



## Peace, Security, Globalisation & Cultural Diplomacy

**Ashok Natarajan**

Senior Research Fellow, The Mother's Service Society;  
Fellow, World Academy of Art & Science

### Abstract

*This article argues for a positive, comprehensive conception of peace that goes beyond the mere absence of war and a more integrated conception of human security that encompasses a wider range of issues than threats of physical violence. Education is one of humanity's most effective social institutions for redirecting the violent physical energies of destruction into higher avenues of civilization and culture as an instrument of conscious social evolution. Organization is knowledge of higher accomplishment. Organization has the power to vastly accelerate and multiply the potentials of education for the promotion of peace and security. Peace and Security have a mutually reinforcing effect on each other in the sense that peace results in security while security results in peace. Physical violence eventually led to the development of the knowledge needed for the avoidance of violence by means of diplomacy, trade and cultural exchanges, marking the beginning of the transition from the physical to the mental level of evolution. Trade requires travel, transport, human interaction, exchange, trust with respect to products, and reliable mechanisms for the exchange of a stable currency that can only be effectively founded on an enduring peace that generates confidence among the traders. Isolated communities evolve a communal consciousness as they mature into organized social units founded on shared customs and culture, which later develop into a common legal framework. What began as diplomacy so many centuries ago has now evolved into a near universal recognition of fundamental human rights and the rule of law. The evolution of diplomacy in previous centuries is the foundation for the remarkable betterment of human life witnessed in recent times. The world is in the process of evolving a unifying global culture founded on universal values and recognition of the rich contributions of different cultures to humanity's progress. As physical force once shaped global events, today ideas possess the power for effective action that can change the world.*

The world in general is moving in a progressive manner in all its aspects. Peace is one such important aspect. Traditionally peace has been defined negatively as the absence of war. With human beings being the center of existence, it may be pertinent to redefine peace in the human context. Peace prevails only when the situation is conducive to the growth of human delight. We say life is generally secure when factors causing physical disturbances are absent. However, security is at a much higher level than mere physical security. Security is enhanced when life situations are arranged in such a way that fosters a man's inner joy. There is plenty of scope for arranging external situations in such a way as to guarantee security.

---

*“Education is a long, slow subconscious process by which human beings convert long years of trial and error experience into usable knowledge that can be passed on to future generations.”*

---

A philosopher historian once commented that centuries of existence are required to generate a little history. Many more centuries are needed to create a little civilization. An even greater number is required to distill a culture. All such accomplishments require education. Education gives in a compressed form all our past accumulated knowledge. Education can be a very inspiring process. Given in the right manner, education can make it difficult to lure students' attention away from it with mundane pleasures. It sublimates, diverts and channels the intense physical energies that express destructively as violence into activities that foster evolutionary progress. It converts conflict into enlightened diplomacy. Education is a long, slow subconscious process by which human beings convert long years of trial and error experience into usable knowledge that can be passed on to future generations. But humanity is also capable of a more rapid, conscious process of education. Education has transformed primitive human life into a life of sweetness. In a broad sense education is the yoga of society, a systematic method for conscious social evolution. When education imparts culture, it in turn generates courtesy. Education used to be accessible to a small minority and denied to the multitudes. It is a sign of social goodwill that it is now available to almost all members of society. This marks a great beginning and shows that a great goal has to be reached.

The social spread of education and culture is unevenly distributed. This is said to be the nature of things. What we call Nature is the power of society as it normally functions. But society possesses a higher power of organisation that can be consciously applied to vastly expand the reach of education and other social benefits. The agencies of the UN in international affairs and the power of Internet in cyberspace are examples of powerful organizations that await full exploitation.

The world is forever on the move. It is a movement that widens horizontally and deepens vertically. The development of agriculture 10,000 years ago transformed nomadic communities into sedentary societies. Foreign trade developed more than 2000 years ago into an important catalyst for the spread of ideas, inventions, and culture. Indian handwoven cottons were prized in Europe for centuries until the Industrial Revolution brought in cheaper machine made fabrics. The physical conquests of Greece, Rome and the Mongols were important vehicles for the expansion of commerce, civilization and culture.

They fostered the spread of knowledge from Asia through the Middle East to all parts of Europe. Physical expansion began in earnest with the conquest of the Mongols who reached distant Spain and India. Physical conquests build temporary connections, while spread of trade fosters lasting relationships. As a result of trade, Europe came to India and Indonesia and America came to Japan and China. Knowledge in the form of technology spreads quickly as gunpowder, paper, railways and telegraph etc. The spread of culture however takes more time.

Globalisation takes place at many different levels. At the physical level the movement is not yet complete. There is no rhythm or linearity in these movements. Each part as it tries to reach perfection is overtaken by the next adjacent part. For example, the thirst for physical conquest morphed into economic imperialism and colonialism which have morphed into the global marketplace we know today. The course of progress is uneven and somewhat unpredictable. This seems to be the normal method for Nature.

Each civilization has made a unique contribution to the evolution of humanity and the process continues. While Asia sought prosperity through fullest development of emotions, Europe sought it through development of Mind. As a result European levels of prosperity became the world standard. In a broad sense, emotions have a more fulfilling power than Mind. Mental efficiency can have a dazzling effect, but it can divorce itself from life and grow dry. Gorbachev, former President of the Soviet Union, pointed out this very fact to a Western journalist when he asked a question. In this respect, cultural contacts are revealing and instructive. Hence multicultural diplomacy acquires great significance. Peace and security have a mutually reinforcing effect on each other in the sense that peace results in security while security results in peace.

## **Evolution of Diplomacy**

Through experience we acquire both knowledge as well as capacity. Long experience on the battlefield improves the organization, skills and capacity of troops for coordinated action. Organization is knowledge of higher accomplishment. It eventually leads to the knowledge that warfare itself is superfluous as a means for achieving social objectives. Thus, physical violence led to the development of the mental clarity and knowledge needed for the avoidance of violence by means of diplomacy, intermarriage among communities and trade. Knowledge is power. As humanity's physicality diminished and its mentality increased, the power of its knowledge grew too. Seeing that violence could be avoided through negotiations leading to compromise gave rise to diplomacy. This transition to diplomacy signified the transition from physical man to mental man. Knowledge gained at one place has a tendency to spread elsewhere. Diplomacy is a mental exercise in which thoughts are organized in a neat and presentable manner. Diplomacy has a refining effect on the way human beings live and relate to one another, one of the earliest exercises in humanity's evolution from an animal existence to one of civilization and culture worth passing on to the next generation. This gave rise to a sense of history.

When the faculty for diplomacy develops, all other faculties also develop in parallel. Historical research has documented this process. An earlier stage in the process was humanity's transition from shouting to symbolic language. This capacity for communication preceded the development of transport. But they have a mutually beneficial impact on each other. We can trace the process even more clearly in recent times, where facts are plentiful. We see how the League of Nations evolved into the UN. The League aborted its mission, though its founder was awarded the Nobel Prize. The First World War was followed by the Second as a result of its failings, which led to the founding of the UN. The UN has succeeded in avoiding a major international hot war for seven decades due to its subtle strength. Today

we find the veto power a very irritating obstruction. But during the days when the UN was founded, no consensus was available as to how major powers could be made to work together without some mechanism for voicing disapproval. It was then that the veto was conceived as a mechanism that made the UN a reality.

When war rages, trade is severely affected. Trade requires travel, transport, human interaction, exchange, trust with respect to products, and reliable mechanisms for the exchange of a stable currency founded on an enduring peace that generates confidence among the traders. Farm products normally come from cultivated fields, which are severely hampered during times of war, when most farmers are taken to the battlefield. Thriving agriculture is possible only when peaceful conditions prevail. Only then can suppliers be assured of buyers if they take their products to the specified market. For the transaction to be successful it requires that the buyer carries currency that is recognized by the government of the day. Prolonged peaceful trade requires that there be banks representing both the buyer and seller. When war breaks out, all such functions break down or are severely hampered. It may even lead to famine conditions. However when a country is generally peaceful, its reputation spreads far and wide prompting even foreign buyers to visit its shores. This is how in earlier centuries India attracted traders from England, France, Portugal, Holland and Denmark because she offered mature conditions for commercial exchange etc. Flourishing trade is a sign that a nation has achieved a level of social maturity beyond the stage of war. Once war breaks out, it takes a long time for normal trade to resume. This ripening social maturity and culture develop through several complex levels.

Conquests that form empires unite various regions. Religion unites people where even conquest has failed. Trade forges relationships and unifies populations, enriching people's lives by presenting them with a more diversified product range. Commerce develops by developing standards for weights, measures, coins, cash and contracts, etc. A commercial society is more developed than a mere agricultural society. Commercial societies develop urban centers, banking, insurance, education, entertainment and arts to occupy people in their leisure time, etc. Commerce has a way of compelling society to focus on more sophisticated issues, such as law and governance. A farmer generally learns to cultivate his fields and safeguard his production. Normally he does not directly sell to people. He approaches a middleman experienced in all aspects of the purchase, transport and marketing of produce.

For a population to discover itself as a society is a great accomplishment, though at a rudimentary level. For a population to mature into a society, the minimum requirement is that it overcome unsettling disorders that threaten to undermine its very functioning. To the extent it moves away from it, to that extent order enters into social formation. In early centuries populations lived in isolated pockets at different locations. Communal consciousness emerges when these pockets come under a single ruler. This marks the earliest stage in development of national consciousness. Over the course of time they discover a unity of purpose through intermarriage and professional complementarity or some other bonding factor. Though they arrive at some order, the order has not yet acquired the power of law. Development of a legal framework marks an advanced stage of social formation. Building judicial machinery to enforce such laws marks a further advance in social formation. Society is actually governed

more by custom and usage than by law and order. People conduct festivals, administer temples and hold marriages and manage so many other social functions within society. They feel a great joy in these activities. Indian mathematician Srinivasa Ramanujan is universally recognized as a great genius. But Ramanujan felt that he owed his genius to an inspiration emanating from his personal deity Namagiri. It is in such local contexts that the psychological truth of society lies. The outcaste in India is one who falls outside of the local context and he finds it very difficult to reenter Indian society. Untouchability is unique to India, but such social exclusion is prevalent in all countries without exception. It is such cultural affairs that decide the social status of individuals. In America, African Americans working in the houses held themselves in superior status to those working in the fields. Such distinctions are not socially formalized, but they are there in the social scheme of things.

---

*“World peace is an essential condition for the survival and development of international organizations.”*

---

Universal recognition of human rights became a universal phenomenon after the founding of the UN. Society has started treating each human being as a respectable individual to be duly governed by the process of law. Prisoners, invalids and physically challenged people are now extended basic rights and legal facilities that were previously absent. Two centuries earlier, insurance developed as a striking example of how society can extend support to the individual through social institutions. In the post-war era it has penetrated almost all fields of social activity globally. Such social support climaxed with abolition of capital punishment by many Western countries. When a criminal was brought to trial for killing a four-year old child for jewelry worth a few rupees, an Indian High Court judge asked how capital punishment could be abolished when crimes are committed for trivial issues. The comment of the Judge seems valid, but the cancellation of capital punishment is equally valid. Today education has become universal and life has lost its original roughness. Now the aim of society is to make life comfortable for the traveler as well as the tourist. The world community is taking all-out efforts to eradicate communicable diseases like influenza, polio and typhoid. These developments stand in stark contrast to the persistence of gun culture in the U.S., the cause of thousands of deaths every year. This relic of the earlier culture of violence could be a reason for the failure to abolish nuclear weapons. Moreover the world still suffers from want of a fool-proof justice system. It has been found in the U.S. that 25% of those in prison were victims of unfair prosecution. Some Muslim countries still feel it is right to deny education to women.

Each passing decade stands testament to rising human values and the betterment of human life. This is the end result of the civilizing influence initiated by the evolution of diplomacy in human history. Informal channels of diplomacy often succeed where more formal diplomatic efforts fail. Indian and Pakistani civilian groups have been engaged in Track II diplomacy even during times when governmental relations were at their worst.

The future of global government is a topic of great concern to leading thinkers of the world. The UN is perceived as an important precursor of development of more truly

democratic, representative institutions of global governance. The UN itself was preceded by the League of Nations, which proved to be unviable due to lack of political strength. World peace is an essential condition for the survival and development of international organizations. The world's activities have all expanded in the direction of globalization. Every field of economic activity, including agriculture, transport, banking, manufacturing, research, education and communication, has acquired a major global dimension. This expansion attests to the fact that wherever they may be, human beings are the same. While physical things such as new technology and fashions spread quickly, the spread of psychological elements such as values is much slower.

The value of freedom stands foremost of all the values that humanity cherishes. Some 300 years ago European countries began to outlaw slavery and abolish slave trade. It took more than a century for Europe to get rid of that evil. The abolition of slavery marks an evolutionary transition of society to a higher stage of human development. In the physical stage, people believe in the superiority of the mental man and justify slavery. Society entering the mental stage took the initiative to wean itself from the practice of slavery as a degrading practice. The USA atoned enough for its earlier reluctance to outgrow a barbarian practice by electing Barack Obama as the first African-American President. The world has long desired cultural unity, which does not mean cultural uniformity. Cultural unity must be based on a recognition and respect for the rich diversity of cultural influences that have contributed and continue to contribute to human evolution. The unification of cultures will enable each society to complement and complete its own cultural development by enriching it with the multicultural perspectives of other societies. Even if cultural unity remains a distant goal, at least cultural cooperation is possible now. Travel and tourism are great promoters of international cooperation and cultural appreciation. They open the closed minds of people who have not travelled. It is a pity that India does not have much recorded history. Historians have gathered a lot of beneficial information from the writings of Chinese travelers. Historical information about medieval India has been obtained only from foreign documentation. Why Indians failed to document their experiences remains a mystery.

“Thought that leads to action” carries the implication that the thinkers of the world can unite for global action. The entire Western world's thinking has been modeled on thoughts that originated in Greece some 2500 years ago. In the 19<sup>th</sup> century the world revolved around Europe. Then Darwin came on the scene with his theory of evolution. Many notable thinkers contributed to European thought around the time of World War II. Roosevelt formulated a grand vision of a world free of imperialism. That thought was mainly endorsed by Britain after the war when it chose to disband a large part of its colonies. When mental ideals are passionately embraced, they acquire a power of action and express themselves sooner or later. The motto of WAAS has found expression in the fields of economics, education and employment. Academic thought soon leads to academic research. Politics later on energises the thought. Even Greek democracy became live only after English aristocrats decided to wrest power from the English monarchy in the 16<sup>th</sup> century. This revolutionary momentum continued with the French and Russian Revolutions. The 21<sup>st</sup> century is far more amenable to rule by the power of ideas than by violence or war.

“Leadership in thought that leads to action” is the motto of WAAS. True to its ideal, it strives to identify new perspectives and token initiatives that can act as catalysts for global progress. Employment for all job seekers is a subject of immense importance in the field of economics, though contradictory views are put forth regarding its feasibility. When recognized as a fundamental human right, it will acquire the political power for implementation. WAAS has conceived of an idea to establish a new international research institution in East Asia to promote coordinated global strategies for addressing the challenges confronting humanity today. Kazakhstan has abandoned nuclear weapons and given a call to other countries of the world to give them up. This it has done in spite of the limitations of democracy within the country, a fact of tremendous political significance. The current UN General Assembly is now considering a proposal for a global convention banning nuclear weapons.

---

*“Ideas can still acquire the power required for effective action.”*

---

The World Academy can present to politicians a great many ideas for effective action. A country’s receptivity to violence is largely determined by its general level of education. Moreover, how vested interests can turn ideas upside down is well documented by recent political events. Such irrationalities foster violence that lies dormant within nations. Setting such anomalies right is the task of politicians. Academic research can support this effort. Ideas can still acquire the power required for effective action.

*Author contact information*

*Email: [secretary@motherservice.org](mailto:secretary@motherservice.org)*