

## Kant's Perpetual Peace: A New Look at this Centuries-Old Quest

Benjamin Solomon

### Introduction

In the last two decades of the 20th century, the appearance of certain empirical evidence suggested to a number of political theorists and international relations scholars that speculative ideas advanced by Immanuel Kant (1795) were coming to fruition two hundred years after he wrote *Toward Perpetual Peace*. A major outcome associated with the oft-noted Kantian revival<sup>1</sup> has been the “democratic peace” thesis, “the ‘law’ that democracies do not fight each other” (Franceschet, 2000:280). Another theoretical position, “cosmopolitan democracy,” also found inspiration in Kant’s writings and helped to spawn comprehensive models of a future world of peace, democracy, equality, and justice (Held, 1995; Linklater, 1998). Antonid Franceschet (2000:279) observed of these two formulations: “In both research programmes the concept of democracy is central.” My aim in this paper is to open up new theoretical space in which to consider the problem of peace and war and the age-old quest for its solution. Despite the centrality of democracy in the above doctrines, I shall argue that both overlook the fact and significance of the *present involvement* of citizens in the forces that sustain competitive preparations for war and the option of war itself. Further, my analysis, while taking cognizance of the wealth of ideas in *Perpetual Peace* and Kant’s other political writings (Reiss, 1991), will pay special attention to his conviction, fundamental to his philosophical inquiries, that human beings and their societies possess a unique potential to develop their powers of reasoning and morality.

Andrew Hurrell (1990:104), in assessing Kant’s “paradigm in international relations,” states: “[T]here is no single Kantian solution to the international problem. Kant’s writing on the subject is characterized by a tentative and exploratory approach and he is keenly aware that all solutions involve trade-offs and costs.” Kant recognized a challenge that went to the very foundations of his philosophical work. He believed that social life under a rule of law was a prerequisite for the flourishing of rational and moral capabilities and the achievement of maximum individual autonomy and freedom. The emergence of sovereign territorial states provided a model for governance under the rule of law. Ironically, however, a large part of the resulting increase in material powers was being employed not to elevate social life but, instead, to support ever-more powerful

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<sup>1</sup> Kant has been accorded a very high stature by some scholars. For example, philosopher Georg Cavallar (1999:153), in the final paragraph of his *Kant and the Theory and Practice of International Right*, wrote: “I agree with Howard Williams, Ken Booth, and Chris Brown that ‘Kant is the greatest of all theorists of international relations.’” Brown (1992:14) initiated this encomium in his *International Relations Theory: New Normative Approaches*. Williams and Booth (1996:95) concurred with Brown’s accolade in their essay “Kant: Theorist beyond Limits.” However, Thomas C. Walker (2000), in his “The Forgotten Prophet: Tom Paine’s Cosmopolitanism and International Relations,” refused to join the celebration.

military forces and, all too often, to launch wars of barbaric devastation that were horrifyingly antithetical to civilized ideals. It was evident that the potential for an enlightened social life inherent in the territorial state model was severely truncated by the absence of lawful, peaceful relations with other states. Kant was enough of a realist to recognize that in his period there was no feasible solution to the problem posed by the state of nature existing among the sovereignties of Europe. At the same time, he could not abandon his philosophical premises to the unbridled forces of destruction operative among the states of Europe. His famous 1795 essay had three additional words in its title: *A Philosophical Sketch*. Kant did what a philosopher could – spell out hopeful ideas and possibilities that might bear fruit in some future era in which more favorable conditions had emerged (Waltz, 1962; Hinsley, 1963; Gallie, 1978; Williams, 1983).

Apparently, many of those who have contributed to the Kantian revival share the belief that the present era does, indeed, hold the promise that war will fade from the human scene. Two articles by Michael Doyle (1983) in *Philosophy and Public Affairs* boldly affirmed Kant's key themes in *Perpetual Peace* and presented empirical evidence in behalf of the author's claim that "democracies don't fight democracies." (Also see Russett, 1993; for a dissenting voice, Layne, 1995) These articles are often credited with triggering the spate of research and analyses that established the "democratic peace" as a doctrine with impressive empirical credentials. The democratic peace is joined at the hip with the related "liberal peace" doctrine in a research article entitled: "The Liberal Peace: Interdependence, Democracy, and International Conflict, 1950-85." In their concluding remarks, the authors (Oneal, Oneal, Maoz, and Russett, 1996:24) bring together major elements of the democratic/liberal peace position:

...Kant and the other liberals were essentially correct about the benefits of democracy. Peace is more likely when societies have adopted nonviolent means of conflict resolution, executive authority is constrained by a system of checks and balances, and intertwined commercial interests make conflict uneconomical... Our findings support a favorable prognosis for international relations. There has been a dramatic increase in the number of democracies since World War II... The pacific effects of interdependence provide more reason than ever, therefore, to believe that Hobbesian anarchy is being reconstructed to reflect liberal values (Russett, 1993). As Kant (1795:112) observed, peace does not depend upon our becoming angels as long as even devils can calculate. (Also Russett, Oneal and Davis, 1998)

Similarly sanguine views are also found among cosmopolitan peace theorists, as shown in such major works as those by Held (1995) and Linklater (1998). An active literature has developed around what not long ago might be quickly dismissed as visionary or utopian notions (Archibugi, 1992; Archiugi, 1995; Archibugi and Held, 1995; Bohman and Lutz-Bachmann, 1997).<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> Because of its more immediate and specific claims, I will in the ensuing discussion refer more often to the democratic peace thesis than to the cosmopolitan project.

As indicated earlier, Kant's hope for the future realization of perpetual peace rests on his assumption that humans are endowed with a singular potential for reasoning and moral development, that is, that progress is possible in the realms of both theoretical and practical reason. Humphrey (1983:1-2) describes Kant's view of this potential in a comparison with other Enlightenment thinkers:

. . . Where other Enlightenment figures such as Locke, Voltaire, and D'Alembert argued that increase of knowledge would, on the one hand, provide fuel for driving the machine of man's technological mastery of the environment, thereby improving the material conditions of his life – and, on the other, reduce superstition and intolerance by casting religious and moral differences in a clearer light, thus freeing society from destructive fanaticisms – Kant saw an increase in knowledge in and of itself to have no such beneficial effects. . . Unless knowledge could be put in the service of appropriate ends, it cannot truly benefit individuals or society. For Kant, then, such enlightenment as derives from mere scientifically applicable knowledge is subordinate to enlightenment of a moral nature.

The progress made over the 19th and 20th centuries in knowledge and mastery of the forces of nature is surely enormous and far beyond even the fertile imaginations of Kant and other Enlightenment thinkers. But has the moral development of society kept pace with its material progress? This is a much more sobering question. I will attempt to address it solely in respect to the concern of this essay – the peace and war problem.

I base my argument on two key propositions:

1. I locate the peace and war problem in the *operative field of forces in the security sector* that accounts for the constant competitive military preparations for war that have been a hallmark of the interstate system since its inception (McNeill, 1982; Giddens, 1987; Buzan, Jones, and Little, 1993). In a 1778 essay, Kant (Reiss, 1991:34, emphasis in original) showed his awareness of these forces: “We have to admit that the greatest evils that oppress civilized nations are the result of *war*—not so much of actual wars in the past or present as of the unremitting, indeed ever-increasing *preparations* for war in the future.” As long as states maintain military establishments in competition with other states – that is to say, as long as the field of forces remains operative – the prospect of war is contemplated and planned for by sovereign states and remains a live option. I argue thus that a primary condition for a lasting peace is the evisceration of these forces and demilitarization of the international system.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> My reasons for focusing on preparations for war instead of the more usual concentration on causes of war as the crucial variable in respect to the peace and war problem are as follows: (1) Conflicts of interest are a permanent feature of all social relationships including those between states. (2) Conflicts of interest that result in war are a subset of the larger set of conflicts of interest between states and extremely difficult to separate from the larger set (Dessler, 1991); in any case, they are highly uncertain predictors of the conflicts that might cause war in the future. (3) The constant feature of the international system, competitive preparations for war, signifies the existence of a war system, one in which war is contemplated as an option in the planning, budgeting, strategizing, and organizing of military forces. (4) Global disarmament would remove the basic structure of the war system. (5) Any such change must necessarily involve complementary changes, especially a commitment to nonviolent means of settling disputes given that conflicts of interests

2. *Reason has far outstripped morality in respect to the continued operation of the field of forces* – but now with weapons of catastrophic magnitudes of destructive power. Kant (1784:49, emphasis in original) compared the progress European society had made in these two areas: “We are *cultivated* to a high degree by art and science... But we are still a long way from the point where we could consider ourselves *morally* mature.” Certainly, his assessment of late 18<sup>th</sup> century Europe is indisputable; I believe a strong case could be made for an even larger gap between reason and morality within the security sector in today’s world. The amazing mastery achieved by humans through scientific rationality has not been matched by a corresponding elevation and implementation of moral principles to insure that these unceasingly escalating powers are utilized for appropriate ends instead of ends imposed by the anarchic field of forces.

The democratic peace position holds that war will fade from the international scene with the proliferation of democratic states. However, there is no associated claim that these states will disarm and thus bring into being an authentic regime of interstate peace. Kant’s (1795:94) Third Preliminary Article states: “‘Standing armies will gradually be abolished altogether.’ For they constantly threaten other states with war by the very fact that they are always prepared for it. They spur on the states to outdo one another in arming unlimited numbers of soldiers...”

At this point in time, there is little sign of global disarmament in the foreseeable future. In fact, the leading liberal democracy, the superpower United States, is currently increasing its already dominant defense budget.<sup>4</sup>

My argument is continued in three further steps:

3. In polities in which sovereignty and legitimacy have shifted downward to the popular level – most clearly so in democratic states – citizens who exercise their political power to support their state’s independence and security requirements are thereby *integral participants, morally and substantively, in the field of forces that impels competitive arming among the states*. By supporting state independence, their political power upholds the anarchic interstate system and its characteristic forces; by the closely related support of plausible security needs, their political power enters into and helps generate the operative forces in the security sector that induce states to maintain military forces relative to those of other states.
4. *Citizen implication does not signify citizen knowledge of the nature and significance of their implication*. Because their present political cultures provide only a vague and limited understanding of the salient forces and the moral and substantive implications

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would persist. (6) It is true that disarmament does not by itself preclude war between independent political communities; states can go to war with whatever weapons are at hand. But as discussed below, the dynamic processes involved in achieving disarmament together with the fact of disarmament itself could greatly reduce, if it does not eliminate altogether, the incidence of war. In the final analysis there can be no *absolute* guarantee that states will never resort to war against each other.

<sup>4</sup> A recent *New York Times* (2001) article under the byline of M. R. Gordon, “Pentagon Review Puts Emphasis on Long-Range Arms In the Pacific” is among the many that could be cited that attest to the continued robustness of the field of forces and its likely projection into the foreseeable future.

of their roles in generating these forces, they are effectively cognitively disarmed in addressing the problem of interstate violence, even though they are a perhaps decisive, if unwitting, part of this problem.

5. This absence of a basic conceptual understanding constitutes, however, an opportunity through the new possibilities that could be opened up by its rectification. If an *educational intervention* were undertaken and successfully accomplished, there could emerge a hitherto unconsidered pathway toward a solution to the peace and war problem. The operative assumption is that the new awareness of the forces at work would induce a sustained process of inward struggle and external discourse over the evoked moral and substantive issues that in time could forge enhanced moral and cognitive resources. This process could conceivably entail changes in identity and interests that would eventually culminate in a global cognitive and moral community committed to ending interstate violence. This could, in turn, provide the foundation for a worldwide political constituency of citizens with the common aim of utilizing their political power both domestically and internationally on behalf of a phased disarmament of all states and a regime of nonviolent dispute settlement.

These are the main themes that will be discussed in the remainder of this paper. Implicit in the above outline is the question of the existence of a moral right to know: do people at large have a right to understand the basic nature of and their part in forces that impose enormous daily costs on all societies and that impel states to build the capacity to physically destroy all humanity? And, if so, on whom does the responsibility to implement this right to know fall? A related issue is the role of knowledge in human affairs. In the event that people did gain a grasp of the forces at work, would it make any difference in their political behavior? These questions clearly also have significance for the meaning and role of democracy.

The discussion will also necessarily include analysis of the dynamics of the anarchic field of forces that is at the core of the problem of interstate violence. Further, this paper is premised on the existence of democratic processes in a major and strategic part of the earth's population and the prospect that such processes will be adopted in time by the remainder.

It is instructive at this point to compare the democratic peace approach with that in this paper. "A fundamental positive goal of international relations," as Gartzke (2000:191) recently stated, "is the explication of costly contests" and a "fundamental normative goal...is of course the alleviation of such contests," generally by providing valid policy recommendations to responsible governments. Scholars seek to achieve these goals by studying the interaction of people – or, more specifically, of independent political communities – in a realm with state of nature characteristics that historically have frustrated attempts to reach sound explanations that could support credible predictions and policy guidance to state leaders. The promise in the democratic peace thesis has been limited, as Gartzke (2000:209-210) notes, by the difficulty of identifying the relevant causal determinants. Attainment of the normative goal has thus remained problematical, given the uncertainties regarding the positive goal.

That so many scholars persist in pursuing this challenge after many decades of being thwarted may be deemed admirable as well as vital in the absence of significant alternatives. But if the normative goal is given priority, then the question of a solution may be directed at overcoming or eliminating the known forces implicated in organized violence between sovereign states instead of continuing to rely on first obtaining success in realizing the positive goal – i.e., an effective explanation of the incidence of war that could provide the basis for dependable policy guidance on how to cope with the operative field of forces so as to ensure nonviolent outcomes. In short, the opportunity opened up by democracy allows for a *first image solution* as well as the second image solution of the democratic peace thesis. The democratic peace formulation accepts a difficult and jeopardous challenge: specifically, the promise of a regime of stable, nonviolent interactions in a future world of an expanding constellation of evermore dissimilar if democratic polities, of the likely continued flourishing of nationalist forces, and of the predictable ever-increasing pressures on resources (Orme, 1997). And, further, these dynamic elements must somehow resolve themselves in a system still beset by the exceptional indeterminacy of the numerous variables and complex forces bearing on the national security decision-making of any single sovereign state.

In contrast, the first image approach relies on the fuller realization of the potential of democracy at the basic citizen level to achieve a more definitive solution through the exercise of concerted political power to bring an end to the role of the field of forces in world politics.<sup>5</sup> Put in ideal terms, such a solution would be a conscious, morally responsible, and direct undertaking by a knowledgeable humanity, one that had become aware of its central role in the problem, of the immense stakes for all people, and of its power to solve it. The prospect of such a transformation undoubtedly seems visionary; yet it is worth exploring as a possible alternative pathway to interstate peace.

Democracy, it is worth reiterating, is the necessary ingredient for any solution: without it, there is no way to get a conceptual or practical handle on the problem of interstate violence.<sup>6</sup>

## The Field of Forces and Abdication of Moral Responsibility

In the absence of a higher authority, states must provide their own security; further, no institutions exist to set restraining limits on conflict processes. Under these conditions

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<sup>5</sup> The world government idea is of course an attempt to eliminate anarchic forces by setting up a single hierarchical government to replace the multiple independent governments of the international system. Its chief advocate, the World Federalist Movement, has since its early halcyon days after World War II become only a marginal force on the international scene. It stands out, however, as proffering a solution based on the conscious and responsible action of people and political communities. From the standpoint of the analysis in this paper, its conceptual foundation is relatively shallow and mechanical. In pursuing its federalist solution, it fails to bring people into touch with the underlying anarchic forces and the role of citizens and governments in generating these forces. (Claude, 1984:411-433).

<sup>6</sup> Democratic peace scholars have broadly interpreted Kant's approval of the republican governmental form as equivalent to support of modern mass democracy. However, as shown by his preference for restricting the suffrage to the respectable classes, his notion of republicanism was conservative and unlikely to include empowering of the masses (Kant, 1795:99-102, 1797:139-40; Walker, 2000:67).

of self-help and the absence of enforced limits, the imperative pressures that operate within the field of forces effectively impose their own moral environment, one that might be termed *anarchic morality*. Necessarily associated with this “situational morality” is an *anarchic rationality*. Key operational characteristics of the field of forces may be outlined as follows:

1. Because military power is a relative matter, comparison with other states' military forces is a pervasive and central factor in any state's decisions in this sector. Each state must confront the implications of such comparisons for its continued existence and vital interests in light of the inherent threat posed by the existence of other states' military power.
2. In this context, the propensity exists for states to abdicate moral responsibility for their military decisions – that is, to abide by the moral dictates operative within the field of forces. The anchor concept is *necessity* justified by the high moral responsibility to protect one's own society from grievous harm. This then permits placing the onus for one's moves on the other state for *creating the necessity* by its actual or potential moves. In this way both parties in an action-reaction process abdicate moral responsibility (in the conventional sense) for their respective moves by placing it on the other party. Viewed from another angle, responsibility is assigned to the forces in the interactive process itself.
3. In the absence of institutional limits, a self-propelling momentum may be set in motion that in conducive circumstances can extend the interactive process far beyond any line of conventional rationality or morality. The operative forces (generated in the anarchic context by the independent states themselves) carry only a single but irresistible message: For a state to fail to match move for move risks giving the foe a superiority that could prove fatal.<sup>7</sup>

This stark outline of the dynamics at work<sup>8</sup> helps to explain such historical phenomena as the unceasing mass slaughter of the First World War, the massive city bombing by

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<sup>7</sup> “Deterrence” is a concept that incorporates the elements of “anarchic rationality” and “anarchic morality.” It is the modern version of the Roman maxim: “If you want peace, then prepare for war.” Despite the fact that historically well-prepared states have gone to war with each other, it is a powerful concept because it embodies the inescapable necessity imposed by the operative dynamics in the state of nature. However, deterrence exemplifies the circular reasoning that is prevalent in anarchic contexts: i.e., the threat posed by military capabilities is resolved by military capabilities – the problem solves itself! This rationale conveys the character of the systemic trap and predicament, often referred to as the “security dilemma,” in which states and their citizenries find themselves (Waltz, 1979; Buzan, Jones and Little, 1993).

<sup>8</sup> Defensive and prudential motives may indeed be the primary source of the pressures exerted by the field of forces but they only partially reflect the complex indeterminacy of the dynamics in this anarchic arena. Other, more ambiguous, less defensive, or more clearly aggressive motives also play a major role. There is no clear distinction between offensive or defensive weapons; motives are not imbedded in weapons but are alterable over time and circumstances; a state's strategy may include both offensive and defensive elements; and in any case, states invariably claim defensive motives for their armament decisions. Also, military capabilities are broadly useful in that they often play a significant role in political and diplomatic interactions that are short of war. Time may alter intentions; a state with purely defensive motives in adding new weapons may in some unpredictable future situation find itself employing (or threatening to employ) its armed forces beyond its borders. Technological developments, changes in tactical and strategic concepts, in relationships among the states, as well as in domestic pressures are among the factors that influence the dynamics, one way or another, of the competition in military preparations.

both sides in the second, and the incomprehensible overkill nuclear arsenals produced in the recent superpower Cold War. A continuous field of forces, always adjusting to altered historical conditions, has been a central reality of the international system since its beginnings in the 16th century. The intensity of these forces at any given time has varied with a number of factors but has attained its most extreme degree when mutual hostility, fear, and suspicion together with the stakes at issue have been extraordinarily high.

There is thus a clear contrast between the operative forces in the interstate security sector and the constraints of the domestic rule of law. In the former but not in the latter: (1) conflict processes with deadly and massively destructive weapons can and do take place; and (2) the self-generating momentum in such processes is always partially and can be (virtually) totally out of the control of the human decision-makers. In other words, decisions are made in the formal or nominal sense by the responsible leaders, but in the de facto sense, their content is to a varying extent – but sometimes almost wholly – dictated by anarchic forces.

The assertion that anarchic forces can compel human decisions is, of course, disputed. For example, in 1983 the Harvard Nuclear Study Group (Carnesale, Doty, Hoffmann, Huntington, Nye, Jr., and Sagan, 1983:106) vigorously disagreed:

The notion that technology controls politicians, rather than the reverse, is insidious: it shifts responsibility from men of free will to the impressive but utterly dependent fruits of their labors. Technology has no mind of its own; it is developed only through choice.

However, the authors present a contradictory picture a few pages later (113):

... This fundamental impetus to arms competition [differing philosophies and purposes of the two countries] is well reflected in an exchange which occurred early in 1951 when President Truman was meeting with his advisers to decide whether or not to build the hydrogen bomb. The president asked: "Can the Russians do it?" All heads nodded yes they can. 'In that case,' Truman said, 'we have no choice. We'll go ahead.'" So long as the political competition between the United States and the Soviet Union continues in its present mode, statesmen on both sides will continue to be driven to say, "We have no choice. We will go ahead."<sup>9</sup>

Truman and his advisors were caught up in an anarchic competition with infinitely high stakes. In truth, he did have the choice to refuse to build the H-bomb, but in the existing political climate he would have been pilloried as a traitor, overruled by Congress, and perhaps driven from office. Leaders who are "driven to say: 'We have no choice'" are in essence persons deprived of free will. Free will could be effectively redeemed by emancipation from the anarchic field of forces.

<sup>9</sup> The anecdote is attributed to McGeorge Bundy (1982).



Thus, the race with A-bombs, which Bernard Brodie (1946) had labeled the “absolute weapon,” took a leap of 1,000 times when H-bombs became the “weapon of preference.” In another decade or so, a redundant capacity had come into existence that could destroy all civilization many times over and poison air, water and earth to wipe out most of the biological life evolution had taken billions of years to create.

But is international anarchy the cause of the problem? Anarchy per se is the most open of political arrangements. Its possibilities range from cooperation and peace at one end of the spectrum to the Hobbesian state of war at the other. From its European origins, the modern state system has recorded substantial and ever-increasing intercourse across borders – political, economic, social, and cultural – even as states armed and fought wars against each other. It is worth emphasizing that all of these lateral interactions – the cooperative and nonviolent as well as the conflictual and violent – are “anarchic” in that they occur in a system without an overarching authority. The historical legacy constituted by the “feudal anarchy” (Poggi, 1978) of the Middle Ages, a culture that practiced and glorified violent combat, helps to explain this paradoxical mixture of contradictory elements. As the European state system spread across the planet, so also did its basic patterns of interactions. The historical record thus has been a changing combination of accommodation, cooperation, competition, conflicts of interest, and armaments and war. In sum, then, an interstate anarchy of nonviolent relationships is conceivable but our actual inheritance is an anarchy which for centuries has had an unbroken record of continuous preparations for war and episodic wars (Tilly, 1975); McNeill, 1982; Giddens, 1987) alongside a growing volume of cooperative and nonviolent relationships (Buzan et al, 1993:66-80).

The continued vitality of the field of forces indicates that the mastery of the forces of nature that Enlightenment thinkers foresaw has not been matched by a corresponding development of the moral forces that regulate the affairs of humanity, the problem that especially concerned Kant. As shown in the above analysis, the problem is not simply the typical dilemma of choosing among a range of alternatives with differing moral/immoral implications. Instead, the problem is entrapment within the field of forces in which a single, undeniable “choice” is imposed. Once liberated from this trap, the independent parties would experience an environment in which a range of choices, from good to bad, is possible.

Kant’s goal, human freedom, or the maximum autonomy consonant with necessary social constraints, means essentially that the autonomous individuals or organized groups have the opportunity to make their own choices among an array of alternatives. If, then, put in terms of this analysis, his hoped-for solution to the problem of interstate violence, namely, a pacific federation of independent states, would still be an anarchic system but one in which the field of forces no longer holds sway.<sup>10</sup>

## The Union of Moral Purpose and Democratic Power

<sup>10</sup> I rely here on Kant’s clear preference for a “pacific federation” as the solution to the problem of interstate violence as stated in the Second Definitive Article in *Perpetual Peace* (Kant, 1795:102-5).

The ideas set forth above constitute, I believe, a conceptual framework that brings a greater reach and power to an inquiry into Kant's quest for a lasting peace. These include the central role of the anarchic field of forces and constant preparations for war; the exceptional moral issues associated with these interactive dynamics, and the existing and potential roles of citizenries. In contrast, the democratic peace thesis largely overlooks such salient aspects of reality and bases itself on observed regularities in the relationships of democratic states – the absence of warfare between them – and the extrapolation of these regularities into a future whose most certain aspect is unceasing change.

The present analysis brings into view the necessity as well as the promise of tapping the fuller potential of democracy. The proposed *educational intervention* is the instrument by which this potential could conceivably be realized by setting in motion a transformative process of intensive reflection and discourse that would engage people in all the communities of humanity.

The ultimate moral unit is the individual. The ultimate unit of political power in a democracy is the individual citizen. The union of morality and power at this basic level is a key property of democracy. Although the democratic process may thus be said to be rooted in the individual agent, its other side must be equally stressed, the presence of a shared and supportive political culture in which citizens participate in group processes in exercising their political power.

Democracy has made possible the reality of involvement of ordinary people, however unknowing it may be, in the anarchic field of forces and, conversely, the opportunity, *with knowledge*, to play a direct role in addressing and perhaps acting to eliminate the scourge of armaments and war from human social life. To some observers, this may seem a naïve view in light of the gross inequalities of economic power in liberal democracies. Nonetheless, the democratic process allows the circulation of ideas and an ongoing discourse and thus the possibility of the exercise of political power by the enfranchised populaces. A related issue is the claim that there cannot be an end to interstate violence until other major problems are resolved. However, the challenge before humanity is how to attain a stable peace in an existing imperfect world; it is not to defer this goal until all other problems have been remedied.<sup>11</sup>

In democracies, each citizen may possess only a micro amount of political power, but he or she confronts essentially the same insistent issues of state security and protection of vital interests as do government leaders. While questions of the nature and size of military budgets are often matters of controversy, the historical record shows that electorates typically support plausible requests for the country's preparations for war. A state without its military forces would be an anomaly; citizens of a democratic polity possess a special responsibility to their country's survival in a world lacking other

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<sup>11</sup> I restrict my discussion to interstate relations and therefore do not include the problem of violence within polities in which the rule of law has been disrupted by violent civil conflict or domestic anarchy. War is defined as organized violence between sovereign territorial states. All proposed solutions to the problem of war presume a rule of law at the domestic level; there does not seem to be any way to go directly from local anarchy to a larger system of lawful relations among the people and communities of the planet.

guarantees of its security; their democratic processes are bound up with the state's continued independent existence.

The aim of the suggested *educational intervention* is to make the basic concepts of international anarchy and its field of forces the common currency of political discussion everywhere across the planet. Given the provocative challenge inherent in these powerful dynamics, it may be expected that the introduction into political cultures of a basic conceptual grasp of their operation would set off a process of sustained inward personal struggle and outward vigorous and controversial discourse that will range from the local to the international in scope. The outcomes that this discourse might be expected to engender over time could be, *first*, changes in *identity* and *conceptions of interests* among people globally that, *second*, would culminate in group formations that could best be described as taking place in two stages: (1) the emergence worldwide of a *cognitive and moral community* committed to ending the regime of interstate violence; and (2) the further step of the development of a *cross-borders political constituency* dedicated to the implementation of this goal.

Writing on "The Condition(s) of Peace," Emanuel Adler (1988:189) observed: "And, at the global level we are very far from having found a common moral purpose around which to build 'the state of peace.'" Kant would have approved the recognition in these words of the need for moral principles to serve as the guide and spur to correct action. And given his belief in the major role that reason also plays, it is likely that he would also agree that a precondition for the emergence of a "common moral purpose" is a shared cognitive understanding of the problem at issue.

The educational intervention could, then, as it gradually made headway in political cultures globally, provide the cognitive basis for provoking and engaging the moral and emotional nerves of people and setting off the process of internal wrestling and external controversial dialogue. The field of forces portrayed by the intervention project operates throughout the interstate system and thus embraces virtually all the earth's population. These forces are validly depicted as "anarchic," a term that typically evokes fear and loathing among people living under the rule of law, but the selfsame people are shown to be personally implicated in an anarchic regime of vast international proportions through their loyal and responsible support of their state's independence and security requirements. They partake in the generation of forces that produce weapons of frightening, apocalyptic destructive power and that can also attain a self-propelling and escalating momentum that is unbridled and ungovernable. Finally, states and their citizenries are all in the same trap and predicament; they experience and respond in similar ways to the same system-wide forces; the same conceptual language captures these dynamics for people everywhere.

The possibility of the formation of a universal cognitive and moral community comes into view, then, as an outcome of the process of ongoing and contentious discourse.<sup>12</sup> The process holds the prospect of engendering a *shift in identity and Interests*

<sup>12</sup> Glossed over are the formidable obstacles to attainment of the educational goals, such as the diversity of cultures, conflicting national interests and ongoing disputes, domestic problems that engross the energies of

(Wendt, 1992) among increasing numbers globally. As people absorb the notion of worldwide forces that exert a similar grip and pose a similar dilemma on all states and societies, the psychological basis is being readied for the formation of empathetic bonds and a growing sense of *identity with all others* ensnared in the same predicament. Likewise, the implications of the dynamics confronting them suggest the logic of a *new congruency of interests* – personal and family interests, specific national interests, and the common interests of all humanity entrapped in the system as a whole – in overcoming the domination of the field of forces.<sup>13</sup>

Such anticipated changes in the minds and hearts of people engaged locally to globally in serious, even wrenching, discourse could, therefore, eventually lead to the emergence of a *universal cognitive and moral community* that is appalled at its participation in the field of forces and is committed to the goal of ending interstate violence. The envisioned integration of cognitive, moral, and emotional elements could bring about a perceptible *transformation* of the cultural heritage, one that could go some way to modify the perspective in which war and its heroic episodes have been glorified toward a more realistic assessment in which the controlling role of unseen anarchic forces is taken into account.

The stage may be prepared, then, for a further step. The insistent question of how to realize the commitment to end war may find its answer in the inner logic of the anarchic forces. Since their imperative dynamics arise from the division of the earth into multiple independent centers of power and decision making in respect to security matters, these forces could be undercut and eviscerated by establishing a single center of power and decision making. To amass the power to attain such a unified control would call for the formation of a new, global political constituency dedicated to the twin aims of demilitarization and nonviolent conflict resolution. The operative moral and emotional impetus to form such a constituency would be the realization that each citizen was no longer an unwitting participant in and victim of the field of forces but, with knowledge, an aware accomplice and less than innocent victim.

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people, and so on. Moreover, a growing awareness of anarchic dynamics could have the reverse of the intended effect. Some people, especially those in the military/industrial complex and ultra patriotic groups but also ordinary citizens, might conclude that their enhanced understanding of anarchic forces only confirmed what they already knew and thus reinforced their support for substantial military preparations. The prospective division could conceivably take shape as follows: on the one hand, those who favored the status quo and recommended taking whatever advantage could be gained within the anarchic field of forces (pro-anarchy), and, on the other hand, those who felt it intolerable to be part of and subject to such forces and sought for a way to eliminate them (anti-anarchy).

It would not be sensible to attempt to spell out in any detail the nature of the proposed intervention process but the following generalizations may be essayed: (1) adequate resources would be required for an effort that would require at least 15 to 20 years to show perceptible results – the growing use of its concepts in political discourse; (2) the process would probably utilize mass media, information age electronic communications, and educational institutions to make headway on its goals; (3) its initiation need not wait until the time that all states have been democratized; and (4) it is likely that its influence could extend into non-democratic but industrializing states with literate social classes and porous borders.

<sup>13</sup> This congruency can be seen as inclusive of the three “images” – the people, the states, the system – introduced into the international relations literature by Kenneth Waltz (1959). The educational process, by showing how each level was implicated in the dynamics of the system as a whole, provides the cognitive grounds for development of an overall interest embracing all levels.

The extension of political power across borders – i.e., people joining hands with similarly motivated people and groups to create a new, independent, global dimension of democratic political power – would logically and practically constitute the most effective means to liberate humanity from the problem caused by division into separate territorial states. Citizens have a degree of freedom not available to governmental leaders. To illustrate the point, one might compare an alternative pathway, one in which there was no educational intervention but in which well-intentioned governments agreed to disarm and eschew resort to war. The difficulty with such a commendable initiative is that it is likely to lack durability. Such agreements would be vulnerable to attacks from opposition groups on the grounds of undue risks to national security. Citizenries could be susceptible to such arguments, given their unawareness of the underlying forces at work and the lack of developed relationships with other citizen bodies with which there was shared knowledge and commitment to a demilitarized world. A disarmament process and a disarmed state system could only be achieved and endure with the support of knowledgeable and committed citizenries who had established substantial relationships of mutual trust and confidence on an international basis.

This may be termed the “bottom-up” solution to Kant’s quest for a lasting peace. In a broad perspective, it is eminently appropriate: interstate violence endangers the present and future of all humanity; a very large segment of humanity is directly implicated in the existence of the problem; its solution would require their unified support. Knowledge and a moral will are the prerequisites for an attempt at a solution; democratic principles suggest conscious, direct, and concerted political action on a worldwide scale as the method of implementation.

The aim of this paper is to present the conceptual basis for opening up additional theoretical space in which to consider the peace and war problem and its possible solution. From an overall standpoint, my argument may be seen as having three main parts to it: *first*, an analysis in both substantive and moral aspects of the core, underlying forces that sustain the peace and war problem, *second*, the empirical proposition that citizens globally lack the cognitive assets that could enable them to address effectively the common problem of interstate violence; and, *third*, a speculative analysis of a process of change – with an emphasis on the cognitive and moral factors – that might be set in motion if the cognitive deficit were remedied. That the third part is speculative (or even visionary) is a characteristic of all formulations that look to an end of the problem of war among the sovereign states.

The theoretical task has been essentially completed in the above discussion. I will, however, in the next sections briefly sketch the most likely alternative paths available to an engaged and committed humanity and then turn to the issue of where the moral responsibility to initiate an educational intervention falls.

## Alternative Paths to a Lasting Peace

I will sketch two possible pathways that a bottom-up approach might take towards a demilitarized, independent state system.<sup>14</sup> The first is based on an optimistic forecast, specifically, that the predictions of the democratic peace advocates are steadily being realized. If, concomitantly, a cognitive and moral community was in formation, it could reinforce and accelerate the peace process and, in particular, help to insure that disarmament was an integral part of it. In all countries and perhaps with a loose federation internationally, a persistent and insistent public opinion would press governments to engage in a steady process of disarmament on their own initiatives and in arrangements with other governments.

The second possibility calls for a major reliance on the exercise of independent political power in a well-developed and firmly organized, grassroots global campaign. The necessary assumptions are, first, that competitive arming and the option of war remain significant elements of the interstate system and, second, that a substantial cognitive and moral community has emerged and responds to the necessity of utilizing democratic political power to implement its commitment to end interstate violence. The international, people-based movement would seek to amass decisive global political power in order to exert internal and international pressures on all states to agree to a scheduled process of mutual disarmament and the strengthening of institutions for dispute settlement. In effect, this would introduce a new structural element, a worldwide, citizen-based, independent dimension of political power, into the interstate system.

The commitment to disarm would necessarily require a complementary commitment to peaceful means of dispute settlement. This would entail a deliberate choice to accept the costs and risks of nonviolent methods (negotiations, mediation, arbitration, judicial), whatever such costs and risks might be, in preference to the much vaster costs and risks of the inherited system of competitive armaments and war.

The regime of peace thus portrayed would be of the “negative” type – the absence of violence but not the expectation of a harmony of interests. Other major problems would remain to confront humanity. The process of solving these could prove relatively cumbersome, but the elimination of the war system could allow a greater concentration of policy and resources in addressing them. Negotiations, international institutions, and global networks of actively-involved people and groups could all play roles in reaching realistic and durable agreements. The presumption that a central government for the world would be more efficient should be weighed against the conceivably high costs in effort and strife entailed in its establishment, the added burden of another and more remote layer of governmental bureaucracy, and the prospect of a new political arena in which the competition for supreme power could be of unprecedented virulence.

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<sup>14</sup> World government is another possible bottom-up approach (see footnote 5 above). To achieve an authentic world government would require much more far-reaching changes than those entailed in the pathways sketched here. An authentic world government, one that was more than an elaborate collective security arrangement, would call for a shift of loyalties from national governments to the single political center, a formidable task that could entail bitter conflict. Moreover, the case for a central political entity for the entire earth would be much less compelling if the problem of interstate violence were resolvable by more limited changes.<sup>14</sup>

Given the prominent role of competitive armaments and war in the history of the modern states system, the introduction of a global political constituency with the political power to banish these phenomena would constitute a significant transformation in its character, even though it continued to be based on independent nation-states. A leading but open question would be how the interplay of power would develop in the absence of competitive state military establishments.

Such a state system would broadly resemble Kant's prospective pacific union of republican states who agreed not to wage war on each other and who with the universal adoption of this governmental form would increasingly respond to the injunction of the third Preliminary Article to gradually disarm (Kant, 1795:94-95). Of course, Kant did not have in mind the idea of citizens acting independently of their national governments to unite with counterparts across borders to enforce an end to the regime of militarization and war.

The objection may be raised that this discussion is based on purely theoretical ideas that have no chance of being realized because they depend on the success of an action that is not yet even contemplated – the educational intervention. Two points may be made. First, the formulation asserts that a cognitive and moral community of the type portrayed is a necessary condition for assuring a stable peace. Second, the issue of the state of knowledge and awareness of people endowed with democratic power represents a variable that can undergo change and, if changed, possibly bring into existence new, hitherto unconsidered, possibilities.

#### A Global Classroom: Who Will Take the Initiative?

Knowledge is a form of power. Possessors of power are saddled with moral responsibility for its rightful employment, whether by acts of omission or commission. The finger thus points to the international scholarly community as the major repository of the knowledge relevant to an educational intervention – to political and ethical philosophers, historians, and international relations scholars. Academicians could not be expected to launch and carry through an educational intervention of the scope and persistence required; others, such as foundations, political leaders, religious bodies, public figures and pundits, peace and disarmament groups, and so forth, would have to join in a cooperative effort and provide major material resources. But the initiative and continuing intellectual support would have to emanate from within the academic community.

A necessary first step by those who see promise and a moral imperative in rectifying the knowledge gap in political cultures would be to subject the idea to rigorous examination. Are the key concepts valid – e.g., the claim that reason has far outpaced moral growth in the security sector; locating the peace and war problem in the anarchic field of forces with its perpetual, competitive arming and its dominating rationality and morality; the claim that citizens endowed with political power are integral but largely unaware participants in the field of forces; the proposition that an educational intervention could engender change in political cultures and people that would open up new approaches to the peace and war problem? Ethical philosophers might further address the

questions of the right of people to know of their involvement as well as that of who has the moral responsibility to remedy the knowledge gap. If the process of Inquiry confirms for a significant number of scholars the notion of an educational undertaking, investigation of its nature and feasibility would then be in order.

Such a large investment of Intellectual energies could be defended on the basis of the substantial theoretical issues at stake and the moral responsibility of the scholarly community to make its knowledge available to the larger community on matters of compelling significance. Of course, open discourse has always been a primary characteristic of the process of inquiry. But the challenge at hand may be likened to a vast enlargement of the academic teaching function – the classroom is virtually the entire human population. As with teaching on campus, decisions must be made not only on basic content but also on the organization of and methods to be used in the educational process. The aim would be to disseminate a valid and objective description of the underlying forces involved in competitive arming and war as well as people's implication in these forces. The motive would be as in all teaching: to help people gain the intellectual powers to understand and address the issues and problems that confront them. This does not preclude the hope that the process will contribute in time to a solution of the legacy of interstate violence.

The greeting accorded by scholars to the idea of such an undertaking is likely to vary with doctrinal positions. In international relations, for example, realist and neorealists are typically skeptical of visions of political communities abandoning military establishments and the associated power politics, but some might be attracted to an analysis that recognizes the role of anarchic forces and at the same time holds forth the possibility of a “power solution” – that is, one based on massed political power – to the peace and war problem. Liberals and neoliberals may acknowledge that in their enthusiasm for the positive effects of the spread of democracy and increase of economic interdependence – the democratic peace doctrine – they have overlooked the significance of the *present involvement* of citizens in the field of forces and the moral and substantive implications of this involvement. Critical thinkers might object to the emphasis on anarchic forces but welcome, on the other hand, the idea of creating a global grassroots discourse that could eventuate in a universal cognitive and moral community dedicated to the end of interstate violence. Cosmopolitan theorists, such as Held and Linklater, might also acknowledge their oversight in not recognizing the present role and lack of accountability of citizens and thus the potential to bring into being a global community with universal values in a key sector of social relations as a first major step toward their cosmopolitan visions.

This speculative discussion may itself be termed visionary. It speaks, however, to the two chief functions of academia – inquiry and teaching. In its scale and aims, an intervention of the sort discussed here would, of course, be unprecedented. Although a hoped-for political response may be implicit in its conceptual content, the primary aim is to describe the underlying forces and the involvement of people – not to present a surface analysis and prescribed solution. In effect, the aim is to dump the problem into the lap of humanity by providing it with the relevant knowledge.



This is a far cry from Kant's approach to learning: namely, in his philosophy of history, nature's plan based on man's "unsocial socialability" in which "concord among men" is produced "by means of their very discord" – that is, by the suffering and destruction of wars. The latter, according to his "guarantee of perpetual peace," generates a forced learning by rational humans to order their interstate relationships on more cooperative and nonviolent principles (Kant, 1784:44-45, 47-49; 1795:108-114). The contrary assumption of an educational intervention is that human beings in contemporary society can be induced to engage in a transforming struggle of mind, heart and will that could achieve an even more beneficent outcome. A relevant question is, of course, whether or not the generality of people have achieved a level of intellectual and moral maturity that bespeaks a readiness to enter into and undergo the experience of such a process.

### Reason, Morality, and the Human Future

Scholars have long sought for favorable trends and processes that promised to bring an end to interstate violence without the necessity of a direct political challenge to the regime of armaments and war. The exceptional indeterminacy of the international system combined with its historical legacy have largely frustrated these efforts. The democratic peace doctrine has in recent years provided cause for optimism, but large measures of uncertainty still remain and its significance for the question of competitive war preparations is far from clear.

The thrust of the group of themes set forth above with the stated aim of opening new theoretical space is that the time may be at hand for a direct challenge to the continued operation of the anarchic field of forces. On the one hand, the prospect is dubious at best that a solution might come about solely by the effects of benign historical processes. And, on the other, the political empowerment of a major sector of the earth's population and the future hopes for democracy make possible for the first time a significant challenge at the fundamental level of the forces that account for the peace and war problem.

The assumption underlying the latter statement is, as set forth above, that a cognitively-equipped world population – a formidable but perhaps doable task – could provide the necessary condition for a direct assault on the dynamics that have made the blessings of advancing civilization a curse that threatens its very existence. There is, of course, no guarantee analogous to that in Kant's First Supplement to *Perpetual Peace* that a knowledgeable citizenry would act to end the regime of armaments and war. But at least the issue would not be left to the drift of history, with or without the aid of a benevolent Providence; the fate of humanity would be in the hands of a knowledgeable humanity.

The scholarly community has a crucial role in these matters, in good part because of the difficulty for citizens to discern with reasonable clarity the basic forces and their chief characteristics. Two key assessments have to be made. How reliable is the proposition that historical processes will work in some foreseeable future to cause the problem of interstate violence finally to fade away? Or has the time finally come to

address the proposition that rectifying the knowledge gap could lead to a conscious and direct global political attack on the underlying forces that sustain competitive armaments and war?

These are legitimate as well as timely questions to engage scholarly inquiry. Whether scholars have a responsibility to assist in an educational intervention is an issue that may become more pressing as conclusions emerge from the above inquiries.

In the final analysis, Kant may have been right to hold that enlightened progress depends on the rational and moral elevation of societal cultures. From this standpoint, the prospects for eliminating the war system depend in good part on some significant degree of cultural advancement. The dialogic process set in motion by the proposed educational intervention has the possibility of producing such transformative outcomes.

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**Benjamin Solomon**, a World War II veteran now living in Evanston, Illinois. retired in 1983 from the social sciences department of the City Colleges of Chicago. During the 1970's and '80's he played an active role in the anti-nuclear weapons campaign in Illinois. His current interest is the Israel-Palestine conflict.