

The Prizes: A Tale of Two

Presented to the

ATHENAEUM SOCIETY

Hopkinsville, KY

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March 4, 2010

Almost exactly one century apart, two U.S. Presidents, acting on the world stage, present interesting and complimentary (?) expressions of their beliefs (and the policy of their governments) to the world.

One—--- what all believed to be—near the end of an extraordinary career—the other only at the beginning of what might be---One out of office, presumably forever, the other less than one year into his tenure.

Attempting to examine these with some clarity—the first U.S. President to receive the Nobel Prize and the latest—and only the fourth since the origin of the award—requires us to explore the circumstances of the first before attempting to fathom the latter.

At the outset, in 1901, the Nobel Prize for Peace was a part of a greater effort to reward achievement in physics, chemistry, physiology or medicine, literature and peace. In 1968, Sveriges Riksbank (Sweden's central bank) established an Economics Prize in memory of Alfred Nobel, founder of the Nobel Prize.

As described in Nobel's will, the prize was dedicated to "the person who shall have done the most or the best work for fraternity between nations, for the abolition or reduction of standing armies and for the holding and promotion of peace congresses".

Over these 108 years, the peace prize has been awarded 90 times. The committees, understandably, avoided the prize during most of the two great world wars although other omissions are more random—1923-24; 1928; 1932; 1948; 1955-56; 1966-67; 1972. Since 1973 (Henry Kissinger) there have been no years without a peace prize—simply many years without a peace!

William Howard Taft, Warren G. Harding, Herbert Hoover, Franklin D. Roosevelt, Harry S. Truman & Dwight D. Eisenhower were nominated but not chosen. For later Presidential nominations, we shall have to wait. The lists of nominated persons are sealed for fifty years, so we know little of the more recent nominations.

But we do know who may nominate:

1. Present and past members of the Nobel Committee and the advisers at the Nobel Institute.
2. Members of national assemblies and governments, and members of the Inter-Parliamentary Union.
3. Members of the Permanent Court of Arbitration and the International Court of Justice at The Hague.
4. Members of the Commission of the Permanent International Peace Bureau. The International Peace Bureau (IPB) was founded as a result of the third Universal Peace Congress in Rome, 1891. Headquarters in Geneva—renamed International Liaison Committee of Organizations for Peace (ILCOP) after World War II.)
5. Members of the *Institut de Droit International*.
The Institute of International Law is a purely scientific and private association, without official character, whose objective is to promote the progress of international law, founded in 1873. Now in Lausanne.
6. Present university professors of law, political science, history and philosophy.
7. Holders of the Nobel Peace Prize.

Why they choose nominees is strictly up to the nominators to reveal—or not as they see fit.

Now the history lecture:

At the turn of the 20th century, the U.S. was involved in Asia as an exporter. Our main customers were China and Japan. Standard Oil and the America China Development Company, a railroad construction outfit headed by J. P. Morgan and E.H. Harriman were the largest investors on the Asian continent. The Manchu rulers in China were on the way out—granting economic concessions and powerless to resist military encroachments, be it British commerce, Russian occupation of Manchuria or Japanese forces in Korea. While proclaiming the continuation of the famous “Open Door” in China, the Roosevelt administration supported the

Anglo-Japanese Alliance formalized in 1902. It buttressed our desire to thwart Russian expansion to the south.

When Japan blew most of the Russian Pacific fleet out of the water in 1904-5 our policy supported the Japanese actions—the only downside was ultimate Japanese success could lead to total occupation of Manchuria by Japan and a realignment of power in Asia that could eventually be troublesome for both European and American interests. TR secretly hoped that both Russia and Japan would exhaust themselves eliminating the “Slav and yellow perils”. Publicly TR pushed continuously for mediation and restoration of a balance of power in the region. Much private personal negotiating finally resulted in both parties coming to Portsmouth New Hampshire to end their conflict. Russia needed a solution to concentrate on the growing political unrest at home. Japan had virtually bankrupted itself in expansionist adventures. Both needed a face-saving way out of warfare.

The treaty of Portsmouth confirmed Japanese economic interests in Manchuria, but left it legally a part of China. The Sakhalin island north of Japan was divided virtually in half. (Drawing lines through countries on maps to settle disputes would have a continuing role throughout the 20th century!!)

Russia was left intact in Asia. Japan absorbed Korea. The Open Door was still on its hinges and open. TR was hailed as the maker of the treaty and for the prevention of a larger Asian war. The Nobel committee recognized that achievement.

The 1906 award to the President presented some practical logistical problems. The award was only in its fifth year and TR was still in office. Except for his celebrated Panama Canal inspection trip (Departed the U.S. November 9; returned to U.S. November 26, 1906), no sitting President or President-Elect had ever left the country.

The prize was worth \$37,127. TR announced the money would go to the creation of an Industrial Peace Committee in Washington to bring together representatives of both labor and capital to discuss industrial problems.

In March of 1907, Congress created the commission, provided for its structure and membership and the holding of an annual meeting to discuss industrial problems.

So while an immediate in-person response to the honor wasn't possible, a trip to Norway became part of TR's celebrated African safari and European tour following the inauguration of President Taft. TR was very conscious of his unique position in the succession of Taft and, to his credit, felt absence would serve both well. Many arrangements had to be made and financing secured to ensure a successful adventure. The Smithsonian provided accompanying taxidermists to document, secure and transport specimens. Scribner's Magazine contracted for \$50,000 for articles and with a great fanfare and mountains of luggage and weaponry, TR departed March 23, 1909. It would be June of 1910 before he arrived back in NY.

The African adventurers listed 296 specimens shot! They finally emerged at Khartoum. Mrs. Roosevelt joined the group, which was to proceed to Cairo and then across the Mediterranean for the European excursion including Italy, lectures at Oxford, the Sorbonne, Germany, and Norway. It was to be over two months of constant speeches, dinners, and intense publicity.

I mention only two of the many vignettes on our journey through pre-Great War Europe. TR infuriated the Egyptian nationalists by declaring British rule in Sudan as "really the rule of civilization" and urged every "decent citizen of the Sudan to uphold the present order of things". The insulted included, in Roosevelt's words, "fanatically Moslem party" members!

In less than two weeks the Roosevelts were guests of the King and Queen of Italy. He found them to be "delightful people" but in general found European royalty to be "serious people devoted to their people and anxious to justify their own positions by the way they did their duty. Of course, as was to be expected, they were like other human beings in that the average among them was not very high as regards intellect and force. Apparently what is needed is that [a king] shall be a kind of sublimated American Vice-president."

While the Italian royal visit went well, a row with the Papal secretary had a less successful outcome.

The proposed audience with his Holiness had a string attached. It seems there were several American Methodist missionaries in Rome doing what missionaries are required to do while being happily oblivious to their minority and foreign position. They too

would see the ex-President! However, since one of their group had called the Pope “the whore of Babylon”, the papal secretary insisted that any Vatican audience would be conditioned on a promise of no such visit with the meddling Methodists. TR responded with a declaration that he declined to “make any stipulations which limit my freedom of conduct”. The Papal office then suggested a secret agreement not to visit Methodists while publicly announcing that no deal had been made. TR declaring that offer worthy of a Tammany hall alderman, refused the proposal.

An immediate overly exuberant joyous response from the aforementioned Methodists prompted a cancellation of their opportunity to visit with Roosevelt as well.

“The only satisfaction I had out of the affair...was that on the one hand I administered a needed lesson to the Vatican, and on the other hand I made it understood that I feared the most powerful Protestant Church just as little as I feared the Roman Catholics.”

Following a lecture at the Sorbonne on the “duties of Citizenship”, he arrived in Norway to accept his prize.

The formal text followed standard protocol of the day, but ventured into substance on four major areas:

1. Support for treaties of arbitration to settle disputes among “all really civilized communities” except in “very rare cases where the nation’s honor is vitally concerned.”
2. The Hague Tribunal was compared to the evolution of the Supreme Court in the United States. TR advocated for the emerging world court arguing that in certain specific cases the court could be a successful venue for conflict resolution similar to the jurisdiction given to the U.S. Federal courts in areas of disputes between the States under the U.S. constitution.
3. Reduction of naval armaments should be pursued, but he rejected unilateral disarmament or reduction “for it is eminently undesirable...that a power which really does believe in peace should place itself at the mercy of some rival which may...have no such belief...” Nevertheless, the “growing extravagance of expenditure” should compel negotiations.

4. Finally, Roosevelt strongly supported a “League of Peace” with forces available to keep the peace, by military action if necessary.

The speech was well received and marred only by a great difficulty in speaking to the point that many in the audience could barely hear his remarks. This prompted a visit to a throat specialist who wisely prescribed “resting” his vocal chords. While this must have seemed a virtual prison sentence, rest would have to wait because duty trumped relaxation—King Edward VII died the day after TR’s Nobel speech. England was already on TR’s schedule—President Taft selected TR to be the U. S. representative at the formal funeral events.

I can’t let this grand and solemn occasion be brought into our discussion without recounting two events before getting back to the topics at hand.

At the banquet the night before the royal funeral TR was seated between the Prince Henry of Prussia and the Prince of Cumberland (not the one in Macbeth, apparently a real one. I have sadly been unable to find any info on the 1909 occupant of the office!!)

The only memorable encounter at the dinner was with the King of Greece who annoyed TR with persistent demands that he address the injustices by the rest of Europe toward the island of Crete. TR reported that the king “fairly wept out his troubles...Finally I simply walked away from him while he was pitifully muttering and spluttering Crete to me.”

The other event was during the procession the following day. TR’s assigned carriage was eighth in line behind numerous crowned heads of Europe and shared with the French Foreign Minister Pichon and a Persian Prince! The Frenchman was profoundly insulted with their placement but wanted TR to lodge a protest. TR after enduring as much as he could stand finally told Pichon to ‘wait until another king dies and settle it beforehand.”

Sir Arthur Conan Doyle writing for the *Daily Mail* described the President as a “strong profile...set like granite” in his carriage—if he had only known what was really going on inside!!

However, we now must return to the main issue—the Prize! At this point we need to jump forward to the most recent presentation—of much controversy and contentious debate. While this is the proper study of future members, say in 2110, we should look again at the criteria established in the last century by Mr. Nobel.

“the best work for fraternity between nations”

I think this holds the key to the committee’s thinking in 2009. The recognition is sometimes for accomplishments, sometimes for potential.

Speech given by The Chairman of the Norwegian Nobel Committee Thorbjørn Jagland :

Former Secretary-General Dag Hammarskjöld said that "the U.N. was not created to take humanity to heaven, but to save it from hell". The Norwegian Nobel Committee can not award a Peace Prize where nothing has been achieved. If the principles are important enough, however, and the struggle over them is vital to the future of the world, the Committee can not wait until we are certain that the principles have won on all fronts. That would make the Prize a rather belated stamp of approval and not an instrument for peace in the world...From the very first moment of his presidency, President Obama has been trying to create a more cooperative climate which can help reverse the present trend. He has already "lowered the temperature in the world", in the words of former Peace Prize Laureate Desmond Tutu.... The committee knows that many will weigh his ideals against what he really does, and that should be welcomed. But if the demand is either to fulfil your ideals to the letter, and at once, or to stop having ideals, we are left with a most damaging division between the limits of today's realities and the vision for tomorrow. Then politics becomes pure cynicism. Political leaders must be able to think beyond the often narrow confines of realpolitik. Only in this way can we move the world in the right direction.”

The Nobel committee last year was clearly advocating for the President’s international agenda. The evaluation of their wisdom will have to wait—a non-political dinner or maybe a later paper!

Now for the quiz. On your table are four quotations. By table reach a consensus as to the source of the quotes. The choices are Roosevelt and Obama. Make your selections now.

“Our words must be judged by our deeds; and in striving for a lofty ideal we must use practical methods; and if we cannot attain all at one leap, we must advance towards it step by step, reasonably content so long as we do actually make some progress in the right direction.”

“There is at least as much need to curb the cruel greed and arrogance of part of the world of capital, to curb the cruel greed and violence of part of the world of labor, as to check a cruel and unhealthy militarism in international relationships. “

May 5, 1910 T. Roosevelt in Christiania, Norway Nobel Prize Committee Speech

“The belief that peace is desirable is rarely enough to achieve it. Peace requires responsibility. Peace entails sacrifice.”

“So part of our challenge is reconciling these two seemingly irreconcilable truths – that war is sometimes necessary, and war at some level is an expression of human folly.”

President Obama delivered his Nobel Lecture in the Oslo City Hall, December 10, 2009.

I have attached to this paper the full text of both speeches if you wish to use a non-electronic finder.

Thank you for your kind attention!!

Copy this sheet for the "quiz"

1. "The belief that peace is desirable is rarely enough to achieve it. Peace requires responsibility. Peace entails sacrifice."

President Roosevelt

President Obama

Circle your choice

2. "Our words must be judged by our deeds; and in striving for a lofty ideal we must use practical methods; and if we cannot attain all at one leap, we must advance towards it step by step, reasonably content so long as we do actually make some progress in the right direction."

President Roosevelt

President Obama

Circle your choice

3. "So part of our challenge is reconciling these two seemingly irreconcilable truths – that war is sometimes necessary, and war at some level is an expression of human folly."

President Roosevelt

President Obama

Circle your choice

4. "There is at least as much need to curb the cruel greed and arrogance of part of the world of capital, to curb the cruel greed and violence of part of the world of labor, as to check a cruel and unhealthy militarism in international relationships."

President Roosevelt

President Obama

Circle your choice

**May 5, 1910 T. Roosevelt in Christiania, Norway Nobel Prize
Committee**

It is with peculiar pleasure that I stand here today to express the deep appreciation I feel of the high honor conferred upon me by the presentation of the Nobel Peace Prize. The gold medal which formed part of the prize I shall always keep, and I shall hand it on to my children as a precious heirloom. The sum of money provided as part of the prize by the wise generosity of the illustrious founder of this world-famous prize system, I did not, under the peculiar circumstances of the case, feel at liberty to keep. I think it eminently just and proper that in most cases the recipient of the prize should keep for his own use the prize in its entirety. But in this case, while I did not act officially as President of the United States, it was nevertheless only because I was President that I was enabled to act at all; and I felt that the money must be considered as having been given me in trust for the United States. I therefore used it as a nucleus for a foundation to forward the cause of industrial peace, as being well within the general purpose of your Committee; for in our complex industrial civilization of today the peace of righteousness and justice, the only kind of peace worth having, is at least as necessary in the industrial world as it is among nations. There is at least as much need to curb the cruel greed and arrogance of part of the world of capital, to curb the cruel greed and violence of part of the world of labor, as to check a cruel and unhealthy militarism in international relationships.

We must ever bear in mind that the great end in view is righteousness, justice as between man and man, nation and nation, the chance to lead our lives on a somewhat higher level, with a broader spirit of brotherly goodwill one for another. Peace is generally good in itself, but it is never the highest good unless it comes as the handmaid of righteousness; and it becomes a very evil thing if it serves merely as a mask for cowardice and sloth, or as an instrument to further the ends of despotism or anarchy. We despise and abhor the bully, the brawler, the oppressor, whether in private or public life,

but we despise no less the coward and the voluptuary. No man is worth calling a man who will not fight rather than submit to infamy or see those that are dear to him suffer wrong. No nation deserves to exist if it permits itself to lose the stern and virile virtues; and this without regard to whether the loss is due to the growth of a heartless and all-absorbing commercialism, to prolonged indulgence in luxury and soft, effortless ease, or to the deification of a warped and twisted sentimentality.

Moreover, and above all, let us remember that words count only when they give expression to deeds, or are to be translated into them. The leaders of the Red Terror prattled of peace while they steeped their hands in the blood of the innocent; and many a tyrant has called it peace when he has scourged honest protest into silence. Our words must be judged by our deeds; and in striving for a lofty ideal we must use practical methods; and if we cannot attain all at one leap, we must advance towards it step by step, reasonably content so long as we do actually make some progress in the right direction.

Now, having freely admitted the limitations of our work and the qualifications to be borne in mind, I feel that I have the right to have my words taken seriously when I point out where, in my judgment, great advance can be made in the cause of international peace. I speak as a practical man, and whatever I now advocate I actually tried to do when I was for the time being the head of a great nation and keenly jealous of its honor and interest. I ask other nations to do only what I should be glad to see my own nation do.

The advance can be made along several lines. First of all there can be treaties of arbitration. There are, of course, states so backward that a civilized community ought not to enter into an arbitration treaty with them, at least until we have gone much further than at present in securing some kind of international police action. But all really civilized communities should have effective arbitration treaties among themselves. I believe that these treaties can cover almost all questions liable to arise between such nations, if they are drawn with the explicit agreement that each contracting party will respect the others territory and its absolute sovereignty within that territory, and

the equally explicit agreement that (aside from the very rare cases where the nation's honor is vitally concerned) all other possible subjects of controversy will be submitted to arbitration. Such a treaty would insure peace unless one party deliberately violated it. Of course, as yet there is no adequate safeguard against such deliberate violation, but the establishment of a sufficient number of these treaties would go a long way towards creating a world opinion which would finally find expression in the provision of methods to forbid or punish any such violation.

Secondly, there is the further development of the Hague Tribunal, of the work of the conferences and courts at The Hague. It has been well said that the first Hague Conference framed a Magna Charta for the nations; it set before us an ideal which has already to some extent been realized, and towards the full realization of which we can all steadily strive. The second Conference made further progress; the third should do yet more. Meanwhile the American government has more than once tentatively suggested methods for completing the Court of Arbitral Justice constituted at the second Hague Conference and for rendering it effective. It is earnestly to be hoped that the various governments of Europe, working with those of America and of Asia, shall set themselves seriously to the task of devising some method which shall accomplish this result. If I may venture the suggestion, it would be well for the statesmen of the world, in planning for the erection of this world court, to study what has been done in the United States by the Supreme Court. I cannot help thinking that the Constitution of the United States, notably in the establishment of the Supreme Court and in the methods adopted for securing peace and good relations among and between the different states, offers certain valuable analogies to what should be striven for in order to secure, through the Hague courts and conferences, a species of world federation for international peace and justice. There are, of course, fundamental differences between what the United States Constitution does and what we should even attempt at this time to secure at The Hague; but the methods adopted in the American Constitution to prevent hostilities between the states, and to secure the supremacy of the Federal Court in certain classes of cases, are well worth the study of those who seek at The Hague to

obtain the same results on a world scale.

In the third place, something should be done as soon as possible to check the growth of armaments, especially vital armaments, by international agreement. No one power could or should act by itself; for it is eminently undesirable, from the standpoint of the peace of righteousness, that a power which really does believe in peace should place itself at the mercy of some rival which may at bottom have no such belief and no intention of acting on it. But, granted sincerity of purpose, the great powers of the world should find no insurmountable difficulty in reaching an agreement which would put an end to the present costly and growing extravagance of expenditure on naval armaments. An agreement merely to limit the size of ships would have been very useful a few years ago, and would still be of use; but the agreement should go much further.

Finally, it would be a masterstroke if those great powers honestly bent on peace would form a League of Peace, not only to keep the peace among themselves, but to prevent, by force if necessary, its being broken by others. The supreme difficulty in connection with developing the peace work of The Hague arises from the lack of any executive power, of any police power to enforce the decrees of the court. In any community of any size the authority of the courts rests upon actual or potential force: on the existence of a police, or on the knowledge that the able-bodied men of the country are both ready and willing to see that the decrees of judicial and legislative bodies are put into effect. In new and wild communities where there is violence, an honest man must protect himself; and until other means of securing his safety are devised, it is both foolish and wicked to persuade him to surrender his arms while the men who are dangerous to the community retain theirs. He should not renounce the right to protect himself by his own efforts until the community is so organized that it can effectively relieve the individual of the duty of putting down violence. So it is with nations. Each nation must keep well prepared to defend itself until the establishment of some form of international police power, competent and willing to prevent violence as between nations. As things are now, such power to command peace throughout the world could best be assured by some combination between those great nations which sincerely desire

peace and have no thought themselves of committing aggressions. The combination might at first be only to secure peace within certain definite limits and on certain definite conditions; but the ruler or statesman who should bring about such a combination would have earned his place in history for all time and his title to the gratitude of all mankind.

President Obama delivered his Nobel Lecture in the Oslo City Hall, December 10, 2009.

Your Majesties, Your Royal Highnesses, distinguished members of the Norwegian Nobel Committee, citizens of America, and citizens of the world:

I receive this honor with deep gratitude and great humility. It is an award that speaks to our highest aspirations – that for all the cruelty and hardship of our world, we are not mere prisoners of fate. Our actions matter, and can bend history in the direction of justice.

And yet I would be remiss if I did not acknowledge the considerable controversy that your generous decision has generated. (Laughter.) In part, this is because I am at the beginning, and not the end, of my labors on the world stage. Compared to some of the giants of history who've received this prize – Schweitzer and King ; Marshall and Mandela – my accomplishments are slight. And then there are the men and women around the world who have been jailed and beaten in the pursuit of justice; those who toil in humanitarian organizations to relieve suffering; the unrecognized millions whose quiet acts of courage and compassion inspire even the most hardened cynics. I cannot argue with those who find these men and women – some known, some obscure to all but those they help – to be far more deserving of this honor than I.

But perhaps the most profound issue surrounding my receipt of this prize is the fact that I am the Commander-in-Chief of the military of a nation in the midst of two wars. One of these wars is winding down. The other is a conflict that America did not seek; one in which we are joined by 42 other countries – including Norway – in an effort to defend ourselves and all nations from further attacks.

Still, we are at war, and I'm responsible for the deployment of thousands of young Americans to battle in a distant land. Some will kill, and some will be killed. And so I come here with an acute sense of the costs of armed conflict – filled with difficult questions about the relationship between war and peace, and our effort to replace one with the other.

Now these questions are not new. War, in one form or another, appeared with the first man. At the dawn of history, its morality was not questioned; it was simply a fact, like drought or disease – the manner in which tribes and then civilizations sought power and settled their differences.

And over time, as codes of law sought to control violence within groups, so did philosophers and clerics and statesmen seek to regulate the destructive power of war. The concept of a "just war" emerged, suggesting that war is justified only when certain conditions were met: if it is waged as a last resort or in self-defense; if the force used is proportional; and if, whenever possible, civilians are spared from violence.

Of course, we know that for most of history, this concept of "just war" was rarely observed. The capacity of human beings to think up new ways to kill one another proved inexhaustible, as did our capacity to exempt from mercy those who look different or pray to a different God. Wars between armies gave way to wars between nations – total wars in which the distinction between combatant and civilian became blurred. In the span of 30 years, such carnage would twice engulf this continent. And while it's hard to conceive of a cause more just than the defeat of the Third Reich and the Axis powers, World War II was a conflict in which the total number of civilians who died exceeded the number of soldiers who perished.

In the wake of such destruction, and with the advent of the nuclear age, it became clear to victor and vanquished alike that the world needed institutions to prevent another world war. And so, a quarter century after the United States Senate rejected the League of Nations – an idea for which Woodrow Wilson received this prize – America led the world in constructing an architecture to keep the peace: a Marshall Plan and a United Nations, mechanisms to govern the waging of war, treaties to protect human rights, prevent genocide, restrict the most dangerous weapons.

In many ways, these efforts succeeded. Yes, terrible wars have been fought, and atrocities committed. But there has been no Third World War. The Cold War ended with jubilant crowds dismantling a wall. Commerce has stitched much of the world together. Billions have been lifted from poverty. The ideals of liberty and self-determination, equality and the rule of law have haltingly advanced. We are the heirs of the fortitude and foresight of generations past, and it is a legacy for which my own country is rightfully proud.

And yet, a decade into a new century, this old architecture is buckling under the weight of new threats. The world may no longer shudder at the prospect of war between two nuclear superpowers, but proliferation may increase the risk of catastrophe. Terrorism has long been a tactic, but modern technology allows a few small men with outsized rage to murder innocents on a horrific scale.

Moreover, wars between nations have increasingly given way to wars within

nations. The resurgence of ethnic or sectarian conflicts; the growth of secessionist movements, insurgencies, and failed states – all these things have increasingly trapped civilians in unending chaos. In today's wars, many more civilians are killed than soldiers; the seeds of future conflict are sown, economies are wrecked, civil societies torn asunder, refugees amassed, children scarred.

I do not bring with me today a definitive solution to the problems of war. What I do know is that meeting these challenges will require the same vision, hard work, and persistence of those men and women who acted so boldly decades ago. And it will require us to think in new ways about the notions of just war and the imperatives of a just peace.

We must begin by acknowledging the hard truth: We will not eradicate violent conflict in our lifetimes. There will be times when nations – acting individually or in concert – will find the use of force not only necessary but morally justified.

I make this statement mindful of what Martin Luther King Jr. said in this same ceremony years ago: "Violence never brings permanent peace. It solves no social problem: it merely creates new and more complicated ones." As someone who stands here as a direct consequence of Dr. King's life work, I am living testimony to the moral force of non-violence. I know there's nothing weak – nothing passive – nothing naïve – in the creed and lives of Gandhi and King.

But as a head of state sworn to protect and defend my nation, I cannot be guided by their examples alone. I face the world as it is, and cannot stand idle in the face of threats to the American people. For make no mistake: Evil does exist in the world. A non-violent movement could not have halted Hitler's armies. Negotiations cannot convince al Qaeda's leaders to lay down their arms. To say that force may sometimes be necessary is not a call to cynicism – it is a recognition of history; the imperfections of man and the limits of reason.

I raise this point, I begin with this point because in many countries there is a deep ambivalence about military action today, no matter what the cause. And at times, this is joined by a reflexive suspicion of America, the world's sole military superpower.

But the world must remember that it was not simply international institutions – not just treaties and declarations – that brought stability to a post-World War II world. Whatever mistakes we have made, the plain fact is this: The United States of America has helped underwrite global security for more than six decades with the blood of our citizens and the strength of our arms. The service and sacrifice of our men and women in uniform has promoted peace and prosperity from Germany to Korea, and enabled democracy to take hold in places like the Balkans. We have borne this burden not because we seek

to impose our will. We have done so out of enlightened self-interest – because we seek a better future for our children and grandchildren, and we believe that their lives will be better if others' children and grandchildren can live in freedom and prosperity.

So yes, the instruments of war do have a role to play in preserving the peace. And yet this truth must coexist with another – that no matter how justified, war promises human tragedy. The soldier's courage and sacrifice is full of glory, expressing devotion to country, to cause, to comrades in arms. But war itself is never glorious, and we must never trumpet it as such.

So part of our challenge is reconciling these two seemingly irreconcilable truths – that war is sometimes necessary, and war at some level is an expression of human folly. Concretely, we must direct our effort to the task that President Kennedy called for long ago. "Let us focus," he said, "on a more practical, more attainable peace, based not on a sudden revolution in human nature but on a gradual evolution in human institutions." A gradual evolution of human institutions.

What might this evolution look like? What might these practical steps be?

To begin with, I believe that all nations – strong and weak alike – must adhere to standards that govern the use of force. I – like any head of state – reserve the right to act unilaterally if necessary to defend my nation. Nevertheless, I am convinced that adhering to standards, international standards, strengthens those who do, and isolates and weakens those who don't.

The world rallied around America after the 9/11 attacks, and continues to support our efforts in Afghanistan, because of the horror of those senseless attacks and the recognized principle of self-defense. Likewise, the world recognized the need to confront Saddam Hussein when he invaded Kuwait – a consensus that sent a clear message to all about the cost of aggression.

Furthermore, America – in fact, no nation – can insist that others follow the rules of the road if we refuse to follow them ourselves. For when we don't, our actions appear arbitrary and undercut the legitimacy of future interventions, no matter how justified.

And this becomes particularly important when the purpose of military action extends beyond self-defense or the defense of one nation against an aggressor. More and more, we all confront difficult questions about how to prevent the slaughter of civilians by their own government, or to stop a civil war whose violence and suffering can engulf an entire region.

I believe that force can be justified on humanitarian grounds, as it was in the Balkans, or in other places that have been scarred by war. Inaction tears at our conscience and can lead to more costly intervention later. That's why all

responsible nations must embrace the role that militaries with a clear mandate can play to keep the peace.

America's commitment to global security will never waver. But in a world in which threats are more diffuse, and missions more complex, America cannot act alone. America alone cannot secure the peace. This is true in Afghanistan. This is true in failed states like Somalia, where terrorism and piracy is joined by famine and human suffering. And sadly, it will continue to be true in unstable regions for years to come.

The leaders and soldiers of NATO countries, and other friends and allies, demonstrate this truth through the capacity and courage they've shown in Afghanistan. But in many countries, there is a disconnect between the efforts of those who serve and the ambivalence of the broader public. I understand why war is not popular, but I also know this: The belief that peace is desirable is rarely enough to achieve it. Peace requires responsibility. Peace entails sacrifice. That's why NATO continues to be indispensable. That's why we must strengthen U.N. and regional peacekeeping, and not leave the task to a few countries. That's why we honor those who return home from peacekeeping and training abroad to Oslo and Rome; to Ottawa and Sydney; to Dhaka and Kigali – we honor them not as makers of war, but of wagers – but as wagers of peace.

Let me make one final point about the use of force. Even as we make difficult decisions about going to war, we must also think clearly about how we fight it. The Nobel Committee recognized this truth in awarding its first prize for peace to Henry Dunant – the founder of the Red Cross, and a driving force behind the Geneva Conventions.

Where force is necessary, we have a moral and strategic interest in binding ourselves to certain rules of conduct. And even as we confront a vicious adversary that abides by no rules, I believe the United States of America must remain a standard bearer in the conduct of war. That is what makes us different from those whom we fight. That is a source of our strength. That is why I prohibited torture. That is why I ordered the prison at Guantanamo Bay closed. And that is why I have reaffirmed America's commitment to abide by the Geneva Conventions. We lose ourselves when we compromise the very ideals that we fight to defend. And we honor – we honor those ideals by upholding them not when it's easy, but when it is hard.

I have spoken at some length to the question that must weigh on our minds and our hearts as we choose to wage war. But let me now turn to our effort to avoid such tragic choices, and speak of three ways that we can build a just and lasting peace.

First, in dealing with those nations that break rules and laws, I believe that we must develop alternatives to violence that are tough enough to actually change behavior – for if we want a lasting peace, then the words of the

international community must mean something. Those regimes that break the rules must be held accountable. Sanctions must exact a real price. Intransigence must be met with increased pressure – and such pressure exists only when the world stands together as one.

One urgent example is the effort to prevent the spread of nuclear weapons, and to seek a world without them. In the middle of the last century, nations agreed to be bound by a treaty whose bargain is clear: All will have access to peaceful nuclear power; those without nuclear weapons will forsake them; and those with nuclear weapons will work towards disarmament. I am committed to upholding this treaty. It is a centerpiece of my foreign policy. And I'm working with President Medvedev to reduce America and Russia's nuclear stockpiles.

But it is also incumbent upon all of us to insist that nations like Iran and North Korea do not game the system. Those who claim to respect international law cannot avert their eyes when those laws are flouted. Those who care for their own security cannot ignore the danger of an arms race in the Middle East or East Asia. Those who seek peace cannot stand idly by as nations arm themselves for nuclear war.

The same principle applies to those who violate international laws by brutalizing their own people. When there is genocide in Darfur, systematic rape in Congo, repression in Burma – there must be consequences. Yes, there will be engagement; yes, there will be diplomacy – but there must be consequences when those things fail. And the closer we stand together, the less likely we will be faced with the choice between armed intervention and complicity in oppression.

This brings me to a second point – the nature of the peace that we seek. For peace is not merely the absence of visible conflict. Only a just peace based on the inherent rights and dignity of every individual can truly be lasting.

It was this insight that drove drafters of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights after the Second World War. In the wake of devastation, they recognized that if human rights are not protected, peace is a hollow promise.

And yet too often, these words are ignored. For some countries, the failure to uphold human rights is excused by the false suggestion that these are somehow Western principles, foreign to local cultures or stages of a nation's development. And within America, there has long been a tension between those who describe themselves as realists or idealists – a tension that suggests a stark choice between the narrow pursuit of interests or an endless campaign to impose our values around the world.

I reject these choices. I believe that peace is unstable where citizens are denied the right to speak freely or worship as they please; choose their own leaders or assemble without fear. Pent-up grievances fester, and the

suppression of tribal and religious identity can lead to violence. We also know that the opposite is true. Only when Europe became free did it finally find peace. America has never fought a war against a democracy, and our closest friends are governments that protect the rights of their citizens. No matter how callously defined, neither America's interests – nor the world's – are served by the denial of human aspirations.

So even as we respect the unique culture and traditions of different countries, America will always be a voice for those aspirations that are universal. We will bear witness to the quiet dignity of reformers like Aung Sang Suu Kyi ; to the bravery of Zimbabweans who cast their ballots in the face of beatings; to the hundreds of thousands who have marched silently through the streets of Iran. It is telling that the leaders of these governments fear the aspirations of their own people more than the power of any other nation. And it is the responsibility of all free people and free nations to make clear that these movements – these movements of hope and history – they have us on their side.

Let me also say this: The promotion of human rights cannot be about exhortation alone. At times, it must be coupled with painstaking diplomacy. I know that engagement with repressive regimes lacks the satisfying purity of indignation. But I also know that sanctions without outreach – condemnation without discussion – can carry forward only a crippling status quo. No repressive regime can move down a new path unless it has the choice of an open door.

In light of the Cultural Revolution's horrors, Nixon's meeting with Mao appeared inexcusable – and yet it surely helped set China on a path where millions of its citizens have been lifted from poverty and connected to open societies. Pope John Paul's engagement with Poland created space not just for the Catholic Church, but for labor leaders like Lech Walesa . Ronald Reagan's efforts on arms control and embrace of perestroika not only improved relations with the Soviet Union, but empowered dissidents throughout Eastern Europe. There's no simple formula here. But we must try as best we can to balance isolation and engagement, pressure and incentives, so that human rights and dignity are advanced over time.

Third, a just peace includes not only civil and political rights – it must encompass economic security and opportunity. For true peace is not just freedom from fear, but freedom from want.

It is undoubtedly true that development rarely takes root without security; it is also true that security does not exist where human beings do not have access to enough food, or clean water, or the medicine and shelter they need to survive. It does not exist where children can't aspire to a decent education or a job that supports a family. The absence of hope can rot a society from within.

And that's why helping farmers feed their own people – or nations educate their children and care for the sick – is not mere charity. It's also why the world must come together to confront climate change. There is little scientific dispute that if we do nothing, we will face more drought, more famine, more mass displacement – all of which will fuel more conflict for decades. For this reason, it is not merely scientists and environmental activists who call for swift and forceful action – it's military leaders in my own country and others who understand our common security hangs in the balance.

Agreements among nations. Strong institutions. Support for human rights. Investments in development. All these are vital ingredients in bringing about the evolution that President Kennedy spoke about. And yet, I do not believe that we will have the will, the determination, the staying power, to complete this work without something more – and that's the continued expansion of our moral imagination; an insistence that there's something irreducible that we all share.

As the world grows smaller, you might think it would be easier for human beings to recognize how similar we are; to understand that we're all basically seeking the same things; that we all hope for the chance to live out our lives with some measure of happiness and fulfillment for ourselves and our families.

And yet somehow, given the dizzying pace of globalization, the cultural leveling of modernity, it perhaps comes as no surprise that people fear the loss of what they cherish in their particular identities – their race, their tribe, and perhaps most powerfully their religion. In some places, this fear has led to conflict. At times, it even feels like we're moving backwards. We see it in the Middle East, as the conflict between Arabs and Jews seems to harden. We see it in nations that are torn asunder by tribal lines.

And most dangerously, we see it in the way that religion is used to justify the murder of innocents by those who have distorted and defiled the great religion of Islam, and who attacked my country from Afghanistan. These extremists are not the first to kill in the name of God; the cruelties of the Crusades are amply recorded. But they remind us that no Holy War can ever be a just war. For if you truly believe that you are carrying out divine will, then there is no need for restraint – no need to spare the pregnant mother, or the medic, or the Red Cross worker, or even a person of one's own faith. Such a warped view of religion is not just incompatible with the concept of peace, but I believe it's incompatible with the very purpose of faith – for the one rule that lies at the heart of every major religion is that we do unto others as we would have them do unto us.

Adhering to this law of love has always been the core struggle of human nature. For we are fallible. We make mistakes, and fall victim to the temptations of pride, and power, and sometimes evil. Even those of us with the best of intentions will at times fail to right the wrongs before us.

But we do not have to think that human nature is perfect for us to still believe that the human condition can be perfected. We do not have to live in an idealized world to still reach for those ideals that will make it a better place. The non-violence practiced by men like Gandhi and King may not have been practical or possible in every circumstance, but the love that they preached – their fundamental faith in human progress – that must always be the North Star that guides us on our journey.

For if we lose that faith – if we dismiss it as silly or naïve; if we divorce it from the decisions that we make on issues of war and peace – then we lose what's best about humanity. We lose our sense of possibility. We lose our moral compass.

Like generations have before us, we must reject that future. As Dr. King said at this occasion so many years ago, "I refuse to accept despair as the final response to the ambiguities of history. I refuse to accept the idea that the 'isness' of man's present condition makes him morally incapable of reaching up for the eternal 'oughtness' that forever confronts him."

Let us reach for the world that ought to be – that spark of the divine that still stirs within each of our souls.

Somewhere today, in the here and now, in the world as it is, a soldier sees he's outgunned, but stands firm to keep the peace. Somewhere today, in this world, a young protestor awaits the brutality of her government, but has the courage to march on. Somewhere today, a mother facing punishing poverty still takes the time to teach her child, scrapes together what few coins she has to send that child to school – because she believes that a cruel world still has a place for that child's dreams.

Let us live by their example. We can acknowledge that oppression will always be with us, and still strive for justice. We can admit the intractability of depravation, and still strive for dignity. Clear-eyed, we can understand that there will be war, and still strive for peace. We can do that – for that is the story of human progress; that's the hope of all the world; and at this moment of challenge, that must be our work here on Earth.

Thank you very much.

1. "The belief that peace is desirable is rarely enough to achieve it. Peace requires responsibility. Peace entails sacrifice."

President Roosevelt

President Obama

Circle your choice

2. "Our words must be judged by our deeds; and in striving for a lofty ideal we must use practical methods; and if we cannot attain all at one leap, we must advance towards it step by step, reasonably content so long as we do actually make some progress in the right direction."

President Roosevelt

President Obama

Circle your choice

3. "So part of our challenge is reconciling these two seemingly irreconcilable truths – that war is sometimes necessary, and war at some level is an expression of human folly."

President Roosevelt

President Obama

Circle your choice

4. "There is at least as much need to curb the cruel greed and arrogance of part of the world of capital, to curb the cruel greed and violence of part of the world of labor, as to check a cruel and unhealthy militarism in international relationships."

President Roosevelt

President Obama

Circle your choice