

Pax Forum—Appendix I
Building Peace: To Understand, So We Can Act

Summaries of the Debate per Theme

Throughout the entire debate and to facilitate its progress, the Forum Coordination provided weekly summaries of what had been discussed and, every time the debate on one of the themes was closed, a summary of the debate on that theme. The present appendix comprises the set of summaries per theme. Given, however, the wealth of the discussion, which could not be entirely reflected in these summaries, we assembled in Appendix III all of the *weekly summaries* and, for a more condensed reading of them, a compilation of their respective abstracts in Appendix IV.

As for the totality of the messages themselves, the raw material for all these summaries, their archive is available on the Web site at <http://www.alliance21.org/forums/arc/pax/>

Summary I (December 6, 2001 – January 27, 2002)

After September 11: Exploring Violence on the Road to Peace

by Arnaud BLIN, Pax Forum Coordination

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http://sympa.alliance21.org/forums/d_read/pax/participants/introductions/forum_coordination.htm

Abstract: This text, in short, contains a summary of the topics covered these past weeks in response to our forum's first topic, the September 11, 2001 terrorist attacks on the United States. Discussion proved philosophical, emotional, and pragmatic all at the same time. From the idea of the attacks on New York and Washington naturally flowed an attempt to understand and define terrorism, as well as violence in general [see on that subject the contribution School of Peace that is also published today, as their closing statement for this item on the agenda]. Defining them proved to be more difficult than expected. Emerging alongside the exploration of violence and its roots was the issue of peace. Again the forum searched to define peace, and how to attain it. In the course of searching for the root cause of violence, thus the root destruction of peace, the issue of inequality ran a strong current, as did the need for co-operation. Tackling these difficult tasks, the forum established the necessity of classifying whose role was who's in the struggle for peace. Should the responsibility fall to the people, to state governments, or to international bodies?

This forum opened to the topic of the September 11, 2001 terrorist attacks on the United States. Participants shared their dismay for these attacks, expressing how deeply they affected their lives and their outlook on the world. Everyone condemned them as an abominable event, and most expressed that no act of terrorism is ever justified, while some even deliberated as to how it could be turned into a call for peace. In addition to the loss of innocent lives, this act of terrorism challenges democracy and its principles, rendering the consequences globally vital.

Is the Use of Violence Ever Legitimate?

While some declared indeed that no act of terrorism, or violence, is ever justified, others wondered whether or not terrorism is sometimes appropriate as an instrument of peace. Is terrorism truly the absolute antithesis of a world built on mutual tolerance and peace? Is there ever legitimacy in the use of violence? Is it more legitimate when used by states, by means of military intervention or through the application of economic and social policies that perpetuate extreme poverty and human distress in all of its dimensions for the majority of humankind? Can acts of terrorism used as a means to promote a cause -- as for instance, in the case of Palestinians, Basques, or Tamils, and clearly *not* in the case of the 11th of September attacks -- in the end achieve their ultimate goal, or are they doomed to provoking increased violence at worst, or a change *based* on violence, at best?

These questions, in large part, were difficult, sometimes impossible, to answer. Yet this may be truly the heart of the question of peace: Are non-violent means sufficient to force the rich and powerful to stop using the military and economic violence that they consider to be legitimate?

Philosophical wondering emerged in the attempt to reach the roots of what causes violence, and ultimately, what promotes peace. Two main ideas resulted from this inquiry. The first approach finds that violence seems to be the result of a skewed combination of three elements: biology (an inherent violent nature), culture, and religion (the concept of the original sin). Preventing these elements from causing harm can be achieved by educating our children to learn how to propagate peaceful societies, by bettering our personal socialization, and by becoming actively involved in order to shape our surrounding conditions. The second theory

claims that violence is the result of another type of imbalance: an inequality of economy and power.

Changes Start with the Individual

For example, United States foreign policy perpetuates an inequality of wealth and power, thus causing tension, conflict, and sometimes violence. The tilted balance of wealth strengthens the cycle in which the wealthy continuously line their pockets with more wealth, and the poor continuously line theirs with more holes. This being the case, as the poor plunge deeper into the depths of destitution, tension increases, starting the path to violence. Holding the fatter end of the power stick represents many advantages, including keeping the distorted cycle of wealth as it is, putting leaders into power, or taking them out, and controlling the dissemination of information, and misinformation, such as the treatment of violence in the media. Some also hold the belief that an imbalance of power, as currently exists, for example, stimulates deficient recognition of cultural differences. The cultural diversity that the global “underlings” have to offer is largely overlooked, therefore making it impossible to create appropriate policies on their behalf. All of these inequalities produce tension.

Some approached solving the problem of violence by trying to define peace. Peace is not non-violence, but rather a dichotomy that separates the concept of absolute peace and the reality of imperfect, attainable peace. Considered as a duty shared by all, attaining global peace proves to be nothing less than nearly impossible. To yield this enormous goal more manageable, some basic strategies need to be outlined. First and foremost, the changes start with the individual, not the government; as individuals, we must become that which we seek. We must begin by setting an example. Furthermore, if inequality does beget conflict, these inequalities need to be redistributed.

A Stream of Pessimism Regarding Political Leaders

While some participants felt that violence, such as terrorism, could only be solved by violence, others felt that attaining peace requires going beyond the punishment of terrorists to achieving an understanding of their motives. Foreshadowing the forum’s next topic, the idea of Planetary Consciousness was introduced. This theory states that we should think of ourselves as all being part of the same biosphere, the same system. It promotes the consideration of establishing links with science in an effort to further our understanding of the nature of the transformational, collective consciousness. We must recognize that attaining greater power and more wealth is not the objective, but understanding that we are all of one planet, one human consciousness, is.

Stemming from these ideas on how to cultivate peace, the question arises as to what the roles and responsibilities should be for the people and for the government. Many feel that governments and transnational organizations are ineffectual in fostering peace. This leads to the question: by what means can governments be reformed to behave like rational entities seeking peace? To this, many reply that the responsibility falls to the people, especially in democratic societies where the people elect the government. This should lead to the question of the lack of motivation among people in many democratic countries to actually vote, under the pretext that political leaders never truly represent their voters, and make decisions that are largely influenced by specific interests groups (oil companies, for instance), those, precisely, whose actions feed the roots of violence. A stream of pessimism flows through carrying the idea that many governments, even elected, lack competent political leadership and frequently merely advance their own agendas, which oftentimes neglect the issues of fostering peace and diminishing violence.

How Do We Make Conventions Work?

On a more global scale, the same question emerges concerning where the roles and responsibilities lie for creating peace. Many in our forum turn their gaze to structures already in existence: conventions, treaties and charters. Many feel that these instruments should bear greater weight than they do now by being put into practice. But how? Some deem that not only is it necessary that these global mediators be able to enforce the agreements reached, but also that, unless these agreements represent fairly the cultural diversity of the peoples they embody, these conventions are likely to fail. The achievement of cultural democratization is imperative before global peace can be accomplished. New ideas should also be tested such as the proposal for a “world parliament” put forth at the World Assembly of Lille. Of course, a world parliament is just a developing idea at this point, and we must all unite our forces to push the idea through and make it a reality. In many ways, the future is in our hands. To be able to shape it, one must also understand the present, and the past.

Summary II (February 4 -- 24, 2002)
Debate on Humanity, the Biosphere, and Peace
**Everything We Do Counts: We Have to
Take Chances, Make Decisions, and
Enact Them**

by Arnaud BLIN, with Marina URQUIDI, Pax Forum Coordination

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http://sympa.alliance21.org/forums/d_read/pax/participants/introductions/forum_coordination.htm

Abstract: The first actual debate of the forum was devoted to Humankind, the Biosphere, and Peace. It started with the following question: What does the way in which we humans relate to our biosphere have to do with building lasting peace? There was a general consensus among participants that we have a big problem on our hands and that we need to focus on it in a serious manner. Energy became the running theme of our considerations and led to a discussion on alternative sources of energy that might be more environment-friendly and less conducive to conflict. Competition for resources is a well-known source of conflict, and some believed that sustainable development is a main engine for peace, while others were less certain but nevertheless argued that it is a formidable tool for achieving a greater degree of fairness in access to basic resources for a decent life. We were also reminded that sustainable development is not only based on economic development with a sensitivity to environmental protection, but that it must also deal with every aspect of the human condition, including social and governance issues. A strong theme during this debate was that we, as humans, including our minds, are part of the biosphere. So what can we do? Enhance our awareness and review our everyday actions: thus we can hope to contribute to making the “planetary awareness” factor of the biosphere move in the direction we think is right.

After having spent the first six weeks of the forum on introductions and an open exchange on the September 11 events, the second discussion period of the forum was devoted to its first actual debate, on “Humankind, the Biosphere and Peace.” The debate, as the next ones to come, lasted for just three weeks. It was more focused than the opening discussion and the topic was very different. Yet, there was a definite linkage between the more general considerations on the September events and the discussion on humankind, the biosphere, and peace. For example, one participant shared with us how the terrorist attacks, which she witnessed first hand, triggered an even greater commitment to actions that will lead to greater fairness and a better preservation of the natural world.

We started the debate with a general question: What does the way in which we humans relate to our biosphere have to do with building lasting peace?

This involved more specific questions such as, among others:

- Is sustainable development related to peace?
- Is sustainable development realistic?
- How can individuals contribute, on a daily basis, by their attitude, to sustainable development and to the resolution of the world’s imbalances?
- Are there any measurable signs that environmental education is becoming part of education in any significant way?
- The biosphere is an organic system of which we are all a part. Is the awakening of a “planetary awareness” a path toward building peace?

The three-week discussion logically took place along two main lines, which ultimately joined one another. The first issue dealt with humankind’s relationship with the biosphere. The second issue tried to make the linkage between that first topic and the building of a lasting peace.

Civil Society's Role is Crucial in Influencing Power Holders, Who Are Reluctant to Change

Regarding humankind and the biosphere, there was a general consensus that we have a big problem on our hands and that we need to focus on it in a serious manner. For various reasons, energy seemed to be the running theme of the discussion. The manner in which the world has until now consistently wasted fossil fuel, which is non-renewable, illustrates humankind's unhealthy relationship to the biosphere. The main culprit of this myopic vision has been caused in great part by the short-term gains sought by governments and companies, big and small, both in terms of political and financial rewards. While we can pinpoint ignorance as a cause of this global disaster when we talk about the early stages of the industrial revolution, this is no longer the case today. Indeed, there are many environment-friendly energy sources, solar energy and water among them, which are well-known by energy experts, but are still dramatically underutilized. Because large companies, including oil companies, are reluctant to look to other energy sources, and because the nature of governments, including democratic ones, makes them adverse to change current policies, there has to be another engine for change.

This engine is constituted at the base by ordinary citizens, and then by civil society. However, ordinary citizens are all too often misinformed and undereducated in matters pertaining to energy sources, thanks in part to the negative impact of politicians and the media. Thus, a dialogue must be organized, both locally and globally, between the informed, but often isolated, scientists and the lay citizens. It is thus at the basic individual level that a planetary environmental consciousness will begin. And while each citizen cannot accomplish miracles on his or her own, he/she can make changes in daily lifestyles that can aggregately have an important impact. Civil society's role is crucial in terms of organizing groups of citizens and in educating and informing the public. This bottom-up approach, if it works, would eventually affect the policies of governments, which, however reluctant they may be to initiate change, can rapidly move in the direction of the wind.

It is a well-known fact that the competition for natural resources, including energy and water, is a source of conflict, sometimes even violent conflict. In this perspective, the appetite of industrialized nations can often provoke conflicts in the developing world, as we have witnessed for example in Africa. We mustn't forget that the first genocide of the century took place in the Belgian Congo in the context of the exploitation of rubber by European colonizers. A hundred years later, the Great Lakes region is still in a crisis, the origins of which date back to this dark, and all too forgotten, episode. The wars that still linger in the regions have taken a tremendous toll on the natural environment. Today, the competition for resources is less visibly violent perhaps than it was a hundred years ago but it is far from generating peace. Since the demand for natural resources is ever greater while supplies are dwindling, we may have reason for pessimism. It is a blatant fact that wars are often waged to preserve access to the last reserves of fossil fuel, which in turn leads to the massive loss of lives, global warming, and a continued dependence on fossil fuels, hence such wars are waged in no one's long-term interests. Will we only learn our lessons after some cataclysmic conflict? Or will we be able to control this fight for resources?

Beware of ideologies!

Within this dire reality, many entertain the hope, indeed the certainty for some, that things will evolve for the better. Through a greater awareness, through global consciousness in environmental matters, sustainable development may indeed become a source for peace. If, as some suggest, we are on the brink of provoking a *revolution of consciousness*, this might indicate that humanity may be about to take a great evolutionary leap forward. Since each of us

longs in the end for universal peace, our collective consciousness might constitute our great hope for the future of humanity and the biosphere.

Beware of utopias and other ideologies, however, suggested a participant, as their nature is to be tyrannical, to hinder thought, and especially the creative thought we need to make things change. Even “green” ideology can prevent us from implementing a necessarily transitional solution, which might be, according to some, using nuclear energy as a temporary solution until we can produce enough energy from other forms of clean, renewal, and safe sources. Change requires organization and work: we must choose, design, and implement. We are conscious enactors, using our science, and sometimes just our luck. We may stumble upon a solution, but then we have to make it stick, through regulations and compliance with them.

Individually, we can become informed, review our own relationship to the environment, and change our habits. One person pointed to a couple of Web providing questionnaires to help us self-evaluate our conduct.

But we must remain humble. Even if sustainable development were fully embraced as a goal by the entire world, it might not eliminate the root causes of war. What it might achieve is a greater degree of fairness in access to basic resources for a decent life, which is an important end in itself and might reduce certain frictions that can translate into conflict. It could also lead to a greater respect for the natural world we all depend on for survival.

Everyone agreed, however, that a long-lasting and global peace would not be possible without a more equitable distribution of wealth worldwide. This widely shared opinion is based on the premise that non-sustainable development always benefits a few at the expense of a vast number of others. Is negative growth the solution? While some people have forwarded this idea, one participant suggests, this solution is unfeasible in the real world where history cannot move backward.

Does “Practice Make Perfect”?

Nor should we lose sight of the fact that sustainable development is an integral concept. It is not only based on economic development with a sensitivity to environmental protection. Certainly, it takes into account environmental problems and puts into question the whole economic system as we know it today. But sustainable development must also face the problems and setbacks of the human condition. Above all, it must integrate the challenges raised by a new type of governance. On this latter point, we should be aware of the fact that sustainable development will also be a political process requiring a strong determination to establish new conditions for a dramatic modification of international relations. International relations as we know them at the beginning of the twenty-first century are radically different from the power politics of the twentieth century. Yet, their current nature is ill-adapted to the needs of the new millennium as they are still thought of in terms of political and economic structures. New types of international and transnational initiatives, like the Kyoto Protocol and the International Penal Tribunal—all too often beleaguered by strong opposition by states, including powerful states—need to grow, multiply, and work in coordination with one another. Only then will sustainable development, and the prospects for a positive peace, be a real possibility for future generations, and not just wishful thinking.

What we can do, one person suggested, is continually perfect our practice of civilization, without expecting that there is an end state of perfection. There is only the process of perfection, and this implies practice. A final contribution provided us with the thoughts of Frederick Douglass (1818-1895), an African-American runaway slave and leader of the abolitionist movement: “Men may not get all they pay for in this world; but they must pay for all they get. If we ever get free from all the oppressions and wrongs heaped upon us, we must pay for their removal.”

Summary III (March 4 -- 31, 2002)

Debate on a Socioeconomy of Solidarity and Peace

Should a Socioeconomy of Solidarity Be a Goal? If So, How Can It Be Reached?

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Abstract: This session on the socioeconomy of solidarity involved the following course of action: the identification of a problem, the establishment of term definitions, the presentation of solutions to the problem, and/or subsequently found problems. For many in our forum, creating a socioeconomic solidarity can only happen with the elimination of economic inequality. Inequality can lead to societal instability, and, at times, to terrorism. For others, the link between inequality and terrorism is indirect. In large part, participants agreed that the clearest route to achieving socioeconomic solidarity, and global economic impartiality, is the coexistence of fair justice and fair trade. The ingredients for this call for participation, namely that of transnational organizations, state governments, nongovernmental organizations, civil society, individual citizens and consumers.

Socioeconomic Solidarity Is an Alternative to the Present Global Inequity

The act of tackling an issue generally pursues the following course: the identification of a problem, the establishment of term definitions, the presentation of solutions to the problem, and/or subsequently found problems. Such was the case for this session's questions: Would establishing a socioeconomy of solidarity promote peace? Are there really alternatives to the prevailing economic model? Is peace dependent on reducing inequalities at every level and on a more equitable economic system? What are the different things an ordinary person can do to foster a socioeconomy of solidarity? Is terrorism directly related to poverty? Do women have a particular role to play in local development?

Three main definitions for a socioeconomy of solidarity emerged during the course of these past few weeks. Some see that such an economy is one that is no longer separated from society and culture, thus a support structure for peace and sustainability. Others look to socioeconomic solidarity as an alternative to liberal and neo-liberal economic conceptions, in other words, an alternative to a system of free-market trade that causes poverty, consequently extinguishing the cultivation of peaceful societies. A third interpretation of the idea of a socioeconomy of solidarity contends that it provides an alternative to corrupt governments and an alternative to the promotion of inequality at the state level.

The Suffering Produced by Poverty Is Justification in Itself

For many in our forum, creating socioeconomic solidarity can only happen with the elimination of economic inequality. Inequality can lead to societal instability, and, at times, terrorism. For others, the link between inequality and terrorism is indirect; from this point of view, stem the definitions of two main types of terrorism: exploited terrorism and voluntary terrorism. The former occurs *via* the exploitation of the impoverished. In other words, terrorism of this nature arises not as a result of indigent people being unhappy about their situation, but rather because these people are in a situation that more easily permits them to be persuaded by people who want to commit terrorist acts.

The latter is terrorism that is a result of the desire for domination. For others, poverty presents an even bigger problem than does terrorism. Though poverty can breed violence, thus possibly terrorism, the more important problem, however, is the suffering caused by poverty itself. Hence, the resultant misery is reason enough to render this issue high priority. In any case, be it inequality directly, indirectly, or scarcely related to terrorism, most participants agree that poverty contradicts solidarity; therefore, lessening its existence means nurturing peace. In addition to the eradication of inequality, necessary changes in the current global economic system also include the halt of ethical abuse of multinational corporations, the abolition of protectionist trade methods, and the installation of fair trade practices. This last point—that of the need for fair trade—seems to be an integral component of the solution to the problem of socioeconomic solidarity.

All Transnational Actors Have to Be Involved in the Solution

In large part, participants agreed that the clearest route to achieving socioeconomic solidarity, and global economic impartiality, is the coexistence of fair justice and fair trade. The ingredients for a recipe such as this call for participation: that of transnational organizations, state governments, nongovernmental organizations and, most certainly, civil society, individual citizens, and consumers. On the shoulders of the large organizations, fall the responsibilities of creating the structure of fair-trade practices and facilitating its implementation. This framework would necessarily be established by creating a balance between effective economic policy and ethical trade practices. The supporting structure to this balance would be an incorporated equilibrium between contradictory economic needs and differing cultural value systems. Fair-trade practices would include accurate pricing and the availability of information on the reasons behind the prices established, thus enabling responsible, ethical consumerism. As with every plan, a few reservations lie in the shadows. Current fair-trade networks are lacking diversity and scope. In short, the existing system entails a skewed saturation of trade among developed countries and a shortage of inclusion of developing countries.

These possible resolutions towards change, lead naturally to the question of how these changes can be realized. Because the problem is a global one, it can logically be expected that effectuating change will require the involvement of various international bodies that possess the ability to act as catalysts. The use of transnational actors, such as the World Trade Organization, to implement and enforce an international legal system that adheres to the goals of fair trade and fair justice would be imperative to the success of such a striving endeavor.

And Individuals Have Many Roles to Play

The role of nongovernmental organizations to ensure fair play, accurate representation, and impartial international investment would be an equally vital inclusion. Lastly, the recognition of the power of civil society and the consumer would be foolish to overlook. The individual represents the foundation of the entire movement; without this foundation the project would never enjoy longevity. The individual plays a role in many forms, as a citizen or as community caretakers. In order for a country's needs to be accurately known, state governments might need to increase citizens' representation in the decisions of state politics. In this respect, the role of women should also not be overlooked. In many ways, women tend to be the caretakers of the local communities and their inhabitants, especially the children. For this reason, some participants feel that the female population better relays the intimate knowledge of the needs of local societies. In short, the responsibility befalls all, from the global organizations to the individual.

Summary IV (April 9 -- 26, 2002)
Debate on Governance and Peace
**Bad Governance, Anarchical Societies,
and Democracy: Democracy Needs to
be Improved and Extended**

by Arnaud BLIN, Pax Forum Coordination

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Abstract: At first glance, the problem at hand is that of bad governance by governments, the solution for which seems to be democracy. At closer inspection, however, findings prove more complicated than initially thought. The optimal solution for combating bad governance—democracy—in itself contains kinks and problems that need to be ironed out. These past few weeks, forum participants explored not only the issue of bad governance, but also the issue of democracy, both its current global status and condition, as well as whether or not citizens can count on it as a viable tool for promoting good global governance as a basis for building global peace. To improve democracy, it has to be used, and this, in turn, requires everyone's awareness of public interest as more important than personal interest. And, with the added practice of active subsidiarity—a decision-making process that requires agreement among different scales of interest—public interest will not contradict personal interest.

Bad governance corrupts society to its core

What is bad governance? Bad governance is considered to be both a root of violence and a source of corruption, as well as a result of a lack of democracy and political vision. Governance goes awry when it mutates into a method of “governing without government.” Along the same lines, international relations become an “anarchical society” when no supra-national entity is in place to govern state governments.

One could compare bad governance by governments to the all-consuming, dreadful ivy that threatens every year to take over, little by little, every corner of a garden and every available wall. Like ivy, bad governance by governments gradually spreads to every part of society and corrupts it to its core by consequence of self-propagation, affecting more than just politics. All individuals and groups in a position of power are tempted to imitate their political leaders; therefore if the latter are corrupt, so will be the former.

Once bad governance defined, what, then, is good governance? Thus comes the only seemingly easy question to answer: good governance is the abolition of bad governance. This puts our score at two hills behind us, with the entire mountain range yet to conquer. In other words, why does bad governance emerge, and how do we achieve good governance globally?

Ill-governed democracy can result in a lack of democracy

In large part, the forum's participants expressed the indispensability of democracy in the effort to thwart the choking hold of bad governance. For example, citizens in democratic countries need to take advantage of democracy and use it to make known their views on their country's foreign policy, in an effort to influence political decisions at the state level. Though some forum participants debated that protesting current political agendas can be effectively achieved through the use of a refusal to participate in the democratic process, general consensus attested to the fact that society's collective voice presents one of the largest forces of power available for the movement of global political change. Additionally, the use of non-state

actors cannot be overlooked. Other forum members suggested the creation of an international form of authority based on internationally accepted norms. While most expressed hope for improvement, many participants also recognized the need for progress to be made to the world's current state of democracy before it can be used to combat bad governance.

Revealing itself in various forms, ill-governed democracy sometimes results in an imbalance of powers, and other times in a lack of democracy. When an atmosphere of skewed power is produced, those holding power can use democracy as a guise to protect their special interests. An imbalance of power also promotes poor communication. One participant suggested that communication, not just among state leaders, but also between state leaders, local leaders, and citizens, presents the only way to decentralize the decision-making process at the global level in order to more accurately represent the needs of all levels of society. This line of reasoning echoes the one mentioned earlier regarding the power one holds when one decides to vote, or not vote.

Non-state actors also need to be democratized to be legitimate

Likewise generating unfavorable outcomes, when a lack of democracy in governments and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) exists, more often than not bad governance results. Thus, since the role of governments and of NGOs in eradicating bad governance is a crucial one, the problem of their lack of democracy must also be addressed.

Another option to using democracy comes in rethinking the distribution of political and economic power and creating global institutions that are neither government organizations nor NGOs, which would play a visible role in international relations. This solution brings with it some drawbacks that shouldn't be minimized in their importance. For instance, the legitimization of such entities is complicated, and their development needs to be kept in check so they do not become insubstantially over-important.

Essentially, in order for democracy to rid us of bad governance, today's form of democracy needs to be improved and reinforced where it has taken root; at the same time, it must gain new territories in order to combat half-democratic governments, wholly undemocratic governments, and non-state actors that garner power, but do not function democratically. This last category includes multi-national corporations (MNCs), some of which increasingly perform in a world where economic power is gaining ground relative to political power.

Global economic power needs global political power to offset its non-legitimate rule

As mentioned earlier, bad governance by governments doesn't stand solitary in its threat to good global governance. Almost hand-in-hand comes the issue of an anarchical society of states. Among the possible ways to respond to this issue are equilibrium, collective security, or a world state, i.e. either seventeenth-century British philosopher Thomas Hobbes's vision of the world, or other ways to bring together the idea of freedom and democracy with that of a supranational political entity, such as a World Parliament of States (an idea introduced at the World Citizens Assembly held in Lille in December 2001 <http://www.alliance21.org/en/news/index.html#debat>). Another option could be an initiative that involves the cooperation of governmental organizations, NGOs, and supranational organizations, as evidenced in Colombia by the School of Peace <http://www.ecoledelapaix.org>, whose action of international solidarity follows three main orientations:

- action in favor of the younger generations and peace education,
- support to the civil society,
- development and peace

In addition to the problem of bad governance, we must also deal with issue of the ill-equipped structure of governance to meet the needs brought upon by globalization, i.e. the rigidity of national frontiers. The construction of global economic and cultural communities has outpaced the construction of a global political community. To date, it seems that the global

political community has developed around the core principles of strength, giving way to inequalities. We lack a global democracy, but how can we create one? Some returned to the idea of the creation of a World Parliament, while others preferred to work with what already exists with the U.N. Many agree that such changes can be brought about most effectively via pressure of global civil society, and possibly the organization of a large summit on global governance.

Think globally, act locally

At the end of the three-week session, discussion moved to concepts that are closer to possible involvement in governance by ordinary individuals. "Local democracy," "participatory democracy," and "active subsidiarity" were however barely touched upon.

Reminding us of a topic highlighted during the February session on "Humanity, the Biosphere, and Peace," *awareness* was brought to the front as an essential component for peace. In this case, each person's awareness, whatever their position in society and in the decision-making ladder, should be that of the prevalence of public interest over personal and individual interest. Power, on its side, can only therefore be solid and effective if it has, facing it, a strong and constructive citizens' force: for some, this implies personal and local action, as well as the invention of new ways to guarantee that decisions can be taken at the local-community level, autonomously from institutional power.

At this point, the concept of "active subsidiarity" is more than useful. The basic idea contained in it, is that for every public decision made, it should be mandatory for representatives of *at least* two different territorial scales (e.g., community organization and/or local district and/or village and/or town and/or province and/or state and/or international institutions) to first discuss it and agree upon it. Compared to the decentralization of power, which splits competences, active subsidiarity makes it necessary to share competences and identify mutually beneficial decisions instead of generating competition. Such "inter-scale" dialogue has the advantage of producing new and creative solutions, something of which we are in dire need.

In our future Utopia, where democracy is no longer imperfect, policies would be decided and implemented at the local scale, in agreement with every other scale of interest. We are certainly very far from this reality, but this may well be the right direction to make.

Summary V (May 13 -- 31, 2002)

Debate on Education, Culture, Art, Values, and Peace

**Cross-cultural Interaction Will Generate
a Global Culture of Peace**

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http://sympa.alliance21.org/forums/d_read/pax/participants/introductions/forum_coordination.htm

Abstract: Our final thematic discussion, on culture, values, art, education, and peace, produced many interesting exchanges. Dominated by the topic of education, the discussion was launched by a lively debate over religion and conflict. We then moved on to talk about the importance of education in generating a culture of peace, and the role that art might play in opening up the minds of children and more generally as a vessel to help us pursue the truth. In terms of giving youngsters a strong grounding in ethical values, families were deemed as important, if not more, than teachers. We then saw how a world that propagates a global culture of peace and tolerance of diversity is, in effect, one that generates a *universal culture*. Finally, at the macro-political level, it was argued that leaders who make the decisions about war and peace lack any kind of imagination, a void that should be filled by the development of a global culture of peace and greater cross-cultural interaction.

Our final thematic discussion, which addressed the issue of “culture, values, art, education, and peace,” produced one of the liveliest debates of the forum. It generated many exchanges on specific questions raised by individual participants and saw a high level of thought-provoking arguments. Overall, the discussion was dominated by the topic of education, even if art, culture, and values were also part of the conversation. But religion constituted the initial topic that launched this debate. One participant, responding to one of the questions raised by the forum, argued that religion is one of the main sources of conflict in the world, a view that drew many responses.

Ethics and religion are intimately related to war and peace... or are they?

Integrating ethics into international relations and politics poses a dilemma, even more so when attempting to form a global system of ethics. From the start, ethical definitions tend to lack objectivity. This construction permeates every level of ethically based decision making. For example, many societies would have a hard time defining ethics without summoning religion. However, mix religion into the batter and you automatically exclude other members of the globe from being able to co-exist with this religiously based system of ethics. This street travels two ways. To complicate matters further, not infrequently we are faced with a conflict between a system of ethics that works at the individual level, but that might not be practical at the state or global level. An undeniable example would be the issue of taking the life of another person. At the individual level, taking another human being’s life is called murder and constitutes a punishable crime. At the state level, the same act, during war, is considered necessary and heroic. A system of ethics that will successfully transcend multiple generations and societies will need to be both flexible and explicit.

The power of religion should be treated with the same respect and caution with which all forms of power are treated: it should be neither overlooked, nor exploited. The fact that religion does maintain power presents another conflict in the struggle for the cohabitation of tolerance and peace, and this is because power can be used and misused. The power of religion creates a tremendous problem because, among other reasons, the issue is so sensitive. In order to avoid the abuse of religion, we would need to segregate it from state and global leadership

roles and organizations. How do we justify such a move to those who earnestly follow their religion with the intent of bettering their lives and their souls? Some in our forum would respond to this question by saying that the need to justify such an action should never materialize because religion is not the true source of conflict, and, therefore, to strike such a chord would be in vain. Instead, the sources of conflict and exploited power can be found in the social, political, and economic spheres of humankind, as well as in the psychological nature of humankind itself. Thus, it is on these circles that we should focus our efforts for reducing conflict and war. One participant suggested that education be used as a method for integrating religion with exclusively peaceful connotations and intentions.

Education for peace requires cooperation and imagination

The vital role of education to the peace process echoed throughout this month's discussion, as it has from the beginning of our forum. Many consider proper education as the key to the future of humankind, and our participants did not leave us wondering what constitutes the definition of "a proper education." It should teach responsibility and critical thought; it should permit humankind to evolve and progress, as such, permitting humanization. In short, education should promote the values of democratic society. Education for peace starts with children. Before school, it is families who have the primary role in instilling values of peace to their children. But schools also have to change in basic ways if we are to educate the young so that they are *for* rather than *against* one another, so that they develop the ability to resolve their conflicts constructively rather than destructively and are prepared to live in a peaceful world. This recognition has been expressed in a number of interrelated movements: cooperative learning, conflict resolution, multicultural education, and education for peace.

This civic education must not be confined to children however. Adults, particularly decision makers, must also be educated in the uncharted art of peace. Imagination, flexibility of mind, openness: these are some of the qualities that need to be developed in individuals and which might enhance the creation of a real culture of peace. In essence, then, students should have the experience of working together cooperatively in a way that enables them to develop the attitudes, knowledge, and skills that foster effective interpersonal, inter-group, and international cooperation. They should learn how to turn conflicts into mutual problems to be resolved cooperatively. Good cooperative relations facilitate the constructive management of conflict. This would enable them to cooperate with others in resolving constructively the inevitable conflicts that will occur among and within nations, ethnic groups, communities, and families. Then, and only then perhaps, will these students develop into responsible adults capable of resolving conflict in a cogent, constructive and imaginative fashion.

Art and culture are inherently political

Culture plays a great role in our understanding of war and peace, and art defines our culture in many ways. Art interprets our thoughts and our experiences, collectively representing our world. Consequently, art is political, both directly and indirectly. We know about art as an instrument of propaganda for war. However, art can also promote peace by serving as a vessel in pursuit of the truth. Art can be used as an instrument to take on battles, such as revealing history as it truly was, so that the future might develop as it should. The educational power of art could be used to foster consciences in favor of peace. Art can promote dialogue, acceptance and mutual understanding. Art reinforces communicative links among individuals or bigger groups of society. Knowing the power the art can have, artists have the responsibility of creating an art that serves a culture of peace and not of war, and to be critical as to the diffusion of their art. This critical conscience has to be used also when science and technology are used in a work of art. In the end, dialogue and exchange are innate characteristics of art.

Other elements of culture play a role. Science, for instance, has enabled us to know our environment and, hence, to act for its improvement. While it is true that many scientific discoveries have been made through the process of building weapons, the application of scientific

findings have also modified our global environment both economically and socially, the Internet being only one example on a long list.

The generation of universal values is rooted in our self-awareness as a global community

A world that propagates a global culture of peace and tolerance of diversity is, in effect, one that generates a “universal culture.” Since, by default, a universal culture, follows a set of “universal values,” it is ever more important to define, apply, and assimilate these values. The collective will, wanting to share the planet in a responsible way, and in solidarity, will prove an invaluable part of this process. In doing so, people must not ignore or hide those aspects that they feel make them different (their race, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, nationality, etc.). If this were to happen, the development of a universal culture would become nothing more than simply the formation of an additional culture. Where one speaks about universal values, one must speak about what it means to be a citizen of the world. To be a citizen of the world quite simply means to be actively involved, daily and wherever one can act for the edification of the world, of a world where each and everyone knows and feels individually and socially responsible for the others and contributes to the well-being of all in the unity that gathers and the diversity that enriches us.

Differences require imagination in dealing with situations in various societies

At the macro-political level, it seems evident that leaders are not showing a high level of imagination when it comes to preventing or resolving conflicts. Military solutions still predominate over negotiation and misunderstandings still cause many wars. In the age of information technology and globalization, it seems amazing there might be such a lack of knowledge of other cultures. Thus the establishment of a global culture of peace must foster greater cross-cultural contacts while developing ties between nations and peoples at many levels. This objective joins one of the points made earlier about the need to create a global civil society that transcends national frontiers and enhances democratic values around the world.

Summary VI (June 6 -- 23, 2002)

The Next Step: What Now, and How?

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http://sympa.alliance21.org/forums/d_read/pax/participants/introductions/forum_coordination.htm

Abstract: For the final session of the forum we asked the following questions: “How do you feel about the September 11 events and their aftermath now? Has this forum made any difference to you?” There were many responses. While a couple of people seemed a bit disappointed with what was, according to them, (not) accomplished during the past six months, the general feeling was very positive. At the beginning of the forum, many of us felt helpless. Several months later, the same people feel that isolation has been broken and that something can be done. Most of us believe that states, governments, and politicians are either incapable of or unwilling to work for the advancement of peace. The need to get organized is therefore vital and many participants felt that this forum constituted a worthwhile experiment in trying to organize “something.” There were very practical ideas put forth as a way to go forward and to prevent this initiative from dying off, for instance the establishment of a free online resource center for conflict management and resolution skills that would provide advice to people or groups facing conflict. More generally, the need to improve the peace education of future generations seemed to be at the top of everyone’s agenda, a feeling that illustrated what has been one of the most important themes of the forum: education.

It is with a certain sense of sadness that I am writing this final summary for the forum, in what has somehow become a part of my weekly routine. It seems that in a way I will be parting with some good friends. This sentiment was, I believe, felt by many of you from what transpired from the messages of these last three weeks, some of which were quite moving. For the final session of the forum and to put a close to the discussion, the organizers came back to question that started it all: “How do you feel about the September 11 events and their aftermath now?” To which they added the following: “Has this forum made any difference to you?”

Responsibility now falls upon us

The two questions drew many responses. And, while a couple of people seemed a bit disappointed with what was, according to them, (not) accomplished during those six months, the general feeling was very positive. Overall, participants felt good about being able to discuss this (important) topic with others. A majority of those who responded said that they learned a lot from the other participants and that the exchanges were both interesting and diverse. There seemed to be a general consensus that while the forum did not bring about great change per se, it did show that things were possible and that people were interested in doing and changing things. In short, that it provided the opportunity to notice that the different visions of peace are complementary and that they are convergent throughout the world.

At the beginning of the forum, many of us felt helpless. Several months later, the same people feel that the isolation has been broken and that something can be done. But this will only happen if we chose not to remain passive and let governments take care of business (as usual). As the post 9/11 events unfolded, it became clear that governments were incompetent in preventing the events, and lacking in imagination when trying to respond to them.

Let us build “planetization,” based on diversity and democracy

There is an expression in the English language that does not translate very well into other languages: “grass roots.” Since most of us understand what it means, I will not attempt to

translate it. I think that the peace-forum initiative fits very well into what is called a “grassroots” movement. Many of us believe that states, governments, and politicians are either incapable of or unwilling to work for the advancement of peace. There is a famous aphorism that says that “war is too serious to be left to generals.” Along those lines, one could also say that “peace is too serious to be left to politicians.” One major reason for this is that politicians by definition work on a short-term basis. At best, they will work for peace when a conflict has already begun. They are reactive rather than pre-emptive. Their policies are basically band-aid policies. In light of this, and since reforming governments and politicians is very complicated—but necessary too—the best we can do right now is to rely on ourselves. The need to get organized is therefore vital and many participants felt that this forum constituted a worthwhile experiment in trying to organize “something.” Since networks and communication are essential elements of any type of organization in the age of globalization, this type of initiative seemed to fit the bill. And, as someone suggested, “there is strength in numbers.”

Regarding globalization, one participant suggested that we must undo what is basically a process of nonsustainable development based on a paradigm of dominance and hegemony. Instead, we should work to build a different process of *planetization* based on a paradigm of diversity and democracy. Interestingly, one very positive theme seemed to run throughout the messages: that we are now masters of our destiny and that we can, if we so want, *make the world a better place*. One cannot stress how important this is. Up until now, history has shown humankind to be enslaved in one form or another by government policies. Will this change in the twenty-first century? If so, this could lead to the building of a truly *humanistic culture*. But again, if true, it is an opportunity that must not be lost, as was the end of the Cold War, which never yielded the anticipated *peace dividends*.

All kinds of future actions are possible

Now, if all this seems a bit theoretical—and being too theoretical is one of the criticisms voiced against the forum—there were very practical ideas put forth as a way to go forward and to prevent this initiative from dying down and withering away as if nothing had happened. Already, some participants said that on an individual basis, the forum encouraged them to take part in other initiatives on peace. Some suggested practical ideas, for instance the establishment of a free online resource center for conflict management and resolution skills that would provide advice to people or groups facing conflict. Others asked that this forum be used to launch other projects (to be defined) or to start petitions (which already exist). There was a call to demand an Earth Charter at the upcoming Earth Summit. Someone suggested that we focus on certain themes debated during the forum, such as the prevention of conflict in Africa, going so far as to propose the creation of a permanent council on the *prevention of conflict in the twenty-first century*. More generally, the need to better the peace education of future generations seemed to be at the top of everyone’s agenda, a feeling that illustrated what has been the most important theme of the forum: education. All these ideas, and others, give us hope that the forum is perhaps but the start of various new projects that, added to many others around the world, may help build a solid basis for a universal culture of peace.