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A Culture of Peace

The ethnic, cultural, political and social diversity of the Pacific Asia region has long been marketed as its greatest strength. It could turn out to be its greatest liability. The growing number of regional conflicts could pose the gravest danger to travel and tourism in the 21st century. While many of our Pacific Asia destinations are emerging from the ravages of war and conflict, others are plunging into it. As tourism has long claimed to be an industry of peace, the time for it to live up to its slogan is at hand.

The summer 1999 issue of "Work in Progress," a publication of the United Nations University, reported on new research on global security challenges and the role of the

UN. It contained a number of essays on Peace Research, a rapidly growing scholastic and academic field designed to create "sustainable peace." In this edition, we report on some of the points raised in those essays. They will give the travel and tourism industry much food for thought.

The Changing Face of Peace

We are now nearing the end of the most war-ravaged century in human history, a period that gave birth to the grisly terms, "genocide" and "ethnic cleansing." War-related deaths in the 20th century are estimated to total nearly 110 million more than five times the total of the previous century and 25 times the total of Europe's savage 30-year war in the 17th century.

For all its barbarity, the Second World War apparently had little impact on humankind's willingness to resort to violence. Since 1945, there have been nine conflicts that each took at least a million lives.

"We face a paradox," notes Ramesh Thakur, Vice-Rector of UN University. "The incidence of war in human society is as pervasive as the wish for peace is universal." This paradox — so much violence, so widespread a desire to end it has had significant consequences for the UN, which, since the end of the Cold War, has been increasingly confronted with new security challenges. In recent years, its peace-keeping activities have been directed mainly at easing internal civil conflicts, not wars between states.

This issue has led to much scholarly thinking at the UN University's Peace and Governance Programme. Indeed, peace research has changed its focus "from the welfare of the state to that of

individuals and the system: how everybody gains when parties in conflict avoid violence."

The emergence of the forces of globalisation poses a dual challenge to the security responsibilities of the UN. On the one hand, globalism has brought to centre stage an array of new actors: trans-national corporations, social movements, advocacy networks. These need to be given a voice in the new architecture of global governance.

However, the "dark side" of globalisation - trans-national organised crime, drug use and corruption — threaten to impose their own uncivil order and confront the UN with tasks very much like those traditionally faced by nation-states — protecting the lives of their citizens and guaranteeing their rights.

The tremendous human, economic and political costs of conflict and conflict management call for much greater emphasis on conflict prevention.

Conflicts need to be resolved before they escalate into violence and war. However, conflict prevention can only be effective if the UN monitors, regional organisations enforce and civil society helps build peaceful relations among individuals, groups and states.

The development and promotion of the concept of universal human rights has been one of the UN's greatest accomplishments. However, different states have come to see human rights differently, and foreign policies reflect the tensions between countries' human rights concerns and conflicting national interests. A major challenge for the 21st century will be to seek agreement on effective international courts to implement human rights and discipline those who violate them.

Prof Thakur points out that the central problem for peace research, as an academic endeavour is violence: the nature, causes, consequences, management and resolution of conflict. It aims to control the manifestation of arms and violence, and to question

their instrumental utility in promoting societal values. It has a bias towards organised violence in conflicts between political actors, but is not restricted to international conflicts.

Deaths can be caused by the direct application of force, as on the battlefield. But they can also be caused, in greater magnitude and more pervasively, as the unintended consequences of structural inequalities in social systems. Poverty and malnutrition take a far deadlier toll on many more people each year than direct violence by their own or an enemy state.

The task of peace research is to challenge the basic tenets of the conventional analyses of violence and to offer critical alternatives. The challenge can be normative-philosophical, legal and even religious. Or it can be empirical: does the evidence support the claim that if we want peace, then we must prepare for war? Or do preparations for war cause war, or make it more likely?

Perhaps the most important aspect of peace research to bear in mind is that its primary motivation is to improve the human condition. It seeks not simply to understand violence, but to eliminate or tame it. At any given time, most of the countries in the world are ready to go to war if necessary. Yet most of them are also at peace, and long to keep it so.

International politics is a struggle for power. The primary actors in world affairs are autonomous states engaged in power-maximising behaviour. National security is the ultimate and overriding goal, and force is the principal instrument.

The task of strategic analysts is to predict courses of action that will enable states to maximise their own power while neutralising or minimising the national power of opponents. By contrast, peace research changes focus from the welfare of the state to that of individuals and the system: how everybody gains when parties in conflict avoid violence.

Possibilities for the breakdown of peace exist everywhere and at all times. The task for strategic studies is to identify them through the exploration of worst-case scenarios. At the same time, possibilities for building peace exist in every human crisis. The challenge for peace research is to identify them through the exploration of best-case scenarios.

Third Conference on Peace and Tourism

The International Institute for Peace through Tourism (IIPT) is holding its Third Global Conference under the theme, "Building Bridges of Peace, Culture and Prosperity through Sustainable Tourism," in Glasgow, Scotland, October 17-21, 1999.

The aim: "To identify, encourage and develop tourism initiatives that will contribute to sustainable human, social, cultural and economic development in the 21st century. Particular emphasis will be placed on building two-way bridges among developed, developing and emerging economies of the world." One of the key objectives is to create a "21st Century Agenda for Peace through Tourism."

One important conference session will focus on International Understanding and Collaboration featuring lectures on "Achieving Sustainable Tourism through International Collaboration," "The Role of Tourism in the Arab-Israeli Peace Process" and "Building Bridges of Peace and Understanding in Northern Ireland." Another paper will explore The Spiritual Dimensions of Travel and Tourism.

Interestingly, the opening ceremonies will be preceded by two more solemn events; an interfaith service of the eight major global faiths organised by an interfaith committee from Glasgow along with the Theology Faculty at the University of Glasgow, and a ceremony dedicating a Peace Park as a legacy of the IIPT Third Global Conference, organised by the Rotary Clubs of Glasgow and Glasgow City Parks Department.

Further details, including registration information, from <http://www.iipt.org/conference/index.html>

From the strategic studies paradigm, states hope for the best but prepare for the worst. "Trust, but verify," said President Ronald Reagan in the context of the historic agreement on intermediate-range nuclear forces. From the point of view of peace research, nations should be prepared for the worst but work for the best: verify, but do trust. And, where possible, love thy neighbour.

Moreover, the concept of security is being broadened to incorporate military, political, economic, societal and environmental dimensions. Environmental security can be linked to societal security, for example, when collective identities depend upon particular relationships with the land or landscape. This applies, for example, to the Inuit (Eskimos) of Canada and the Aborigines of Australia. As for tensions, self-sustaining economic growth, an important measure of economic security, can come into conflict with sustainable development, a requirement for environmental security.

The border between the domestic and the international has become increasingly irrelevant. Analysts are likely in the next century to be grappling simultaneously with problems of internal social cohesion, regime capacity and brittleness, failed states, economic development, structural adjustment, gender relations, ethnic identity, external threats, and transnational and global problems like AIDS, environmental degradation, drug trafficking, terrorism, child soldiers, child prostitution and so on.

A radical conceptual shift – and the most significant for peace research – is from "national security" with its focus on military defence of the state, to "human security" with its emphasis on the individual's welfare. This has a dual aspect. Negatively, it refers to freedom "from": want, hunger, attack, torture, imprisonment without a free and fair trial, discrimination on spurious grounds, and so on. Positively, it means freedom "to": the capacity and opportunity that allows each human being to enjoy life to the fullest without imposing constraints upon others engaged in the same pursuit.

Putting the two together, human security refers to the quality of life of the people of a society or polity. Anything that degrades their quality of life to the point of crisis – demographic pressures, diminished access to or stock of resources, etc. – is a security threat. Conversely, anything that can upgrade their

World Peace Park Planned at Panmunjom

Korea (ROK) will seek to build a "World Peace Park" in the truce village of Panmunjom in cooperation with the North as part of its effort to promote tourism on a long-term basis.

The plan, along with the blueprints for setting up a free travel zone at Mount Kumgang and Mount Sorak, is a highlight of the five-year tourism promotion plan announced by Culture-Tourism Minister, Mr. Shin Nak-kyun earlier this year.

"The peace park will be a symbolic space to publicise the Seoul government's peace initiative through the South-North cooperation," Shin said, hoping that a tourist festival will be held at the truce village.

The Seoul government will consult with Pyongyang to create an international free travel zone linking Mount Kumgang in the North and Mount Sorak in the South where certain goods will be traded tax free, the minister said.

quality of life – economic growth, improved access to resources, social and political empowerment, etc. – is an enhancement of human security.

Human security directs our attention to the rationale, forms, techniques and measures of state coercion: from the holocaust and the gulags to the death squads and disappearances in Latin America, the killing fields of Cambodia, the cruelty of apartheid in South Africa, the plight of indigenous peoples in many countries and the oppression of women almost everywhere.

Threats are also posed by the administrative, judicial, police, paramilitary and military structures of the state to individual and group rights. Peace researcher Rudolph Rummel has documented that the number of battle deaths for all international and civil wars in this century (up to 1987) is 38.5 million; the number of those "murdered" (his words) by states in the same period is 151 million.

Hylke Tromp, Professor of Peace Research at the University of Groningen and Director of its Polemological Institute, declared in July 1990 that, "the Cold War is over. Nobody won. Everybody lost." The Soviet Empire had collapsed into impoverishment, crime, corruption and pollution. But during the Cold War, the United States too had suffered from a proliferation of social decay, violent crime, pollution and an increasing national debt. Both

superpowers had contributed to the militarisation of international affairs. That particular legacy lives on in Afghanistan, the Horn of Africa, southern Africa and elsewhere.

Conclusion

In Canberra, there is a memorial, at one end of ANZAC Parade, to the friendship between Australia and Turkey. It is a fine example of reconciliation between erstwhile enemies. There can be few more moving words than the lines of poetry penned by Kemal Ataturk, one of Turkey's most revered patriots. Carved in stone on the memorial in ANZAC Parade, the poem is addressed to the foreign invaders of his country:

*You, the mothers
Who sent your sons from faraway countries
Wipe away your tears.
Your sons are now lying in our bosom
And in peace.
Having lost their lives, they have
Become our sons as well.*

The need to temper justice and vengeance with reconciliation and reintegration of traumatised and bitterly divided communities is an increasing imperative in many parts of the world. Ataturk's words can serve as the inspiration to the work of peace research everywhere: if we fail to learn wisdom from the dead, then we shall surely join them in the peace of the dead.

Join in Building a "Culture of Peace"

— A Message for the Travel and Tourism Industry from United Nations Secretary-General Mr. Kofi Annan

A principal mandate of the United Nations – "to save succeeding generations from the scourge of war" – remains as valid today as when those words were written into the Charter more than half a century ago. For millions upon millions of people throughout our world, the march of human progress continues to be plagued by conflict, violence, hatred and greed.

Over the years we have come to realise that it is not enough to send peacekeeping forces to separate war-

ring parties. It is not enough to engage in peace-building efforts after societies have been ravaged by conflict. It is not enough to conduct preventive diplomacy. All of this is essential work, but we must also act at a deeper level if we want enduring results.

We need, in short, a culture of peace. It may seem sometimes as if a culture of peace does not stand a chance against the culture of war, the culture of violence and the cultures of impunity and intolerance. Peace may indeed be a complex challenge, dependent on action in many fields and even a bit of luck from time to time. It may be a painfully slow process, and fragile and imperfect when it is achieved.

But peace is in our hands. We can do it.

This year, the International Day of Peace (September 14, 1999) coincided with the launch, at the initiative of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), of the International Year for the Culture of Peace. "Since wars begin in the minds of men," says UNESCO's Constitution, "it is in the minds of men that the defences of peace must be constructed."

All of us must do our part in this project. The culture of peace is an idea whose time has come.

Editor's Note: Further details of the International Year for the Culture of Peace can be found at <http://www.unesco.org.cpp>. Learn why the travel and tourism should get involved in this effort, and think what you can do about it.

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