A League of Perpetual Peace: An Impossible Dream?

"Article I

The High Contracting parties solemnly declare in the names of their respective peoples that they condemn recourse to war for the solution of international controversies, and renounce it, as an instrument of national policy in their relations with one another."

"Article II

The High contracting parties agree that the settlement or solution of all disputes or conflicts of whatever nature or of whatever origin they may be, which may arise among them, shall never be sought except by pacific means."

So says the Kellogg-Briand Pact signed by the United States, and other countries in 1928.

There we have it, the high point of diplomacy and civilisation in the 20th century; the renunciation of war by the great powers of the time, predating the UN Charter but coinciding with the existence of the League of Nations, which, despite its signing of the Kellogg-Briand Pact, the USA never joined.

The parties to the Kellogg-Briand Pact in fact declared a new stage in world history; a future of perpetual peace. But, since the signing of the document, we have had nothing but perpetual war.
The idea of establishing a world community for peace goes back centuries and received philosophical support from among other thinkers and idealists, Immanuel Kant, in his famous essay, “A Perpetual Peace, A Philosophical Sketch,” written in 1795, and it was President Theodore Roosevelt who, on receiving the Nobel Prize for Peace stated,

“It would be a masterstroke if those great powers honestly bent on peace would form a League of Peace.”

But of course his county and many others were never honestly bent on peace when war was more profitable.

The eternal quest for more profit drove the modern imperialist nations to rely on plunder and pillage as a regular means of income just as much as the empires of the past. The claim by early capitalists and philosophers that free trade and commerce would lead to peace and not war, out of pure commercial self-interest, and the ruinous cost of wars, was proved wrong as soon as the claim was made. We see similar claims made today by world leaders who every day wage war on other states, or resist the wars conducted against them.

Morality, law, ethics, these are empty words for those who the capitalist system makes into thieves and murderers. But then, when the working population is composed of wage slaves, whose labour power is taken from them every hour of the day without compensation, the only way by which profit can be derived from industrial production, when the whole basis of the economy is theft, how can we expect the governments of such nations, the captains of this slave system, to be anything else except murderers and thieves.

And since the United States has been the preeminent capitalist power since 1945, a world imperialist power, we witness the United States, and its servant nations in the NATO, and other vassal alliances, forcing the world to the edge of world war in a continual and never-ending cycle of crises.

Its actions against Russia, against China, against Iran, against the DPRK, even against its own allies, can push us over that edge into the abyss at any time. The Russians, the Chinese, the Iranians, the North Koreans, warn the American leadership, warn the world, again and again that the consequences will be catastrophic for the world; but the irrational leadership of the United States, corrupted beyond redemption by the presumption that their power gives them the right to dominate the world, only increase their aggressive rhetoric and actions, blinded by hubris and an ignorance of reality. They think they can triumph over the world and threaten to reduce it to a radioactive wasteland.

Kant, in his essay, and others since, including the founders of the failed League of Nations, of the failed United Nations, claimed that when sovereign nations join together with mutual assurance of peace and intentions to disarm that peace would soon follow. But this has not happened. The League of Nations fell apart as soon as it was created and the United Nations has never prevented an act of aggression when the aggressor was intent on war. It is now just a forum for speeches and bluster, form without substance; a good idea killed by imperialism.

Kant thought that democracy, that republican forms of government, in which the people ruled, would necessarily lead to peace among nations as democratic rule spread among nations. But we have seen through history that so long as the debt system allows nations to have standing armies and to spend huge sums on creating weapons of unlimited destructive power, so long as the quest for profit remains the basis of the economic system, which leads inevitably to imperialism and colonialism, so long as governments pay men and women in their standing armies to kill, to be killed, for the benefit of others, to be reduced to expendable machines of death, we shall risk incessant war and annihilation.

What better example of this is there than The President of the United States of America threatening to “obliterate” North Korea, to “obliterate” Iran. This is the vocabulary of the deep evil that rests within the heart of the system, evil because it knows no morality, no law, and regards itself to be superior to humanity itself.

Democracy works only when there is a free exchange of ideas, but they control the ideas, control and manipulate the people, blind us with a world-wide system of propaganda using the mass media, and more and more, the social media, to mould our opinions and actions, or inaction. Independent media that are dedicated to peace and dialogue between peoples are becoming fewer or are compromised. So few are able to see the reality, to understand how the system works, how they fit into the system and how they can overcome it.

During the Soviet period, after the defeat of European fascism, the idea spread through the world of the equality of peoples, of nations, of international cooperation, of the community of mankind, of economic systems designed to produce social wealth for the benefit of the people instead of private wealth, making money for a few. Che Guevara wrote a book about the new human beings that this system needed and would produce.

But instead, we have a world in which the oldest capitalist powers are ruled by cutthroats and mobsters. The United States acts as captain of a world order of bandits; all of them dressed up in the clothing of democrats. They want world order, but their “order” is state of world servitude to their moneyed interests.

The Russians, the Chinese, and other still independent nations, call for a new order, one of multi-polarity, but this is to replace the world order of American autocracy with the order of a world aristocracy, still the rule of big powers over small, however
well-intentioned they may be. But what is needed is a just world order in which all nations and peoples are equally respected, and have a real voice in solving global problems, an order which exists for the benefit of all the world’s peoples.

We need a world League of Perpetual Peace to replace the United Nations, which, because of its undemocratic structure and control by the great powers, has not been able to accomplish its objectives. Armies need to be abolished, for if all armies are abolished, no one can have the excuse to create one. Differences among nations have to be solved peacefully and this cannot be done if armies and weapons of mass destruction are in the possession of nations. Without the means to make war, there cannot be war and so the only way to solve disputes has to be by peaceful means.

But the reader will ask, how is this to be accomplished when we know that those who profit from war and ruin will reject the idea with disdain, as an idea of utopians, not realists. And once again, it comes down to each of us to push for a worldwide campaign of world disarmament as a first step. Not just nuclear disarmament, though that is urgent and crucial, and there exists now the Treaty on The Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons that the citizens of each country should push their governments to adhere to. We know governments ruled by moneyed interests will not act unless they feel threatened and so the masses of citizens must make it clear that they will not tolerate world war, nuclear war, any war.

If you hear of a peace group in your area, join it, an anti-war group, any group affiliated with the World Peace Council, and like organisations, join it; making sure they are not hijacked by the “humanitarian war” lovers who are the most vile of them all because they pretend to be for peace and humanity, while taking one side and advocating violence against another, or attempt to confuse people by equating both sides in a conflict, when it is clear who is the aggressor and who is not. If there are no groups in your area, start one.

Unless we make our voices not only heard but make ourselves into a force for action that cannot be ignored we count for nothing and Kant’s plea for a League of Perpetual Peace will remain an impossible dream and war will remain our constant nightmare.

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