

# Just Peacemaking: Ten Practices for Abolishing War

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Summary of the theory for the panel on Just Peacemaking Theory  
at the annual meeting of the American Academy of Religion  
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## Part One: PEACEMAKING INITIATIVES

### 1. Support nonviolent direct action.

Nonviolent Direct Action is spreading widely, ending dictatorship in the Philippines, ending rule by the Shah in Iran, bringing about nonviolent revolutions in Poland, East Germany, and Central Europe, transforming injustice into democratic change in human rights movements in Guatemala, Argentina, and elsewhere in Latin America, in South Africa.... Governments and people have the obligation to make room for and to support nonviolent direct action.

### 2. Take independent initiatives to reduce threat.

Independent initiatives: 1) are independent of the slow process of negotiation; 2) decrease threat perception and distrust but do not leave the initiator weak; 3) are verifiable actions; 4) and carried out at the announced time regardless of the other side's bluster; 5) have their purpose clearly announced--to shift toward de-escalation and to invite reciprocation; 6) come in a series; initiatives should continue in order to keep inviting reciprocation. This new practice has been crucial in several recent breakthroughs.

### 3. Use cooperative conflict resolution.

1) Active partnership in developing solutions, not merely passive cooperation. 2) Adversaries listen to each other and experience each others' perspectives, including culture, spirituality, story, history and emotion. 3) Seek longterm solutions which help prevent future conflict. 4) Seek justice as a core component for sustainable peace.

### 4. Acknowledge responsibility for conflict and injustice and seek repentance and forgiveness.

Until recently, it was widely agreed that nations would not express regret, acknowledge responsibility, or give forgiveness. But Germany since World War II, Japan and Korea, Clinton in Africa, the U.S. finally toward Japanese-Americans during World War II, the South African Truth and Reconciliation Commission, and other actions described by Shriver, *An Ethic for Enemies* and Wink, *When Powers Fall*, show a crucial new practice is emerging that can heal longstanding bitternesses.

## **Part Two: JUSTICE**

### **5. Advance democracy, human rights, and religious liberty.**

Extensive empirical evidence shows that the spreading of democracy and respect for human rights, including religious liberty, is widening the zones of peace. Democracies fought *no wars* against one another during the entire twentieth century. They had fewer civil wars. And they generally devoted lower shares of their national products to military expenditures, which decreases threats to other countries.

Ties of economic interdependence by trade and investment also decrease the incidence of war. Engagement in international organizations like the UN and regional institutions is a clear predictive factor that they will be much less likely to engage in war.

### **6. Foster just and sustainable economic development.**

Sustainable development occurs where the needs of today are met without threatening the needs of tomorrow--where those who lack adequate material and economic resources gain access, and those who have learn to control resource use and prevent future exhaustion.

A key to economic development in East Asian countries, especially Korea and Taiwan, has been land reform that made wealth more equitable and thus created a sizable local market for developing firms. By contrast, Latin America lacks real land reform and equality, and therefore local consumers cannot afford to buy products produced by local industries.

## **Part Three: LOVE AND COMMUNITY**

### **7. Work with emerging cooperative forces in the international system.**

Four trends have so altered the conditions and practices of international relations as to make it possible now, where it was not possible before, to form and sustain voluntary associations for peace and other valuable common purposes that are in fact working: the decline in the utility of war; the priority of trade and the economy over war; the strength of international exchanges, communications, transactions, and networks; and the gradual ascendancy of liberal representative democracy and a mixture of welfare-state and laissez-faire market economy. We should act so as to strengthen these trends and the international associations that they make possible.

### **8. Strengthen the United Nations and international efforts for cooperation and human rights.**

Acting alone, states cannot solve problems of trade, debt, interest rates; of pollution, ozone depletion, acid rain, depletion of fish stocks, global warming; of migrations and refugees seeking asylum; of military security when weapons rapidly penetrate borders.

Therefore, collective action is increasingly necessary. U.S. citizens should press their government to pay its UN dues and to act in ways that strengthen the effectiveness of the United Nations, of regional organizations, and of multilateral peacemaking, peacekeeping, and peace building. They resolve conflicts, monitor, nurture, and even enforce truces. They meet human needs for food, hygiene, medicine, education, and economic interaction. Most wars now happen within states, not between states; therefore, collective action needs to include UN-approved humanitarian intervention in cases like the former Yugoslavia, Haiti, Somalia, and Rwanda "when a state's condition or behavior results in... grave and massive violations of

human rights."

## **9. Reduce offensive weapons and weapons trade.**

A key factor in the decrease of war between nations is that weapons have become so destructive that war is not worth the price. Reducing offensive weapons and shifting toward defensive force structures strengthens that equation. Banning chemical and biological weapons, and reducing strategic (long-range) nuclear warheads from 3,500 to 1,000 each, are key steps.

Arms imports by developing nations in 1995 dropped to one-quarter of their peak in 1988. But the power of money invested by arms manufacturers in politicians' campaigns is a major obstacle to reductions.

## **10. Encourage grassroots peacemaking groups and voluntary associations.**

The existence of a growing worldwide people's movement constitutes one more historical force that makes just peacemaking theory possible. They learn peacemaking practices and press governments to employ these practices; governments should protect such associations in law, and give them accurate information.

Each practice is recent in its widespread use, and is causing significant change. Together they exert strong influence, decreasing wars. Each is empirically happening and being effective in abolishing some wars. Each faces significant obstacles and blocking forces that are named in the chapters. We contend that just peacemaking practices are ethically obligatory for persons, groups, and governments to strengthen them and help overcome the blocking forces.

[Return to Just Peacemaking Page](#)