

ROTARY DISTRICT 5440 PEACEBUILDER NEWSLETTER
OCTOBER 2019 NUMBER 26
THE COSTS OF WAR

William M. Timpson, Bob Meroney, Lloyd Thomas, Del Benson, Sharyn and Larry Salmen
Fort Collins Rotary Club
Lindsey Pointer, 2017 Rotary Global Grant Scholarship Recipient

In these newsletters of the Rotary District Peacebuilders, we want to invite readers for contributions and ideas, suggestions and possibilities for our efforts to promote the foundational skills for promoting peace, i.e., nonviolent conflict resolution, improved communication and cooperation, successful negotiation and mediation as well as the critical and creative thinking that can help communities move through obstacles and difficulties. See the end of this newsletter for more details about this project and the authors.

ALTERNATIVES TO WAR SPENDING

Robert N. Meroney, Ph.D. *is an Emeritus Professor of Fluid Mechanics and Wind Engineering with a long career at Colorado State University.*

One of the consequences of war and conflict is the terrible expenditure of national and world wealth on actions that cost far more than is typically ever redeemed by a war's conflict. One could ask: What are the positive advantages of deliberately deciding to avoid war not only in terms of lives and the environment but in terms of alternative use of the financing of war?

Public access to defense department budget information is imperfect and incomplete. The scale of spending is so large it is hard to grasp. Understanding is further limited by secrecy, faulty accounting, and the deferral of current costs.¹ The US General Accounting Office (GAO) has commented about the department of Defense (DOD) budgets that it could not provide a serious audit of the DOD because "*serious financial management problems at the DOD that made its financial statements unaudit.*"² A comprehensive audit of DOD was attempted in 2018 by six separate private, third-party accounting consultants, but the audit ended and was deemed incomplete due to deficient accounting practices in the department.³

Additionally disturbing is that most of the costs of our wars are based on domestic (60%) and foreign borrowing (40%); hence, our children and grandchildren will be paying for our inability to govern, negotiate, and compromise.

I prepared a spread sheet that looks at statistics (as available) on the costs of war from 2001 - 2019, and what could be done with just the wealth expended on US military infrastructure and

¹ S. Aftergood, *The Costs of War: Obstacles to Public Understanding*, November 14, 2018, Cost of War Project, Brown University, 7 pp. <https://watson.brown.edu/costsofwar/papers/2018/costs-war-obstacles-public-understanding>

² GAO press release, *U.S. Governments 2013 Financial Report Reflects Continuing Financial Management and Fiscal Challenges*, Washington D.C., February 27, 2014. https://www.gao.gov/about/press-center/press-releases/challenges_governments2013financial_report.htm

³ Inspector General, U.S. Dept. of Defense, *Understanding the Results of the Audit of the DoD FY 2018 Financial Statements*, January 8, 2019. <https://fas.org/man/eprint/dodig-audit.pdf>

war. In summary, we have effectively spent more than \$5.9 trillion up to now on wars in Afghanistan, Iraq, Libya and Syria. This is a cost of about \$274 billion/year for 18 years (or cost per American taxpayer of \$23,386/year).⁴

What if we had invested this money instead of spending it on very questionable conflicts? Just to give you an idea of what you could do with \$274 billion/year **we could do all the following every year:**

- Pay for 50% of all college tuition for 1.9 million college students,
- Build a 4-lane highway clear across the United States from one coast to the other,
- Build 750 public schools,
- Build 125 research grade hospitals (1.5 million sq. ft, 500 beds each), and
- Build 1000 community libraries throughout the United States.

Now repeat these expenditures 18 times! Note, this is not the cost for the entire US defense budget/year, just the cost for the active wars being fought!

For just the DOD budget in FY2019 the Pentagon requested \$957 billion (this does not include Homeland Security, Veterans Administration, interest on the DOD generated debt, etc.). Of this \$69 billion is for current war funding (overseas contingency operations, OCO), and another \$26.1 billion for OCO support.⁵ In total the OCO budget since 2001 has been \$2 trillion to pay for the war on terror.⁶ Military spending makes up nearly 16-20% of the entire federal spending and half of discretionary spending. The United States spends more on its military than the next 10 countries combined.

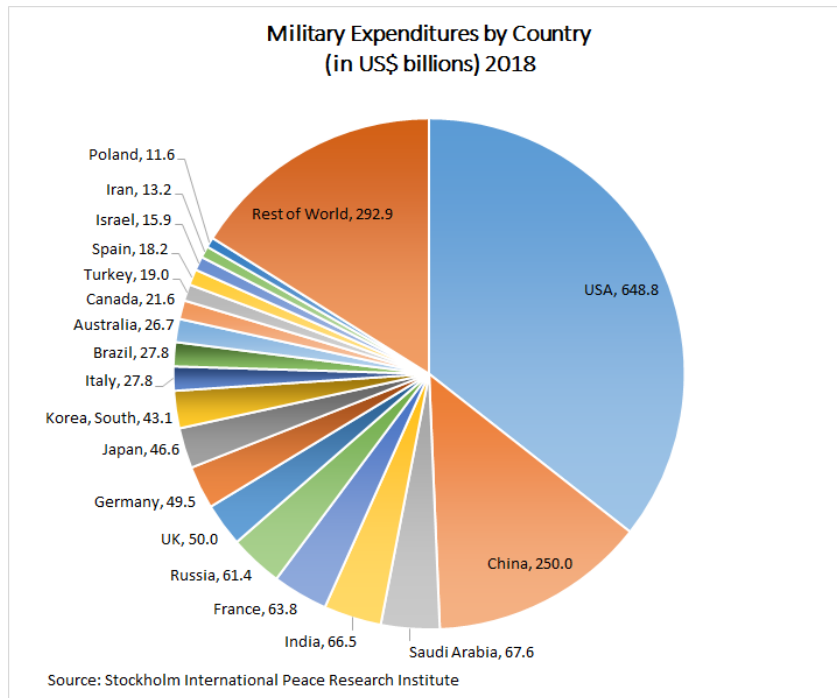
⁴ N.C. Crawford, US Budgetary Costs of the Post 9-11 Wars through FY2019, November 14, 2018, Costs of War Project, Brown University, 13 pp.

https://watson.brown.edu/costsofwar/files/cow/imce/papers/2018/Crawford_Costs%20of%20War%20Estimates%20Through%20FY2019%20.pdf

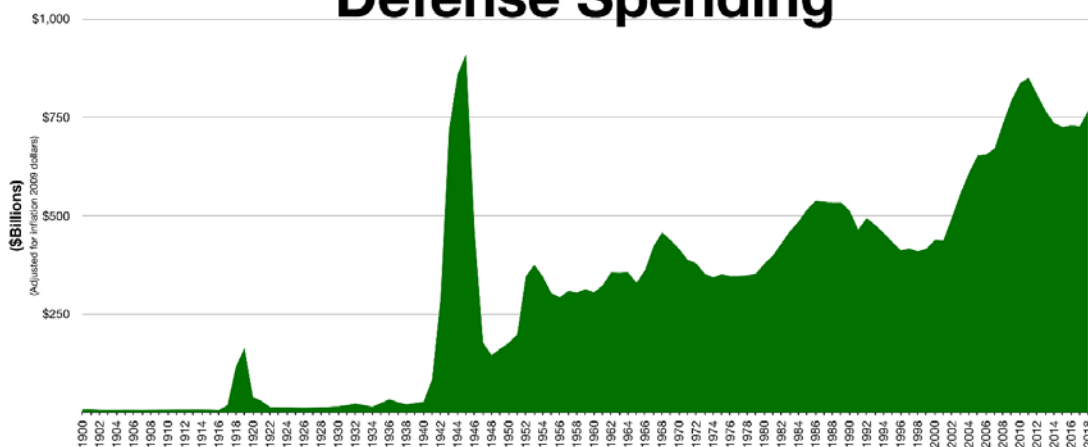
⁵ K. Amadeo, US Military Budget, Its Components, Challenges and Growth, The Balance, April 22, 2019.

<https://www.thebalance.com/u-s-military-budget-components-challenges-growth-3306320>

⁶ A trillion is a million million. If you go back a trillion seconds, it would be about 30,000 BC. \$1 trillion would pay for a \$1 million salary a day for nearly 3000 years.

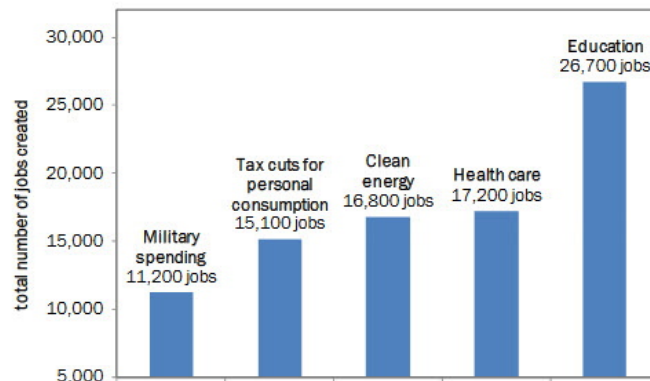


Defense Spending



Let's keep it simple. Look at just one item of hardware in the military budget. The cost of one F-35 military jet is \$90 million. The cost of an elementary school, a middle school, or a high school average \$15 million, \$30 million, or \$45 million, respectively. Thus, for the price of one disposable jet plane we could have six new elementary schools, three middle schools, or two high schools to improve our children's education. Given the purpose of an F-35 military jet is primarily air-to-air combat, and that no nation has fought an extended "dog

JOB CREATION IN THE U.S. THROUGH \$1 BILLION IN SPENDING



fight” since 1992, one could argue this expenditure for the F-35 is a waste of money.⁷ Since the 1990s it is estimated that the development of the F-35 alone has cost a total of \$1.5 trillion.⁸

Some point to the military-industry complex as an important component of the nation’s economy and wealth. But military spending is not necessarily the best way to create jobs. A University of Massachusetts study found \$1 billion in defense spending created about 11,000 jobs, but the same \$1 billion spent on infrastructure would create nearly 20,000 jobs, or on education would create 27,000 jobs.⁹

Finally, several economic analyses have shown that current military expenditures cannot be sustained, and that the costs endanger the integrity of the American economy.^{10,11} Military spending is a major component of public debt, and it deprives funds from other important components of the economy like infrastructure, health, education, and climate change. Military spending burdens negatively affected economic growth in the short run and long run. If these funds were redirected from the essentially unproductive military sector to productive civilian spending positive national growth would occur. Sadly, it is clear that over a 20-year period, a 1% increase in military spending will decrease a country’s economic growth by 9%.^{12,13,14}

A recent survey of 170 works on the impact of military expenditure on economic growth finds that most studies since the end of the cold war provide increasingly strong evidence of an overall negative effect of military expenditure on economic growth. The survey concludes:

“What does seem increasingly clear is that military expenditure does in general come at an economic cost. The lesson might be that if one wants to have any hope of becoming (militarily) strong, one should invest in one’s economy. Once states are economically strong, too much is at stake to risk in war. States may also gain security by becoming important to the world economy, with the major powers protecting them from attack because of the impact any attack would have on the world economy, and thus on them. The best way to security may be through economic growth.”¹⁵

⁷ Dogfight, Wikipedia <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Dogfight>

⁸ Lockheed Martin F-35 Lightning II, Wikipedia https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Lockheed_Martin_F-35_Lightning_II

⁹ R. Pollin & H. Garrett-Peltier (2011), *The U.S. Employment Effects of Military and Domestic Spending Priorities*, Political Economy Research Institute, University of Massachusetts, Amherst, 12 pp.

¹⁰ K. Amadeo, *Militarism, Its History, and Its Impact on the Economy*, The Balance, August 30, 2019. <https://www.thebalance.com/militarism-definition-history-impact-4685060>

¹¹ Paul Kennedy (1989), *The Rise and Fall of the Great Powers*, argues that great nations tend to steadily overextend themselves with repeated conflicts and become militarily top-heavy for a weakening economic base.

¹² P. Hiller, *The Effects of Military Spending on Economic Growth*, *Peace Science Digest*, <https://peacesciencedigest.org/effects-military-spending-economic-growth/>

¹³ d’Agostino, G., Dunne, J. P., & Pieroni, L. (2017). *Does military spending matter for long-run growth?*. *Defence and Peace Economics*, 1-8.

¹⁴ M.A. Khalid, et. al, (2015) *The Impact of Military Spending on Economic Growth: Evidence from the US Economy*, *Res J. Finance and Accounting*, Vol. 6, NO.7, 9 pp.

¹⁵ J.P. Dunne & N. Tian (2013), *Military expenditure and economic growth: A survey*, *The Economics of Peace and Security Journal*, Vol. 8, No. 1, pp. 5-11.

Most expensive US Military Fighters currently in use: <https://financesonline.com/top-10-most-expensive-military-planes-manufactured-in-america/> The following costs do not include total development costs. For example, the F-35 as the largest and most expensive military program ever is estimated to cost US \$1.508 trillion through 2070.

1. FA-18 Hornet	\$94 million	1480	\$139 billion
2. EA-18G Growler	\$102 million	600	\$ 61 billion
3. V-22 Osprey	\$118 million	58	\$ 6.8 billion
4. F-35 Lightning II	\$122 million	2663	\$325 billion
5. E-2D Adv Hawkeye	\$232 million	26	\$ 6.0 billion
6. VH-71 Kestrel	\$241 million	9	\$ 2.2 billion
7. P-8A Poseidon	\$290 million	106	\$ 31 billion
8. C17A Globemaster III	\$328 million	279	\$ 92 billion
9. F-22 Raptor	\$350 million	187	\$ 5.5 billion
10. B-2 Spirit	\$737 million	21	15.5 billion

Total: \$744 billion just for procurement¹⁶

COST SAVINGS FROM THE GOOD FRIDAY PEACE AGREEMENT IN NORTHERN IRELAND

Sharyn H. Salmen *has been a health care consultant. Larry Salmen* *has helped support business success with technology and systems integration. The following is an excerpt of a longer essay you can read by contacting Sharyn Salmen (ssalmen@g.com) or Larry Salmen (lsalmen@g.com)*

Great Britain ruled the whole of Ireland for 632 years 1169-1801. The costs of the violence in Northern Ireland during the "Troubles," in particular, were unquestionably high. From "Bloody Sunday" in 1972 when fourteen protesters in Derry were killed and seventeen were wounded by British soldiers until 1998 when the Good Friday Peace agreement was signed, more than 3,600 people lost their lives. The costs in normal economic terms were similarly high. Now add in the fear, threats, and intimidation to the destruction of property from the bombing. The "disincentives" for economic development are obvious.

British costs for maintaining their military presence was also enormous. In 1993 those estimates came to more than \$592 million. Now factor in the costs for prisons and other detention centers. Between 1974 and 1992 more than 7,000 Irish were detained in the North by British authorities using the Prevention of Terrorism Act (PTA). In the three-year period between 1987 and 1990 more than 86,000 people were "examined" for more than an hour at ports and airport. Consider the loss of productivity!

However, historic hierarchies created by invasion, conquest, war and weapons privileged Protestants and loyalists to the United Kingdom. For example, Catholic men are 2.2 times more likely to be unemployed as Protestant men while the corresponding figure for women is 1.8 times. Northern Ireland Catholic men have the highest unemployment rate of any group in the UK, while Northern Ireland's Protestants have the second lowest.

¹⁶ Research Development Test & Evaluation (RDT&E), Military Construction (MILCON), and operations and sustainment is likely to multiply this number by 5, or a total of \$3.72 trillion.

The conflict in Northern Ireland period damaged its economy generally and, more specifically, its ship-building and linen industries which found cheaper labor and fewer regulations in other parts of the world, primarily southeast Asia. In Northern Ireland, over 30% of the workforce is directly employed in the public sector, compared with under 20% in Britain or the Republic. The Northern regional government is heavily subsidized by London, another often overlooked cost of war and conquest. For example, Northern Ireland is heavily dependent on direct British subsidy for its employment, with an extraordinarily high proportion of jobs being in security fields like prisons, probation, the police etc. One in ten Protestant men now works in these fields. In truth, this economic subsidy is much more of a drain on the UK Treasury than the cost of keeping the Army there. The total cost of the military presence was £405.6 million (\$592.2 million) in 1993 - just 1.7% of the total UK defense budget.

In summary, then, we can see the range of costs for the violence in Northern Ireland, from loss of life to over 50,000 injured and the medical care required for treating them, from reduced productivity because of the fear and violence to the negative impacts that stem from widespread discrimination against the Irish, from the costs of maintaining a military presence to the subsidies required to keep the economy afloat, from the costs of incarceration for those detained as well as for those who work as police and prison guards.

Sources

European Commission figures, reported in *The Guardian* 26 Jan 1994.

Irish News 30 Nov 1993, reporting on a joint study by the Northern Ireland Economic Research Centre in Belfast and the Economic and Social Research Institute in Dublin.

UK Government Northern Ireland Office figures.

Bob Rowthorn and Naomi Wayne, *Northern Ireland: The Political Economy of Conflict* (Polity 1988).

Northern Ireland Fair Employment Commission.

Malcolm Sutton, *Bear in Mind These Dead: An Index of Deaths from the Conflict in Ireland 1969-1993*

West Midlands PTA Research and Welfare Association.

THE PSYCHOLOGICAL AND SOCIAL COSTS OF WAR

Lloyd Thomas, Ph.D. is a longstanding member of the Fort Collins Rotary Club, a licensed psychologist and a life coach with a long history of writing regular columns.

When we are not combatants in an active war, we usually think that the only "costs" of war are monetary, injury or "Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder" (PTSD). If we haven't been directly involved in a war, we rarely consider the many other mental, emotional and social consequences that are a direct result such violent conflict.

In *The Journal of the American Osteopathic Association*, Con. Daryl J. Callahan writes: "More US military service members have been deployed since 9/11 than in the previous 40 years. A greater number of these deployed service members are surviving, which has increased the incidence of combat-related mental health disorders among veterans of 'The Long War.' The societal cost of caring for veterans with such disorders is expected to surpass that of the Global War on Terror, which is estimated at \$600 billion. Because the prospect of stopping all deployment is remote, standardized prevention and treatment methods must be used to eliminate these 'invisible wounds of war.'"

Con. Callahan goes on to write: "Ironically, it is only since the inclusion of post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) in the DSM-III in 1980 (2) that the field of traumatic stress has blossomed and been subsequently underpinned by a major body of neuroscience and clinical research. Despite the slow development of interest into the long-term consequences of the traumatic stress of war, many of the developments in mental health care in the 20th century emerged from the innovations demanded by the need to deal more effectively with the flood of mental casualties amongst the combatants of World Wars I and II. The model of community psychiatry was adapted from the model of forward psychiatry developed by the military to deal with acute combat stress reactions; this model was underpinned by the principles of the provision of early treatment close to the battle front with the expectancy of recovery and return to service (1). Crisis intervention, group therapy and therapeutic communities were innovations that evolved out of the military medical corps (8).

Some recent quotations from the media depict the impact of war on mental health: "We are living in a state of constant fear" (in Iraq); "War takes a toll on Iraqi mental health"; "War trauma leaves physical mark"; "War is hell... it has an impact on the people who take part that never heals"; "War is terrible and beyond the understanding and experience of most people"; "A generation has grown up knowing only war" (7).

The often-unconscious and enduring impact of war is one of the driving forces of history. Yet these terrible costs and the lessons learned by psychiatry tend to be forgotten. Wars have had an important part in psychiatric history in a number of ways. It was the psychological impact of the world wars in the form of shell shock that supported the effectiveness of psychological interventions during the first half of the 20th century. It was the recognition of a proportion of the population not suitable for army recruitment during the Second World War that spurred the setting up of the National Institute of Mental Health in USA.

We know however, war adversely affects combatants and non-combatants alike. Some of the psychological and social "side effects" of a war include: early death; lifelong disability; stress-related illnesses; depression and anxiety experienced by friends and loved ones (including children); extended rehabilitation; increased suicide rates; homelessness; domestic and sexual violence; addiction to drugs/alcohol; malnutrition, joblessness; death of relatives or caregivers, economic hardships, geographic displacement, and continuous disruptions of daily living...to name a few. Clearly, the terror and horror spread by the violence of war disrupts lives and severs relationships and families, leaving individuals and communities mentally, physically and emotionally distressed. Tragically, it is these psychological costs that can lead to cycles of violence, both within the communities that have been at war and between nations seeking revenge and reparation.

Recently many studies of the impact that war has not only on the soldiers, but also on non-combatants as well. Examples of such studies include:

"Disasters and mental health" World Psychiatry (WPA). 2015 Oct; 14: 351–353. (1); the World Bank report "Mental health and conflicts - Conceptual framework and approaches" (2); the United Nations (UN) book "Trauma interventions in war and peace: prevention, practice and policy" (3); the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) document "The state of the world's children - Childhood under threat" (4); the book "Trauma and the role of mental health in post conflict recovery" (5) and a chapter on "War and mental health in Africa" in the WPA book "Essentials of clinical psychiatry for sub-Saharan Africa" (6).

REFERENCES

1. Lopez-Ibor JJ, Christodoulou G, Maj M, et al., editors. Disasters and mental health. Chichester: Wiley; 2005.
2. Baingana F. Fannon I. Thomas R. Mental health and conflicts - Conceptual framework and approaches. Washington: World Bank; 2005.
3. Green BL, Friedman MJ, de Jong JTVM, et al., editors. Trauma interventions in war and peace: prevention, practice and policy. New York: Kluwer/Plenum; 2003.
4. United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) The state of the world's children - Childhood under threat. New York: UNICEF; 2005.
5. Mollica RF. Guerra R. Bhasin R, et al. Trauma and the role of mental health in the post-conflict recovery. Book of best practices. Boston: Harvard Programme in Refugee Trauma; 2004.
6. Musisi S. War and mental health in Africa. In: Njenga F, Acuda W, Patel V, editors. Essentials of clinical psychiatry for sub-Saharan Africa. Milan: Masson; 2005. pp. 216–220.
7. Ghosh N. Mohit A. Murthy SR. Mental health promotion in post-conflict countries. J Roy Soc Promot Health. 2004;124:268–270.
8. Kroll J. Posttraumatic symptoms and the complexity of response to trauma. JAMA. 2003;290:667–670.

ENHANCE HOLISTIC PEACE THINKING

William M. Timpson, Ph.D. is a professor at Colorado State University in its School of Education and a member of the Fort Collins Rotary Club. What follows is adapted from his 2009 book, *147 Tips for Teaching Peace and Reconciliation*, co-authored with an international group of peace scholars that included Ed Brantmeier, Nat Kees, Tom Cavanagh, Claire McGlynn and Elavie Ndura (Madison, WI: Atwood).

The costs of war as summarized by Meroney above, challenge us to think differently about peace, to consider all those aspects that would lessen the threats of war and promote other ways to resolve conflicts. Linda Groff (2002), for example, positions the need for “peace thinking” on multiple, interdependent levels in order to actualize a peaceful world. This model includes Galtung’s (1969, 1988) distinction of negative and positive peace. It also adds the level

of integrated peace—holistic and systemic conceptions of what peace could look like among cultural groups, between the human and non-human world, and peace that holistically integrates outer forms of peace and inner forms of peace.

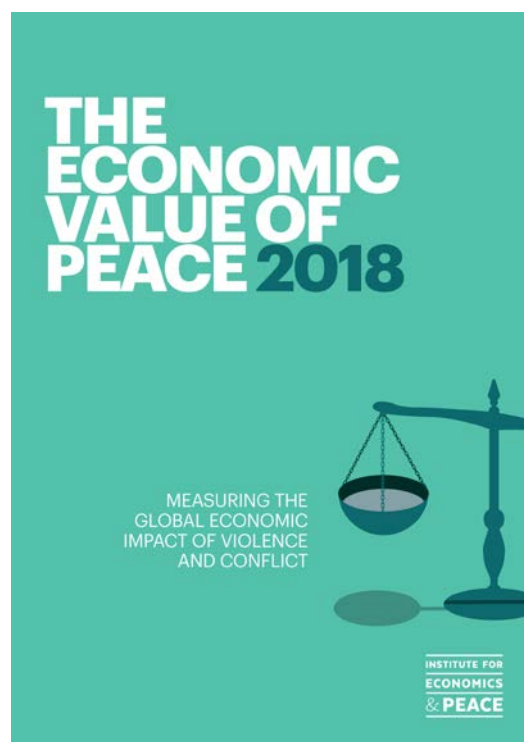
The benefit of using Groff’s conceptual model for thinking about peace is that it adds the more complex “integrated peace” dimension and it includes vital foci on feminist, intercultural, planetary, and inner peace.

Groff’s model (2002) delineates seven central concepts in peace thinking:

1. War Prevention (Negative Peace)
 - a. Peace as Absence of War
 - b. Peace as Balance of Forces in the International System

2. Structural Conditions for Peace (Positive Peace)
 - a. Peace as no war and no structural violence on macro levels
 - b. Peace as no war and no structural violence on micro levels (Community, Family, Feminist Peace)

3. Peace Thinking that Stresses Holistic, Complex Systems (Integrated Peace)
 - a. Intercultural Peace (peace among cultural groups)
 - b. Holistic Gaia Peace (Peace within the human world and with the environment).
 - c. Holistic Inner and Outer Peace (Includes all 6 types of peace and adds inner peace as essential condition) (7-8).



Rotary International has now partnered with the Institute for Economics and Peace “to help address the root causes of conflict and create conditions that foster peace.” With the title of the Rotary Positive Peace Academy, a free online learning platform has been created that “includes modules and interactive tools to teach users how to apply new peacebuilding methods and mobilize communities to address the underlying causes of conflict.” The costs of war and the benefits of investing in education and other human services are central to these analyses.

For more information see: <https://www.rotary.org/en/institute-economics-and-peace>

The Institute for Economics and Peace has developed “an innovative methodology to calculate the economic impact of violence to the economy. It does this by calculating 13 different types of violence related spending at the national level, and applying a multiplier effect to account for the lingering influence of violence and fear. There are immediate and obvious examples of the impact of violence to the economy, like hospital fees, or security costs, and there are also more subtle long term impacts, such as a shift to more defensive spending by individuals, businesses and governments.”

For more information see: <http://economicsandpeace.org/research/#economics-of-peace>

CIVILITY AND STRIFE: CIRCLES OF LIFE ARE NOT REAL BUT USEFUL

Del Benson, Ph.D. Dr. Benson is Professor at Colorado State University. He learned about management of people and nature in Canada, Africa, Australia, Europe, South America, and the US now offering 6 Online graduate courses about policy, communications, management, and sustainability. Awards were received from The Wildlife Society (5), Rocky Mountain Center on the Environment, Colorado Wildlife Federation, CSU Extension and Service Learning, International Hunter Education Association, and Rotary for programs, presentations, publications, and citizen-based organizational activities including The Wildlife Society Writing Award in 2019 for his essays about the environment and peace building.

Environments and humans are similar: they are never the same; they are dynamic; they have times of disturbance and times of healing; outcomes are not repeated exactly. The age of dinosaurs ended with no more dinosaurs; after the ice age there are no more mammoths and cave bears; human settlements beyond the original 13 colonies in the US left no passenger pigeons, and bison are relegated to specially protected areas.

The *Circle of Life* will be one theme for this essay because it is often used to describe nature and was popularized in The Lion King movies, plays, and music. Unfortunately, the Lion King soundtrack left us with a catchy phrase, *Hakuna Matata*, that neither nature nor humans can live up to, so that is the second theme. Hakuna Matata lyrics read: “It means no worries. For the rest of your days. It’s our problem-free philosophy-Hakuna Matata!”

I enjoyed the songs, movies, plays, and sentiments but environments and people are not problem free, and the circle of life is a convenient phrase that lacks accuracy. People and environments evolved over time by adaptive genetic and behavioral survival mechanisms to overcome the many problems and opportunities faced on a changing planet. Circles are better than straight lines to show interactions, interventions, and outcomes with nature and humans; but circles, humans, and environments are not clean drawings with neat outcomes. Visualize

circles as scratchy spheres with lines drawn out and in around the circle, representing variability and change.

With humans, locating one spot on the circle at one point in time might represent minimal conflict, peace, utopia, and perhaps even Hakuna Matata. Another location on the circle is the battle royal with dynamic changes over time and costly outcomes to humans and environments because peoples decided that they wanted to get into or out of their situations. Likely, after battles, positions on the circle can be found that represent peace-building and civility again, but not for long perhaps.

Persons in the US are friends with England now after fighting battles against them to gain national independence. After World War II the US helped to rebuild Western Europe and Japan who we battled. Viet Nam is now a place for US tourism and business after a time of war. We find that conflicts can be minimized and new friends can be made amongst persons who were taught earlier to dislike their enemies.

Some lines of variability on the circle are deep with positive or negative vectors showing that peace or war persists over time while other sites have short periods of constant behaviors. If we want the outcome of peace and are opposed to war, then we need to focus on building and maintaining effective strategies, coalitions, and training for peaceful coexistence. Forming the United Nations did not stop war. Diplomats, state departments, peace and reconciliation commissions, world banks, and Rotarians have not stopped conflicts from happening; but knowing that, humans must try, and to try even harder.

Stopping war seems too onerous for mere humans when institutions have failed; however, if our personal impacts are all that we can influence, then well done and that is not insignificant. Cooperating to induce civil engagements, agreements and positive behaviors are causes worthy of more attention and will be where this essay ends and where future words must begin.

Rather than disputing battles, focus on civil human behaviors that will lead to fewer battles starting with self, home, family, friends, school, work, and society! Civility means being polite, courteous, reasonable, respectful, kind, and mannerly. Using civility means the application of empathy, care, and respect; having positive codes of conduct and fostering positive attributes in others. If problem free and mannerly is our philosophy, then Hakuna Matata might result.

But then, life is not problem free, so it needs our added energy...Hakuna Matata!

THE COST OF INCARCERATION: ONE MAN'S STORY

Lindsey Pointer is a PhD Candidate in Restorative Justice at Victoria University of Wellington and is a past recipient of the Rotary Global Grant Scholarship. She works as a restorative justice facilitator, trainer and researcher.

Incarceration is expensive, both in terms of tax payer dollars, and also in terms of the vast potential that is lost in an individual's life when we put them behind bars. Over the holidays, a police officer who referred a restorative justice case I facilitated several years ago sent me the message below from the offender (Tyler¹⁷). In the years since his process, Tyler has fulfilled his goal of becoming a Physician Assistant and has had a child. All of the progress in his life and the

¹⁷ All names and some identifying details have been changed.

ways he has been able to give back to the community would have been lost if he had been put behind bars.

Hi Officer Peters,

Just was thinking back on the last couple years and wanted to reach out and say thank you again for how you handled my case with restorative justice. I realize things could have been much much different and I am very thankful this holiday season for the vote of confidence and grace that you extended to me. Lesson learned, and all has been on the up and up since then.

I hope the holidays find you and your family well, and thanks again for being such a great example of service in our community.

Best, Tyler

Tyler's story offers a powerful example of how a felony-level offence can be handled effectively through restorative justice alone, removing the costs and negative impact of incarceration. You can read the entire [case study here](#). Below is an excerpt that demonstrates the different restorative justice made in the life of this one man.

Criminal Charges Pending: Felony Possession and Forgery

Factual Synopsis: A 26-year-old male working at a medical clinic wrote prescriptions for himself for oxycodone, forging a doctor's signature and prescription number. He wrote and filled prescriptions for oxycodone for about 8 months.

An Excerpt from Tyler's Story....

In the weeks following the confession, Tyler had hired a lawyer. He did so at the advice of a friend who told him, "It isn't a question of if you'll go to prison, it is for how long. And it isn't a question of if you'll be in financial ruin from fines, it is how bad of ruin it will be." Feeling scared, Tyler hired a lawyer. After Tyler confessed to Dr. Hay and Madeline what he had done, both Dr. Hay and Madeline called and texted Tyler most days to see how he was doing. They expressed that they were worried about him and wanted to make sure he knew they cared about him and was getting the help he needed. After Tyler hired the lawyer, he was advised to no longer communicate with Dr. Hay or Madeline, so he stopped returning texts and calls. Madeline and Dr. Hay both shared that the lack of communication was one of the most hurtful parts of the entire encounter. When they learned that Tyler had hired a lawyer, they began to feel defensive. Dr. Hay and Amy expressed that they were worried because Dr. Hay's physician prescription number and signature had been used, and they weren't sure if this could be turned against them. Madeline also worried that somehow this could be turned against the clinic, and also felt hurt that her care was not reciprocated. When Dr. Hay, Amy and Madeline had the chance to express these feelings in the Restorative Justice conference, Tyler apologized repeatedly and shared that he had only been thinking about his fear and not about how hiring a lawyer would come across to them.

The conflict and hurt around the hiring of a lawyer sheds light on how this case might have turned out if it was sent to the traditional court system. Tyler would have done everything in his power to minimize the amount of time he would be spending in prison and the financial impact

on him and his wife. This would have been battled out in court, with the two sides instructed not to speak to each other, with attempts to shift the blame. Would his relationship with his wife have survived the courts, fines, and prison time? In the fight, would he be able to find the network of supportive relationships he needs to overcome his struggle with addiction? Would he have the freedom to prioritize treatment? Would court, prison, and labels change the way Tyler sees himself?

When we came to the assets portion of the Restorative Justice conference, when the co-facilitator shared strengths and passions Tyler has that can help him to repair the harms from the incident, Madeline, Dr. Hay, and Amy all had their own strengths and positive qualities to add. The message was clear: the circle of people cared about and supported Tyler, they saw him for the good person he is, and were there to help him make things right.

For Tyler's contract to repair the harms, he will be spending hours volunteering at the free clinic for the uninsured and underinsured that Dr. Hay and Amy run two days every week. At Officer Peter's suggestion, Tyler will also spend some time volunteering at the local Youth Center, doing outdoor activities with youth who often face their own struggles coping in a positive way with family trauma. Tyler will also be helping Madeline with a couple projects for the clinic that he can complete remotely in order to take something off her plate. Finally, Tyler has committed to pursuing counseling for addiction and to forming a treatment plan that will help him recognize addiction as a life-long struggle and form strategies for using his network of support when times are difficult.

To read the entire case study, visit: <https://lindseypointer.com/2015/09/04/is-restorative-justice-effective-for-felony-level-crimes/>

PRIORITIES OF THE ROTARY FOUNDATION

In these newsletters of the Rotary District Peacebuilders, we want to invite readers for contributions and ideas, suggestions and possibilities for our efforts to promote the foundational skills for promoting peace, i.e., nonviolent conflict resolution, improved communication and cooperation, successful negotiation and mediation as well as the critical and creative thinking that can help communities move through obstacles and difficulties. The Rotary Foundation has six priority areas: (1) Promoting peace; (2) Fighting disease; (3) Providing clean water; (4) Saving mothers and children; (5) Supporting education; and (6) Growing local economies. It has been argued by staff at Rotary International (RI) that long with promoting peace, "sustainability" is another cross-cutting priority that connects with all the others. RI has directed efforts in these six areas to enhance local and global impact and staff indicate that their most successful and sustainable projects and activities tend to fall within these areas: See the RI website: <https://my.rotary.org/en/learning-reference/about-rotary/our-priorities>

If you would you like to respond to one of the pieces in this newsletter, check out our blog www.rotarypeacebuilder.com and join the conversation! If you would like to contribute to a future newsletter, visit www.rotarypeacebuilder.com/submit/. Future issues are looking at the following: October—Costs of war? Lost Alternatives in Lives, Families, Wealth and the Environment due to War and Conflicts? November—Educating for Peace at Every Level: Cooperation, Communication, Critical and Creative Thinking?