TOWARDS A CULTURE OF PEACE: EDUCATIONAL POLICIES FOR THE FUTURE

INTRODUCTION

The Cold War is over but peace has not broken out. Instead, there is now a new warfare state: with fewer international conventional conflicts and more internal guerrilla ones. This is the major trend determining military matters and is the major challenge in creating an alternative culture of peace.

UNESCO is setting a lead in creating a culture of peace. The culture of violence is so embedded in many societies that a culture of peace cannot be created easily or quickly. Additionally, to create a new culture of peace will require tackling many matters simultaneously. There is no one single simple formula that can transform a society based on a culture of violence into one based on a culture of peace. Therefore "education" for a culture of peace has to be defined very broadly.

This paper covers three matters. It begins with an examination of the changing nature of warfare and the creation of a new warfare state, which will mean a continuation of the culture of violence. It then examines UNESCO's work on the culture of peace. It concludes with some recommendations for educational policies to assist the creation of a culture of peace.

THE NEW WARFARE STATE

The world is moving into a new era of warfare. The new era is characterized by less conventional warfare and the avoidance of a central nuclear war. Instead, it is an era of guerrilla warfare. This means that much of the money that countries now devote to conventional military expenditure is wasted. Governments would be better off finding out why guerrilla groups commence operations and try to address the underlying economic and social causes of violence. Their money should go towards creating a culture of peace.
**Guerrilla Warfare**

The oldest form of fighting is guerrilla warfare, which required little training. People (men, women and children) fought as guerrillas, usually in a part-time capacity, in small bands, with each person knowing the rest of the group. The weapons were unsophisticated and based on everyday implements (usually farming tools).

The Roman army was the exception in the era of European guerrilla warfare. It had large, organized fighting formations, professional soldiers, and distinctive uniforms in retrospect, it was a pioneer of modern warfare. As an ill omen of modern warfare, however, it was not always successful in its campaigns against guerrilla forces.

For about the thousand years of the European Middle Ages, there was little attention given to the Roman military model. The wars of that era consisted of small battles (by modern standards) and sieges of fortified positions (especially castles). There were few full-time soldiers. Knights, for example, ran feudal positions as their main source of income and recruited their own workers as troops when required.

**Conventional and Nuclear Warfare**

Warfare changed around the 17th century. There is no one single explanation for the change. It was more a matter of different events influencing each other. The nation-state system (which international lawyers date from the Treaty of Westphalia in 1648, with the break-up of the Holy Roman Empire) meant that the basic unit of governance shifted from a small tribal area to the nation-state, which gave rulers more power from whom taxation and conscripts could be drawn. The industrial revolution, which began in Britain in about 1750, meant that industry could develop more destructive weapons. Also, fighting formations could be transported over longer distances: Europeans could now fight each other over colonies in the Americas, Africa and Asia.

The new form of warfare became so common that it acquired the title of "conventional" warfare. Fighting formations became larger (and almost exclusively adult males) and it was necessary for all troops to have distinctive uniforms to distinguish them from the enemy. Armies also became more specialized in their work: they were to defend national security. This meant they were taken off the maintenance of law and order and that task was given to a separate force (the police). Armies and navies became more professional. Defence personnel were set apart from the rest of the community; they lived in separate buildings and were controlled by legal codes usually more extensive than that of the civilian legal system. Restrictions were placed on civilian access to weapons - warfare became the exclusive right of the government. The international humanitarian law of armed conflict (the Geneva and Hague Conventions) applied only to military personnel.
During the first half of this century, the nature of conventional warfare changed. It used to be about humans killing humans. Beginning in World War I, land warfare became far more mechanized. Warfare became a matter of machines killing machines. Warfare had become an activity of quarter-masters general and production planners. The "tail" became bigger than the "teeth". In order to keep one soldier at the front (the "teeth"), there were six persons drawn such civilian occupations as catering, engineering, medicine, building, transportation and law (the "tail"). Each arm of service became a society within a society.

The prime factor in the decline of conventional warfare has been the cost of the mechanization of warfare. Governments cannot afford the same stock of equipment as they used to acquire. Humans were comparatively cheap - they often came via conscription. But machines are expensive both to purchase and to maintain. The machines are also much more destructive: they travel further with more firepower than previous weapons. But this also means that machines can be destroyed at a faster rate, with less chance of ever being repaired.

All major conventional wars since the early 1960s, which have resulted in a clear victory, have been won in less than six weeks. If one side cannot defeat the other in that time, then the war will just drag on, such as the inconclusive Iran-Iraq war which ran for eight years in the 1980s. The crucial six week period is derived from the limitations of equipment and supply: governments can no longer afford large reserves of equipment.

Nuclear warfare was a direct outgrowth from conventional air warfare. Leaders in World War II wanted to avoid a repeat of World War I’s trench warfare and so they looked for methods of moving firepower quickly over long distances. Bomber aircraft were the favoured method throughout Europe.

The quest continued for much more powerful bombs. This work culminated in the creation of atomic bombs. Atomic weapons brought the war against Japan to an abrupt end and so politicians reasoned that atomic weapons would be crucial in any future conflict. Later research shifted the emphasis on bombing from aircraft to missiles.

On a rate based on the number of potential deaths, nuclear missiles are cheaper than most other forms of killing. Their limitation arises, ironically, from their extensive capacity to kill. They are too destructive to use in the usual military campaigns. Nuclear weapons would destroy that which the attacker would like eventually to control.

Additionally, for the first time in history, a powerful country cannot defend its people from an attack. Nuclear missiles cannot be shot down. Even if the proposed Strategic Defence Initiative ("Star Wars") had gone ahead fully and it could have shot down some missiles, only about two per cent of Soviet missiles were needed to destroy the US's main cities. The 1987 US-USSR agreement on intermediate nuclear forces and later agreements show that both countries realize the limitations of these weapons for political purposes. But even so the US was much safer from attack in 1945 than it is today.
The Return of Guerrilla Warfare

Guerrilla warfare has grown rapidly since World War II. Almost every conflict underway today involves guerrillas in at least one party to the conflict. These are people fighting in small bands, often not in uniform, with weapons varying from very sophisticated ones (either donated by one of the great powers or stolen from the conventional forces on the other side) to old weapons and even home-made ones. There has also been a return of child soldiers.

Guerrilla warfare turns conventional warfare's reasoning upside down. Guerrilla warfare is essentially political - it is about winning the hearts and minds of people. It is not so much about taking and holding a set piece of territory. Guerrillas do not need a large amount of firepower to do this since they are only carrying out sporadic raids. Too much firepower, as with the US troops in Vietnam, can alienate the local population because there is a temptation to use it wantonly. The US did not lose in Vietnam because of a shortage of firepower but partly because of the excessive use it. Guerrillas can lose battle after battle and yet still win the war since guerrilla warfare is a form of attrition, a wearing down of the conventional forces until exhaustion and frustration set in.

The mass media publicize guerrilla attacks. Although comparatively few people are killed in raids, the deaths attract a disproportionate amount of news coverage. Indeed, in terms of the number of deaths involved, guerrilla warfare is by no means the huge problem that the mass media often suggest that it is. For example, more people were killed on the roads of Northern Ireland each year than were killed in the warfare in the late 1960s to the 1990s. But wars sell newspapers. Guerrilla groups are often adept at using the media to convey their point of view.

The world's population is becoming increasingly urbanized, with a greater percentage than ever before living in towns and cities. Life in large cities is one of anonymity. People living next door to each other often know little about each other. A guerrilla group could operate from a city district and the neighbours would not know. This anonymity makes it difficult for the police to get information. Guerrillas can melt away in the crowd, like fish in a sea.

Guerrillas operate, then, in a different way from conventional forces. An analogy with fighting lung cancer illustrates this: fighting lung cancer is futile if there is no attention given to its cause (smoking). But conventional forces are trained for military action - not to analyse why people go to war in the first place. Politicians prefer what seem "quick solutions" and so like to use force rather than seek the underlying causes of conflict.

Nuclear weapons cannot be uninvented. That knowledge is here to stay. All societies will remain vulnerable to guerrilla groups using nuclear explosive devices. While there is now virtually no risk of a World War III, there is a growing risk that eventually guerrilla groups will get access to nuclear weapons. The weapons need not be very sophisticated and the "delivery system" could be the back of a truck.
The New Warfare State

Most wars underway today are not only guerrilla ones but they are also often not strictly "international". Most wars used to be international - one country attacking another or groups of nations attacking each other. Conventional forces were the main way of conducting such operations. International conventional warfare is now rare.

The modern trends in warfare are for groups to try to break away from an existing country to create their own country, or for a group to try to overthrow its government and so form its own government. Guerrilla warfare is the preferred technique in both cases.

A war may become "internationalized" by the intervention of other countries or through the deployment of an international force (such as a United Nations peacekeeping operation). Once again there are problems for the intervening conventional forces because they are not trained in guerrilla warfare and, in any case, the appropriate response to guerrilla warfare is to examine the underlying causes of the war in the first place. A foreign force is at an even greater disadvantage in this respect than a domestic conventional force.

A further implication of the growth of guerrilla warfare is that civilians now bear the brunt of the fighting. One of the key factors of conventional warfare was the clear distinction between professional soldiers and the civilians - one protected the other and in return received a special status in society. For example, defence officers have a senior standing in orders of precedence at official government functions as part of the reward for being willing to lay down their lives for the protecting the rest of society.

However, from World War II onwards, the percentage of civilians being killed in warfare has increased. This is to be expected given the changed nature of warfare. A tradition of war was that military personnel and buildings were to be the only targets. Nowadays, the targets could be anything - including office blocks. Civilian deaths may now be as high as 90 per cent of the total deaths in warfare.

To conclude, much of today's conventional military expenditure is wasted. The main challenge in the future will not come from conventional warfare but from guerrilla warfare. The response to guerrilla attacks should not be primarily a military one - but one based on trying to find out why the guerrillas are resorting to war in the first place. Increased economic and social expenditure may often be a better protection for national security than military expenditure. This means moving from a culture of violence to a culture of peace.
The Seville Statement

An example of UNESCO’s continuing pioneering role in the promotion of peace is the Seville Statement. In 1986, an international meeting of scientists convened in Seville by the Spanish National Commission for UNESCO, adopted a "Statement on Violence" refuting the notion that organized human violence is biologically determined. Humans are not genetically programmed to do violence to each other.

The core of the Statement contains five propositions. They all set out what does not cause war:

1. War is not acquired from animals (they do not kill each as humans do).
2. War is not inherited from our forebears.
3. War is not necessary to ensure a better standard of living (humans can gain more from co-operation).
4. War is not due to the biological composition of the brain (humans need to be trained for war).
5. War is not due to some basic "instinct".

UNESCO continues to gain international acceptance of the Statement. At the end of World War II, UNESCO produced a statement on race, challenging the then fashionable notion that white people were somehow genetically superior to black people. That statement, by receiving international endorsement and publicity, helped reshape attitudes to race. People may still be racist - but there are no scientific arguments to support their opinions. The intention is to build a similar momentum in favour of the Seville Statement. People may still say that war is inevitable because it is somehow part of human nature - but they will not have the scientific arguments to support their opinions. Educational associations and other organizations are being invited to join the list of bodies which have endorsed the Statement. They are also being invited to distribute the statement and publicize it. It is now beginning to be printed in textbooks. UNESCO has produced a booklet on the Seville Statement, giving both the text and a commentary on it.

The Culture of Peace

A culture of peace is necessary because a culture of violence has not deterred people from going to war. The late Bert Roling recalled the hope that Nobel had in 1890 that the invention of his explosive would deter people from going to war: "Perhaps my factories will put an end to war... on the day when two army corps may mutually annihilate each other in a second,
probably all civilized nations will recoil with horror and disband their troops”. Humans are slow learners. Since that prediction, there have been two world wars and the invention of nuclear weapons - and countries are still going to war.

A better way to avoid war is to make peace more attractive than war. As Nobel found out, it is not possible to make to war unattractive - because that does not deter war. Therefore, peace has to be made as attractive as possible. Countries need to see that they can gain far more from peace than they can from war. This links the development of a culture of peace into the UN's other work on international economic and social co-operation.

Additionally, countries that have simmering disputes (such as over boundaries) should be encouraged to have their own bilateral arrangements, such as on developing projects for mutual gain, for example, responses to natural disasters like floods or famines.

To conclude, UNESCO’s work on creating a culture of peace is a massive undertaking. It will result in the eventual replacement of one dominant culture (that of violence) with another. A good omen for UNESCO’s work is that community groups and even parts of the mass media are questioning the current culture of violence and are looking for alternatives. Thus, UNESCO is able to set a lead in this work. In due course, its work on creating a culture of peace will no doubt be seen as important as its pioneering work against racism.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR EDUCATIONAL POLICIES TO ASSIST THE CULTURE OF PEACE

Given the comparatively small number of words, it is not possible to set out an entire school curriculum. Instead, this section will recommend some themes for educational policies.

1. The components of peace

Peace is as much a journey as a destination. There are many ways of working for peace. These include peacekeeping (the police/ military role of restraining combatants), peacebuilding (the economic and social task of creating and maintaining peaceful societies) and peacemaking (the diplomatic role of settling disputes). Responding to the challenge of the new warfare state requires all these types of activities.
The UNESCO Preamble refers to building the defences of peace in the minds of people. This has two implications in this context. First, the creation of a culture of peace is deliberate act of creation - and should not be left to a haphazard process of serendipity. The emerging warfare state means that the world should act with purpose and speed to counteract the new form of a culture of violence.

Second, building the defences of peace means that all people (from national leaders to very young children) should therefore think automatically in terms of a culture of peace. It is not enough for there to be remediable action after the violence has broken out (such as the role of diplomats in ending a war). Instead, the ideal situation should be that leaders need from the outset to be thinking of handling all their disputes in peaceful ways.

2. Peace is the norm - not war

Most societies are peaceful most of the time. It is unfortunate that the mass media devote so much attention to violence because peace is the norm. By implication, of course, the mass media accept that view because they report what is "news" and by definition that has to be exceptional and so the mass media report violence because most humans are not involved in it.

However, the focus on war devalues the everyday work done by most people. Being a solder may be glamorous (at least in the mass media and history books - the reality is somewhat different) but a focus on soldiering downplays the work done by, for example, mothers, farmers and teachers. Society can function without soldiers - and Costa Rica, for example, does so - but society cannot function without, for example, mothers, farmers and teachers. Societies can live without wars but they cannot live without children, food and education.

Therefore, it is important to convey - especially to impressionable younger children - that war is not the norm and that peace is.

It is also important to convey that peace is possible. Human behaviour can be changed over time. For example, in 1804, the US Vice President and a former Secretary of Treasury conducted a duel (fearing ridicule if they did not). By the end of the 19th century, it was inconceivable that US public officials would use this method as a way of settling a dispute. Duelling has gone. Similarly, humankind is not destined to always use force to settle disputes.
3. **Peace is everyone's business**

The UNESCO Culture of Peace web site points out that "everyone is involved, everyone can contribute to establishing a culture of peace".

This is in keeping with the current ideas in management of "ownership" and delegation of authority. If everyone has a role to play in a culture of peace (rather than having it imposed by superior political authorities) then there is a greater chance of people wanting to be involved in it.

In the new warfare state, with its return to guerrilla and low intensity warfare, there is - alas - scope for all types of people to be involved in this warfare. Thus, the culture of peace has to be attractive to all people who may feel tempted to revert back to the old ways of warfare. They need to feel an ownership in the peace process. Everyone can be a peaceworker.

This will also help the culture of peace take on a dynamic quality. The cause of peaceworking is undermined by people thinking of peace as a boring, uneventful sunny scene where nothing much happens. If the culture of peace is contrasted with the risks of the new warfare state, then peaceworking can be seen as an exciting activity which is seeking a better world while minimizing human suffering.

Military parades, bright colours, inspiring music and uniforms all help to maintain the culture of violence. Humans ought to be equally resourceful in making peace as exciting and attractive. While this author has some scepticism about all the attention devoted to the Olympics (with his city of Sydney being the host for the 2000 Games) none the less it is notable how the modern Olympics movement began just over a century ago as an alternative to war and that the movement is so exciting because it has converted the qualities of a culture of violence to a culture of sport. There are lessons here for the creation of a culture of peace.

4. **Peace as a foundation - and not as a course**

This writer has been involved in Australia's debate over peace education for over a quarter of a century. A constant issue has been the issue of whether peace should be seen, so to speak, as a foundation or as a course. The latter is the easier option (and the writer has taught peace studies courses for several years at all levels of the educational system).

The former approach is, however, the better one - even though it is far more time-consuming to introduce and maintain. In other words, instead of peace being siphoned off to one course (just like, say, geography or history) it is more important to teach existing courses with a greater emphasis on peace. This is more time-consuming because it requires agreement from fellow teachers and educational authorities.
However, it can be done. For example, this writer has been the international law writer for the new Legal Studies Higher School Certificate (that is, for 18 year old students) in New South Wales. For the first time in NSW, all students doing Legal Studies (a popular course) will now study the United Nations and the role of international law in international relations.

The only aspect of a culture of peace that should be separately identified and taught is conflict resolution (see 5 below). In all other respects, the challenge is to teach existing courses in a peaceful way. For example, history is still too often taught as a biography of war leaders and wars are too often used as the dividing points ("Europe 1918-39, "the world since 1945").

5. Conflict Resolution

A risk with the way that peace courses are taught (as distinct from using peace as a foundation for other courses) is that they are problem-centred, such as a focus on the arms race, missile technology or violence. But information without a source of ideas for taking action, may lead to despair and passivity.

Teaching conflict resolution starts out from a positive point of view. A person acquires immediate skills so that they can make a difference. Therefore people feel better because they are able to work for a better world, such as the improvement in their school or family.

In this writer's experience of teaching conflict resolution, there is a process, even among the youngest of students, whereby they soon start to wonder that since conflict resolution can improve the quality of life in their school or family, why governments cannot use it for their own activities.

Conflict resolution is also a "hands-on" practical course. This is also attractive to students (at all ages) who can see the benefit immediately of doing the course.

Conflict in itself is not bad. The question is how the conflict is used. Indeed, conflict can be beneficial if the conflict remains at the level of verbal disagreement and that disagreement is used to find a solution that enables all the parties to be in a better position after the dispute than before it (a "win-win" solution). In this beneficial sense, a seething point of discontent is brought out into the open and dealt with entirely, rather than lingering on and poisoning relationships.

A culture of peace would, in this context, represent a new form of language. A language works best when it is spoken by everyone. A culture of peace which includes conflict resolution would ensure that people take care not to put themselves into potentially conflictual situations (such as the poor use of words) and their family/ friends/ colleagues would all know how to enable a person to get themselves out of a corner without losing face if they were to put themselves into one.
A treaty for the teaching the culture of peace

It is important, then, that people become far more aware of the UNESCO culture of peace: to become "peace literate". A way of doing this would be via the creation of an international treaty to encourage governments to teach their citizens about the culture of peace. This instrument should be based on UNESCO's work for the culture of peace.

An International Convention on Education for the Culture of Peace would stress the indivisibility and interdependence of peace as the basis for the teaching (where appropriate) of other courses. Governments should oblige themselves to provide for culture of peace teaching at all levels of education. They should be further obliged to report regularly on the legislative and other measures which they have taken in this respect.

These periodic reports should be considered by a committee of independent experts in the field of education drawn up under UNESCO's auspices. This committee should also have the power (and the financial responsibilities) to undertake studies and to draft model programmes, methods, structures and teaching materials to be used by the national authorities of the governments.

Culture of peace education would make people easy to lead but difficult to coerce; it would make them easy to govern but impossible to enslave.

CONCLUSION

The new millennium is a good time for UNESCO leadership in developing a culture of peace. The culture of violence has failed but keeps on being used because it is the dominant paradigm and so the culture of violence underpins so much thinking at all levels of society. No clear alternative to the culture of violence has yet been articulated.

UNESCO is in a good position to take on the leadership role for developing a culture of peace. First, peace has always been UNESCO's business. UNESCO has credibility and is well known for its role in this field. Second, UNESCO generally has a good reputation for all of its work in so many areas and so it can use its prestige to attract support for the culture of peace programme. Third, the time is ripe. The evolution of the new warfare state means that people will be looking for leadership in finding an alternative to the culture of violence. The speed with which the new warfare state is emerging gives a sense of urgency to UNESCO's pioneering work.

Keith Suter
NOTES

