

ABOLISHING WAR
Cultures and Institutions

Dialogue with peace scholars
ELISE BOULDING and
RANDALL FORSBERG

**BOSTON RESEARCH CENTER
FOR THE 21ST CENTURY**

November 1998



The Boston Research Center for the 21st Century (BRC) is an international peace institute founded in 1993 by Daisaku Ikeda, a Buddhist peace activist and president of Soka Gakkai International, an association of Buddhist organizations in 128 countries. The BRC brings together scholars and activists in dialogue on common values across cultures and religions, seeking in this way to support an evolving global ethic for a peaceful twenty-first century. Human rights, nonviolence, ecological harmony, and economic justice are focal points of the Center's work.

Published by
Boston Research Center for the 21st Century
396 Harvard Street
Cambridge, MA 02138-3924

ISBN 1-887917-03-9
Library of Congress catalogue card number: 98-074360

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Edited by Helen Marie Casey and Amy Morgante
Copyediting by Kali Saposnick
Desktop publishing and cover design by Ralph Buglass
Abolishing War seminar series organized by Karen Nardella and
Beth Zimmerman

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The United Nations, Servant Leadership, and the Peacebuilding Institute

BY VIRGINIA MARY SWAIN

I am extremely grateful to the Boston Research Center for the 21st Century and to Randall Forsberg and Elise Boulding for the opportunity to participate in this series. My comments address both Elise's observation that a successful global security commission created by civil society at the United Nations has never worked and Randy's observation that a window of opportunity exists in the next 10-20 years to abolish war.

I was struck by how few references there were in this seminar to strengthening the United Nations. That to me is the main issue to be resolved in the debate between Randy and Elise. The United Nations is the only international peacemaking body of its kind. Randy's argument for a defensive security system is already incorporated in the Charter of the United Nations. Article 2 (paragraphs 3 and 4) provides that member states renounce the threat and use of force and pledge to settle their disputes by peaceful means; Articles 2(2), 25, 48, and 49 provide that members shall fulfill their obligations, carry out the decisions of the Security Council, make their armed forces available for international duty, and mutually assist one another in the collective defense. Since the U.N. has failed to live up to its charter obligations, new thinking and action are needed.

I believe a U.N. Peacebuilding Institute is needed to develop what Robert Greenleaf has called servant leadership.¹ It would build on the learnings of the Truth and Reconciliation Commissions, applying accountability, forgiveness, and reconciliation to engender a new vision of the United Nations as a body that would not use force at any level to make peace. An uncommon set of competencies describe the servant leaders—people whose actions are based on study, reflection, practice, and evaluation; who build relationships; who have moral purpose and compassion. They are nonjudgmental listeners who have spent time trying to come to terms with their own past trauma, unhealthy living patterns, atti-

tudes, and behaviors, so that they can take responsibility and not hurt, blame, or project their pain on others. Such spiritually aware leaders could apply techniques of reconciliation to model what such peacebuilding can offer to a world desperately entangled in the use of force to make peace.

A U.N. Peacebuilding Institute to train servant leaders would include all stakeholders of civil society to address root causes of the use of force from the personal to the global levels and to begin to build a global security commission. People who are fully conscious of the power and promise of their spiritual lineage can grow in their understanding of the role they could take globally with their unique gifts, values, and abilities. These leaders serve their followers by helping them through their transformations rather than controlling them. They have a respect for and sense of communion with the earth and an intention to use its resources rightly. Elise's Conflict Management Continuum is enhanced by the appearance of servant leaders to apply to the penultimate part of her continuum, which is transformation. The components of accountability, forgiveness, and reconciliation are essential to the work of transformation in the United Nations. Otherwise, the world will repeat the suffering and horrors of this century's wars, ethnic conflict, and the use of force as a response to terrorism. The best of our humanity is desperately needed now.

Since 1992, The Center for Global Community and World Law has been developing an organizational development process called the Peacebuilding Process of Reconciliation (PPR) to develop political will to build on the learnings of the Truth and Reconciliation Commissions. The Peacebuilding Process, which has been used at the United Nations and in local and international settings, enlarges common interest and builds global community, to build on the window of opportunity to which Randall Forsberg alluded. The PPR is designed for post-conflict peacebuilding; it provides a way to develop servant leadership by engaging people on intellectual, emotional, and spiritual levels.

The Peacebuilding Institute could use the Peacebuilding Process of Reconciliation to develop political will for a global reconciliation service. Such a service could apply accountability, forgiveness, and reconciliation to the highest ideals of a renewed United Na-

tions. Perhaps then, servant leaders could help the U.N. become a true peacemaking body, dedicated to serve its followers, the world's peoples, by finally abolishing war.

Note

1. *On Becoming a Servant Leader: The Private Writings of Robert K. Greenleaf*, edited by Frick and Spears (Jossey Bass 1996).

Asking Tough Questions

BY ELMER N. ENGSTROM

There was agreement during the seminar on at least two important points: (1) that states operate within the values of their culture; and (2) that NGOs should be the primary vehicle for whatever efforts are to be made toward the abolition of war.

There was some question about whether the NGOs' primary efforts should be directed toward the states or toward cultures. Any effort to change states' policies on the use of force—"to speak truth to power," in Randy Forsberg's words—should be based as far as possible on a clear understanding of the state-culture interaction.

Apart from truisms—that most people are not violent in their individual relations, and that hardly anyone is "for war"—the signals on the state of the culture appear to be mixed, at least within the United States. While we see a growing use of conflict resolution techniques to moderate the resort to violence, we also seem to see an increase in the acceptance and use of violence.

- It would be useful to have a clear reading on this cultural issue:
- Is the society's acceptance level for violence at the interpersonal or intergroup level rising, falling, or unchanging?
- What is the relation, if any, between this acceptance level and the society's attitude toward war?

Such a reading would need to have a good deal of depth and sophistication. Some work of this kind has been done in recent years by Alan Kaye (and others?). Perhaps we have some of the answers already.

It might also be useful to think about priorities among the states to which the NGOs' efforts are to be directed. The objective of abolishing war means giving up a lot of sovereignty. The U.S. seems likely to be especially intransigent on this point. Should the effort start with other powers, or must it start at the top? Or, should it be a broadside?