

Background

The International Day of Peace was established in 1981 by the United Nations General Assembly. Two decades later, in 2001, the General Assembly unanimously voted to designate the Day as a period of non-violence and cease-fire. (Continued next column)

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The United Nations invites all nations and people to honour a cessation of hostilities during the Day, and to otherwise commemorate the Day through education and public awareness on issues related to peace.



US Conference of Mayors Calls for Human-Centered Security in a Time of Global Pandemic (July 2, 2020)

Website: www.mayorsforpeace.org

At the close of its 88th Annual Meeting, held virtually due to the COVID-19 pandemic, on June 30, 2020, the United States Conference of Mayors (USCM) Executive Committee unanimously adopted a sweeping resolution **Calling for Human-Centered Security in a Time of Global Pandemic**. The new resolution calls on the President and Congress: to support United Nations Secretary-General Guterres' call for an immediate global ceasefire and international cooperation to address the COVID-19 pandemic; to reconceptualise security in human-centered terms, and to redirect funds currently allocated to nuclear weapons and unwarranted military spending to support safe and resilient cities and meet human needs; and to lead a global effort to prevent nuclear war and actively pursue a verifiable agreement among nuclear armed states to eliminate their nuclear arsenals.

The USCM resolution opens with a stark quote from United Nations Secretary-General António Guterres, who on March 23, 2020 declared: "Our world faces a common enemy: COVID-19. The virus does not care about ethnicity or nationality, faction or faith. It attacks all, relentlessly. Meanwhile, armed conflict rages on around the world. The most vulnerable — women and children, people with disabilities, the marginalized and the displaced — pay the highest price. They are also at the highest risk of suffering devastating losses from COVID-19.

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Let's not forget that in war-ravaged countries, health systems have collapsed.... That is why today, I am calling for an immediate global ceasefire in all corners of the world. It is time to put armed conflict on lockdown and focus together on the true fight of our lives."

The resolution also quotes United Nations High Representative for Disarmament Affairs Izumi Nakamitsu, who warned: "The spectre of unconstrained nuclear competition looms over us for the first time since the 1970s. We are witnessing what has been termed a qualitative nuclear arms race, one not based on numbers but on faster, stealthier and more accurate weapons. Regional conflicts with a nuclear dimension are worsening, and proliferation challenges are not receding."

The resolution reports that "the administration has requested over \$740 billion for the military in its FY 2021 budget proposal, far more than the United States spent for military purposes at the height of the Korean or Vietnam Wars or the peak of the Reagan buildup of the 1980s", noting that "the biggest increase in the proposed FY 2021 budget is a nearly 20% increase in spending on nuclear weapons at \$45 billion".

Warning that "the fact that this pandemic has come close to overwhelming the health care system even when only small fraction of the population has required hospitalization— and hospitals were intact to provide care – demonstrates that there can be no meaningful response to or recovery from nuclear war," the USCM notes that "according to a recent study, the amount of money spent in one year by the U.S. on nuclear weapons could instead provide 300,000 ICU (intensive care unit) beds, 35,000 ventilators and 75,000 doctors' salaries."

In response to the current multi-faceted global crisis, "the United States Conference of Mayors calls on the President and Congress to support United Nations Secretary-General Guterres' call for an immediate global ceasefire and international cooperation to address the COVID-19 pandemic."

Fundamentally, the USCM "calls on the President and Congress to reconceptualize security in human-centered terms, and to redirect funds currently allocated to nuclear weapons and unwarranted military spending to support safe and resilient cities and meet human needs, including by providing immediate funding for critical needs exposed by the COVID-19 pandemic such as health care accessible and affordable for all, more robust public health capacity at every level of government, programs to secure housing and food security, and measures to assure secure funding for municipalities and states throughout this and future disasters for which they are the first line of defense."

And "the United States Conference of Mayors reaffirms its call on the United States to lead a global effort to prevent nuclear war by renouncing the option of using nuclear weapons first; (Continue next column)

(From last column)) **US Conference of Mayors** ending the sole, unchecked authority of any president to launch a nuclear attack; taking U.S. nuclear weapons off hair-trigger alert; cancelling the plan to replace its entire arsenal with enhanced weapons; and actively pursuing a verifiable agreement among nuclear armed states to eliminate their nuclear arsenals."

Noting that , "the United States Conference of Mayors has unanimously adopted Mayors for Peace resolutions for 15 consecutive years, on July 1, 2019 "Calling on All Presidential Candidates to Make Known Their Positions on Nuclear Weapons and to Pledge U.S. Global Leadership in Preventing Nuclear War, Returning to Diplomacy, and Negotiating the Elimination of Nuclear Weapons," the USCM "urges all U.S. mayors to join Mayors for Peace to help reach the goal of 10,000 member cities by the end of 2020, the 75th anniversary year of the U.S. atomic bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki."

The resolution was sponsored by Mayors for Peace U.S. Vice-President T.M. Franklin Cownie, Mayor of Des Moines, Iowa, and co-sponsored by Trey Mendez, Mayor of Brownsville, Texas; Elizabeth B. Kautz, Mayor of Burnsville, Minnesota; Nan Whaley, Mayor of Dayton, Ohio; and Yvonne M. Spicer, Mayor of Framingham, Massachusetts.

As noted in the resolution, "Mayors for Peace is working for a world without nuclear weapons and safe and resilient cities as essential measures for the achievement of lasting world peace, and as of May 1 had grown to 7,905 cities in 163 countries and regions, with 218 U.S. members." Mayors for Peace, founded in 1982, is led by the Mayors of Hiroshima and Nagasaki.

The United States Conference of Mayors is the official nonpartisan association of more than 1,400 American cities with populations over 30,000. Resolutions adopted at annual meetings become USCM official policy.

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Our Mission

The Boundary Peace Initiative represents people of diverse backgrounds officially brought together in 2002 because of our mutual concern for the rise in world conflict. Our mandate is to participate in multilateral non-violent conflict resolution in support of global human rights, ecological and environmental sustainability and international law through education, sharing of information, dialogue and activism locally and globally. We encourage and seek your participation in our mutual work for true peace based on social justice, equality, accountability, integrity, honour, respect, etc in order to build a better world today and future generations.

BPI web site: www.boundarypeaceinitiative.org

BPI regular meetings are suspended until at least 3 people commit to meet monthly. To commit or for info: (250) 444-0524 or (250) 442-0434 or email L4peace@telus.net.

When The Pandemic Is Over, The World Must Come Together (April 2020)

By: MIKHAIL GORBACHEV

During the first months of this year, we have seen once again how fragile is our global world, how great the danger of sliding into chaos. The COVID-19 pandemic is facing all countries with a common threat, and no country can cope with it alone.

The immediate challenge today is to defeat this new, vicious enemy. But even today, we need to start thinking about life after it retreats.

Many are now saying the world will never be the same. But what will it be like? That depends on what lessons will be learned.

I recall how in the mid-1980s, we addressed the nuclear threat. The breakthrough came when we understood that it is our common enemy, a threat to all of us. The leaders of the Soviet Union and the U.S. declared that a nuclear war cannot be won and must never be fought. Then came Reykjavik and the first treaties eliminating nuclear weapons. But even though by now 85% of those arsenals have been destroyed, the threat is still there.

Yet other global challenges remain and have even become more urgent: poverty and inequality, the degradation of the environment, the depletion of the earth and the oceans, the migration crisis. And now, a grim reminder of another threat: diseases and epidemics that in a global, interconnected world can spread with unprecedented speed.

The response to this new challenge cannot be purely national. While it is the national governments that now bear the brunt of making difficult choices, decisions will have to be made by the entire world community.

We have so far failed to develop and implement strategies and goals common to all mankind. Progress toward the Millennium Development Goals, adopted by the U.N. in 2000, has been extremely uneven. We see today that the pandemic and its consequences are hitting the poor particularly hard, thus exacerbating the problem of inequality.

What we urgently need now is a rethinking of the entire concept of security. Even after the end of the Cold War, it has been envisioned mostly in military terms. Over the past few years, all we've been hearing is talk about weapons, missiles and airstrikes.

This year, the world has already been on the brink of clashes that could involve great powers, with serious hostilities in Iran, Iraq and Syria. And though the participants eventually stepped back, it was the same dangerous and reckless policy of brinkmanship.

Is it not clear by now that wars and the arms race cannot solve today's global problems? War is a sign of defeat, a failure of politics.

The overriding goal must be human security: providing food, water and a clean environment and caring for people's health. To achieve it, we need to develop strategies, make preparations, plan and create reserves.

But all efforts will fail if governments continue to waste money by fuelling the arms race. (Continue next column)

(From last column) When The Pandemic Is Over

I'll never tire of repeating: we need to demilitarize world affairs, international politics and political thinking.

To address this at the highest international level, I am calling on world leaders to convene an emergency special session of the U.N. General Assembly, to be held as soon as the situation is stabilized. It should be about nothing less than revising the entire global agenda. Specifically, I call upon them to cut military spending by 10% to 15%. This is the least they should do now, as a first step toward a new consciousness, a new civilization.

Gorbachev, a Nobel Peace Prize laureate, was the only President of the Soviet Union

Being 'Merely Tolerated' May Put Minority Members at Risk: May 2020

By: Association for Psychological Science

<https://www.psychologicalscience.org/>

Tolerance is often regarded as a virtue that allows us to "live and let live" with people different from us, but *being* tolerated is rarely perceived so positively. As social psychologist Gordon Allport put it in his 1954 book, *The Nature of Prejudice*: "When we say that we tolerate a headache, or our shabby apartment, or a neighbour, we certainly do not mean that we like them, but merely that in spite of our dislike we shall endure them."

Even with that perspective in mind, tolerating differences in beliefs, norms, and practices has immense value when it comes to reducing intergroup conflict in diverse societies, write Maykel Verkuyten (Utrecht University), Kumar Yogeeswaran (University of Canterbury), and Levi Adelman (Utrecht University) in *Perspectives on Psychological Science*. Ironically, the implied disapproval of those differences may itself exact a toll on members of minority groups who find themselves "merely tolerated" by dominant members of their societies.

"Being constantly subject to the threat of intervention is risky and psychologically taxing."

—Maykel Verkuyten (Utrecht University) and colleagues

A growing body of research has outlined the conditions under which dominant majority members are likely to engage in tolerance, Verkuyten and colleagues write. Now psychological scientists are beginning to focus on the potential impacts of being tolerated on minority group members themselves.

"We tolerate only what we object to," the researchers explain. "In everyday life, being tolerated may not have only positive implications for minority members; it may also be offensive and hurtful because it implies disapproval of what one believes and practices and can be seen as reproducing inequality and domination."

Tolerance arises from majority members' willingness not to interfere with minority groups who hold less structural power

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WHAT'S UP?

UN International Day of Peace is September 21st. We ask that you take a few moments to honour this day and commit to help create a safe and peaceful space for yourself, your friends, your family, your community and through that the planet. Due to Covid-19, the BPI will not have an event but we do look forward to the time when the pandemic will be under control and we can resume gathering to support each other as we work for peace, social justice and environmental sustainability.

PEACE SYMBOL CONTEST

A great way to spend time while self-isolating. **Enter the Peace Quest Regina 2020 Peace Symbol Contest.** Create a peace symbol on any surface: paper, cloth, a cake or cookies, a sidewalk, a rock....The options are limitless. Email a picture to: makingpeace@sasktel.net. You will receive a peace gift and be eligible to win a major peace prize. Entry deadline is midnight August 31 2020. Winners will be announced September 21, International Peace Day. Visit the Peace Quest Regina Facebook page to entries: https://www.facebook.com/pg/PeaceQuestRegina/photos/?tab=album&album_id=2546836035589182

Knowledge is real knowledge only when it is acquired by the efforts of our intellect, not by memory.
Leo Tolstoy

The BPI welcomes your input. Articles are the author's responsibility and may not be common consensus of members. To submit articles contact Laura at **250-444-0524 or 250-442-0434** or email L4peace@telus.net.

The BPI is a member of: BC Southern Interior Peace Coalition, Canadian Peace Congress, Abolition 2000 and an affiliate of the Fellowship of Reconciliation. We also work with a wide range of local and global peace, social justice and environmental groups.

(From page 3) **Being 'Merely Tolerated' May**

in a given society, such as racial and religious minorities, women, and members of the LGBTQ community. While this can contribute to peaceful coexistence, it may have psychological consequences similar to discrimination itself, which has been found to reduce minority members' physical and psychological health by threatening their sense of belonging and control.

In contrast to full acceptance or respect, non-interference-based tolerance may imply that minority individuals require the majority's permission to retain their own norms, values, and cultural practices, undermining their sense of self-determination, Verkuyten and colleagues write. Framing tolerance as a virtue may also give majority members a sense of moral superiority when they appear to "endure" the presence of minority members with views different than their own.

"The tolerated may, in turn, experience fear and anxiety that any actions of their group can risk upsetting the dominant group and losing the permission of following their own group's way of life," the researchers explain. "Being constantly subject to the threat of intervention is risky and psychologically taxing."

Muslim minority members in Western societies, for example, have experienced significant shifts both for and against tolerance of their religious practices over the past several decades. Even when they are able to take prayer breaks during work or to wear a religious covering such as a hijab or burka in public spaces, the researchers continue, they may often do so with the sense that Christian or secular majority members may perceive these practices as deviant behavior that must be "put up with."

"Because tolerance depends on the goodwill or mercy of the dominant group, it can create a sense of uncertainty about whether it will be possible to continue to live the life that one wants," Verkuyten and colleagues write. Further research is needed to uncover how these highly aversive experiences of anxiety and distress may influence well-being.

"Acknowledging the continued and increased importance of intergroup toleration does not mean that we should ignore their possible negative consequences," the researchers conclude. "On the contrary, a focus on possible negative consequences allows us to make progress in finding more viable approaches to multicultural diversity."

References

- Allport, G. W. (1954). *The Nature of Prejudice*. Reading, England: Addison-Wesley.
- Verkuyten, M., Yogeeswaran, K., & Adelman, L. (2020). The Negative Implications of Being Tolerated: Tolerance From the Target's Perspective. *Perspectives on Psychological Science*. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1745691619897974>

And there comes a time when we must take a position that is neither safe, nor politic, nor popular, but one must take it because it is right."

Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.

Voice your opinion to the Prime Minister and all MPs. Free postage: {Name of MP}, Parliament Buildings, Ottawa, Ontario, K1A 0A6

Go to the Government of Canada website for MP contact information at <http://www.canada.gc.ca>