

2002 Peace Proposal

## **The Humanism of the Middle Way—Dawn of a Global Civilization**

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Humanity last year was confronted with an extremely grave challenge to the effort to set off in an entirely new direction—the quest to part ways with the war and violence of the previous century. The September 11 terrorist attacks in the United States were a truly unprecedented act of mass murder, robbing thousands of innocent people of their lives. No cause or grievance can possibly justify such wanton destruction of human life.

It was particularly bitter that 2001, the first year of the new century, designated by the United Nations as the Year of Dialogue among Civilizations, should be marred by an incident diametrically opposed to the spirit of dialogue, of tolerance and coexistence. Further, despite the magnitude of the damage inflicted, no statement has ever been issued acknowledging guilt for the crime. The anonymous and cowardly nature of this act threatens to undermine humanity at its core. It is an assault and affront that tramples the world's aspirations to dialogue among civilizations.

This crime has had a profound psychological impact on the people of the world. The historian Arthur Schlesinger described the United States after September 11 as a society filled with apprehension and anxiety, and many observers believe that the world will never be the same after that day.

A dark millennial mood permeated the consciousness not only of the United States but of the entire world. The social disruption wrought by the collapse of the enormous twin towers and the subsequent anthrax bioterror has been described in truly apocalyptic terms. In Japan, however, a curiously detached attitude has prevailed despite the fact that there were twenty-four Japanese nationals among the victims. But even here recent opinion polls show a steadily increasing sense of insecurity.

Although the US- and UK-led military action in Afghanistan appears to have brought some short-term resolution, the attacks have left deep scars on human society, including massive economic losses. To permit this incident to impact us in a lasting and negative way, however, would be to play into the perpetrators' hands. Since the goal of terrorism is to thrust people into the chaos of distress and confusion—to fan fear and mistrust—it is vital that we never succumb to these emotions. We must bring forth the power of the human spirit in even greater measure, surpassing the magnitude of the threat that faces us.

As the old saying goes, the darker the night, the nearer the dawn. But the door to a new era will not open of its own accord. Everything depends on us, our capacity to face head-on the full implications of this tragedy, to rise undefeated from it, and to seize upon it as an unparalleled opportunity to transform the direction of human history.

Now is the time to renew our sense of hope and pride as we tackle this enormously difficult task. As the German literary giant Johann Wolfgang von Goethe (1749–1832) once put it, “...man, through faith and hearty courage, will come off victor in the most difficult enterprises” (Eckermann 378).

### **Dimensions of the Moral Dilemma**

The noble intent behind the Year of Dialogue among Civilizations has been cruelly mocked by this heinous crime. To keep the attack from becoming the cause for a clash or even war between civilizations, we must never lose sight of the fact that it was, first and finally, a criminal act. I have consistently urged that the International Criminal Court (ICC), whose role and merits I deal with later in this proposal, be established and commence functioning at the earliest possible date. Terrorism is a crime that must be judged and punished before the law, and it is imperative that we take all measures to enhance the rule of law globally.

Such countermeasures alone are obviously not enough. Preventing and deterring future terrorist attacks requires strengthening international law and developing an effective international system of law enforcement.

In addition to strengthening deterrence systems, it is necessary to address and remedy the fundamental causes and conditions that serve as a breeding ground for terror. These have been discussed and analyzed at length since the attacks, and in this sense it is a welcome development that a framework of international cooperation is finally beginning to take shape to support the reconstruction of Afghanistan.

How, though, are we to meet the threat of fanatical terrorists who so clearly believe that all talk is useless? Is any form of dialogue or engagement, much less negotiation, possible with those who remain hidden behind the veil of anonymity? These questions hover in the minds of people all over the world. This is the fundamental challenge to which we must turn our unflinching gaze, the core of the crisis we must resolve.

The fact that views are deeply divided even among Nobel Peace Laureates underscores the complexity of what we now face.

In December of last year, the Nobel Peace Prize Centennial Symposium was held in Norway. The central focus of debate concerned the appropriateness of military strikes as a response to terrorism. While there was general agreement that military action alone cannot eradicate terrorism, there were significant differences in the participants' views on the use of force. Without a persistent effort to fill and transcend the divide that has arisen even among those moved by a lofty dedication to peace, we cannot hope to make the twenty-first century an era of genuine peace.

What can people of good will do, how are they to respond to ruthless, cold-blooded acts of evil? Sentiments of confusion, powerlessness and inner conflict are experienced in direct proportion to the strength of one's desire to believe in the innate goodness of human beings.

For example, Elie Wiesel, who in his youth survived the unspeakable horrors of a Nazi concentration camp to become a writer of enormous expressive power, commented after the attacks: "The spirit is powerful, but it is powerless in the face of violence. A terrorist with a single machine gun is stronger than a hundred poets and philosophers. The terrorists have proved it" (trans.).

The spirit is powerful, but it is powerless in the face of violence... Wiesel's own life offers potent proof of the irony and paradox of these words. Despite living through the inconceivable atrocity of Nazi violence, he has continued to wield his pen in pursuit of peace—an act of supreme faith in the power of the human spirit. It is symbolic of the distressing and problematic nature of our situation that even this individual felt compelled to support the US resort to armed force.

Amartya Sen of Cambridge University, a Nobel laureate in economics (1998), is renowned for his profound understanding of the problems of developing-world poverty that provide one background to terror. He commented: "The use of armed force, viewed in isolation, cannot be considered appropriate. But when we think of

what happened on September 11, the need for some form of response can certainly be understood. If it goes unpunished, terrorism will simply continue” (trans.).

It should be noted how he stressed the need for some form of response while carefully avoiding explicit reference to the use of military force or reprisal. The scale of this difficult challenge is set in relief by Sen’s careful and restrained choice of words.

### **Breaking the Cycle of Reprisal**

Here is to be found the essence of the darkness that envelops our times. We must call on truly profound sources of spiritual strength if we are to make out the dawn through this otherwise impenetrable gloom.

Vengeance invites vengeance. Any act of reprisal will inevitably provoke a response, and the cycle will continue without end. This is the lesson, rooted in the depths of human nature, that has been learned at the cost of untold suffering and bloodshed.

How can we break such an entrenched and seemingly intractable cycle? This question bears down upon us with urgency and weight to the precise degree that we abandon the relative comfort of the bystander, putting ourselves in the place of those directly affected. Calls to forego vengeance will ring hollow, lacking the power to reach or move people’s hearts, if they are not made as part of an all-out effort to confront an issue whose roots are sunk in the most primordial human emotions. We need only remember the enduring and universal appeal of tales of vengeance such as *The Count of Monte Cristo* and *The Revenge of the Forty-seven Ronin*.

This entails a truly massive effort, a paradigm shift in human morality on the same scale as that to which Jesus exhorted his followers: “Ye have heard that it hath been said, an eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth. But I say unto you, that ye resist not evil: but whosoever shall smite thee on thy right cheek, turn to him the other also” (Matt. 5:38–39). Any call to renounce retaliation must be supported by a set of sharply refined moral standards, as was the case with Tolstoy’s single-minded quest for nonviolence and nonresistance (a quest subjected to Lenin’s fierce critique) (202–09).

To effectively renounce revenge, we must have confronted—directly or in the scrupulous intensity of empathetic imagination—these weighty and seemingly insoluble questions.

If we are to free ourselves from the vicious spiral of revenge and truly conquer the urge for retribution—feelings that are all too human—we must first undergo a spiritual odyssey of anguished inner conflict, reflection and renewal in the depths of our being, of the kind that Tolstoy experienced. Only then will we be truly qualified to speak out. It is this that moves me so deeply in the words of those who, having confronted the horror of indiscriminate terrorist attack, have arrived at their own ineluctable conclusion through a process of heartrending contemplation.

Let me here reiterate my absolute opposition to all forms of violence, terror and retaliation, from the intimate violence of bullying and domestic abuse to the mega violence of war. All violence is an unacceptable affront to human dignity. But it is not enough simply to offer a shallow, emotional critique of military action or to call blithely for talk. For this is to stand helpless before the abyss of seething hatred that threatens to swallow us with its fury.

Altering the course of human history—throughout which “peace” has been but an interlude between wars—will require of each individual a profound inner resolution, a truly existential determination to seek their fundamental, inherent humanity and to transform their entire being. In the SGI we call this ceaseless struggle for inner renewal “human revolution.” It is the steadfast effort to construct “the defenses of peace” within our own hearts and minds as proclaimed in the Constitution of the United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization (UNESCO).

Indeed, the shock wrought by the terrorist acts was so great as to place this imperative before all people.

### **The Pathology of the Absent Other**

The psychic map that we first glimpsed through the blinding dust of the collapsing Twin Towers was one completely devoid of any sense of humanity, any recognition of the humanity of the thousands of victims it consumed.

Writing about a band of terrorists operating in the last years of czarist Russia, Albert Camus (1913–60) called them “gentle-hearted murderers (*les meurtriers délicats*),” and described their profoundly conflicted psychology that considered murder “necessary and inexcusable” (169).

Necessary and inexcusable... This expresses an acute sensitivity to life, an awareness of its preciousness. It demonstrates a willingness to confront those contradictions and dilemmas that are an inevitable aspect of the attempt to live in a fully human manner. For the terrorists in Camus’ essay, this sensibility brought some degree of restraint—

keeping them, for example, from bombing a despot's carriage because two innocent children were riding in it with him.

It is hard to imagine that those who planned and executed the September 11 attacks possessed any such awareness of the value of life. They appear to have been motivated by purely narcissistic self-absorption, with no evidence of reflection.

Soon after September 11, I discussed these issues with Rector Victor Antonovich Sadovnichy of Moscow State University. Concurring fully with his view that morality and ethics live only in the heart of the individual, I offered my own perspective that the pathology of indiscriminate terrorism lies in the complete obliteration of the individual. At the root of this, I noted, is the absence of an "internalized other." Because the minds of terrorists are so obsessed with an objectified "enemy," there is no room for individual "others" in all their infinite variation—even the fundamental distinction between soldier and civilian is not recognized. If there is any consciousness of the other, it is a vague, virtual image at best. It is this utter and complete numbness to the suffering, sorrow, pain and grief of their fellow humans that enables terrorists to commit acts of such brutality (170–71).

It is the nature of human beings that the "self" can develop only through awareness of others; we grow into selfhood in their gaze. Intense spiritual interaction—including that marked by conflict—is essential if we are to grow, mature and become truly human.

Without this process, individuals cannot develop beyond egotistic, self-absorbed infantilism, a condition in polar contrast to Karl Jaspers' (1883–1969) insight about learning to talk with each other: "We want to accept the other, to try to see things from the other's point of view.... To get at the truth, an opponent is more important than one who agrees with us" (12). Self-centered narcissism is the cradle in which rancor and violence are nurtured.

In the darkness in which our civilization has been immersed since September 11, we sense an eerie absence, a spiritual landscape in which people are failing to recognize the humanity of the other. It is far from easy to engage in meaningful dialogue in this climate, for it is the consciousness of an internalized other within the self that gives life to dialogue. An inner, spiritual dialogue is a necessary prerequisite for any attempt at external dialogue. Unless such attempts are preceded and supported by inner dialogue, we may find ourselves reverting to mere monologue and one-sided assertions. In its most advanced state, the pathology of the absent other converts language and speech into just another form of violence.

## **War: Defeat of the Human Spirit**

Struggling to find appropriate measures to respond to terrorism, we can ill afford to regard this dehumanization as something limited to the perpetrators of terror.

I have, of course, no intention of condoning terrorism in any form. To succumb before the craven acts of terrorists or to compromise with them in any way only encourages the escalation of evil. A firm, unyielding stance is necessary to any effort to stop terrorism: indeed, some countermeasures may be necessary.

But surely a massive, sustained and one-sided bombing campaign relying on total command of the air goes beyond the bounds of countermeasures. It seems certain to leave ominous scars that will require attention in the future.

Without doubt, the collapse of the Taliban revealed a terrorist network whose scope exceeded most people's imagination and which had used its enormous financial resources to seize control of the country of Afghanistan. As a result, the world has been forced to grapple with the grave question of whether any response that completely excluded the use of military force could possibly have dealt with this threat. The complexity of these problems makes it clear that there is no simple solution, no Alexander's sword to slice this Gordian knot. It is my conviction that they can only be addressed through direct and unflinching engagement in a relentless inner quest of the spirit such as we see in the case of Tolstoy.

I am deeply concerned by the dehumanizing nature of aerial bombardment. While one side experiences virtually no casualties, the other is devastated to an unknown, yet clearly enormous, degree. One cannot but fear the extent to which this approach provokes numbed insensitivity to the human experience of living and dying, pushing the spiritual dimension far out of sight. The use of such weapons as cluster bombs and the massively powerful "daisy cutters" can only worsen the pathological process of dehumanization.

Here I am reminded of an essay by the respected Japanese critic Hideo Kobayashi (1902–83). Writing during World War II, he quoted a passage from the German general Hans von Seeckt (1866–1936) concerning his memories of his service in the battlefields of World War I in Europe:

Carefully observing how the Russian troops, known for their courage, fled in pathetic confusion like a panic-stricken herd as they were thrown into terror by the ferocious rain of our precise howitzers, I

found myself hoping that they would escape these hellish flames as soon as possible.

Even we would not know how to defend against such fierce shelling. I felt dismayed, shuddering with horror at the miserable defeat of the human spirit, at a time when I should have been proud of our victory. (qtd. in Kobayashi 437)

Kobayashi described von Seeckt's experience as "the intolerable degradation of war" (437).

With modern warfare and state-of-the-art weapons, there is no opportunity to see or even imagine how the Taliban and Al Qaeda fighters, like their Russian counterparts of the past, might have run in a futile effort to escape destruction. Do we still possess enough imagination, enough sensitivity to life, to appreciate in some measure what von Seeckt meant by a "miserable defeat of the human spirit"?

Nor is this limited to military personnel. In a New Year's television program in Japan, a member of Médecins Sans Frontières criticized politicians for remaining too far removed from the consequences of their own decisions. Would it be too much to hope that a clear awareness of battlefield realities might have some deterrent effect and lead to a more flexible response to terrorism? Would such a hope be censured as Tolstoyan naivety?

### **The Real Enemy**

In a sense, the dulling and numbing of our collective sensitivity to life itself is even more ominous than the cycle of violence created by terrorism and military action waged in response to it. In contemporary warfare, overshadowed by the demonic threat of nuclear, biological and chemical weapons, the workings of the human will and spirit are thoroughly marginalized. The human element has virtually no role to play, either for victor or for vanquished.

What von Seeckt experienced as the "intolerable degradation of war"—the process of blinding ourselves to the humanity of those we harm and kill—has been brought to completion.

It would seem that, at least within Afghanistan, the terrorist network has been almost completely destroyed. But should the sense of triumph produced by its successful eradication be nothing more than an emotional sense of vengeance fulfilled—a sense

diametrically opposed to all human virtues—the cycles of retaliation and hatred would only deepen.

My point is not to convey a complacent and unconstructive opinion that places equal blame on acts of terrorism and the response to them. Rather, I think, we need to ask ourselves deeper questions: What is the true danger? What are the real enemies?

The real enemies are, I believe, poverty, hatred and, most formidable of all, the dehumanization that exerts a demonic dominion over contemporary society.

Carl Jung (1875–1961) voiced his concern over this disease of the psyche as follows:

A million zeros joined together do not, unfortunately, add up to one. Ultimately everything depends on the quality of the individual, but our fatally short-sighted age thinks only in terms of large numbers and mass organizations.... (275)

The fight against poverty, hatred and dehumanization may seem a circuitous route to the eradication of terrorism, requiring that much more time and effort. But I am deeply concerned that if we lose sight of these ultimate challenges, means will be confused for ends, and we will fall under the illusion that all that is required is to destroy the terrorist networks.

As the military campaign in Afghanistan wound down at the end of last year, an editorial in the *Christian Science Monitor* maintained, “To just capture bin Laden misses the point. It’s not the man, but the ideas he practices that must be captured, and buried in the deepest cave” (“VA Day?”).

I fully agree. If we lose that perspective, we are likely to find military responses escalating without cease, provoking, in the worst case, a full-scale clash of civilizations. The problem of terrorism is not so simple that it can be eliminated merely through the “hard power” methods of military force. Ultimately, it is rooted in a wide range of social, economic and political issues that demand a concerted response from the international community. This response must embrace the elements of “soft power”—diplomacy, language and moral suasion.

### **A Revitalized Humanity**

Since the ultimate enemy is dehumanization, the ultimate solution must be a revitalization and restoration of humanity. The wellspring for this must be a philosophy of humanism.

Setting aside for the moment all the ways the idea of “humanism” has been qualified over the centuries—socialist, individualistic, existential, Christian, etc.—I would like to approach the concept from a Buddhist perspective, to discuss what I propose to call “the humanism of the Middle Way” and its potential to illuminate the darkness of the present age.

The multilayered structure of the humanism of the Middle Way is best represented in the Buddhist teachings of the “ten worlds” and their mutual possession. These give concise expression to the fundamental Buddhist perspectives on the nature of life and living. Buddhism classifies our moment-to-moment experience of life into ten categories, or “worlds.” These are, in ascending order of desirability: hell, hunger, animality, anger, humanity, rapture, learning, realization, bodhisattva and enlightenment. The world of enlightenment, or Buddhahood, is regarded as the ideal way of life, one characterized by great compassion, courage and wisdom.

While space does not permit a detailed discussion of each of the ten worlds, the key point is that they do not exist as separate, isolated realms. Rather, each world embraces and contains within it all the others. Concretely, even if the (self-)destructive world of unrelieved suffering known as hell has manifested itself in an individual’s life, the potential for the other worlds remains; any of them can become the dominant state of that individual’s life the very next moment. In this way, our life condition is never static or fixed, but continues to transform and transmute, instant by instant, without cease. This interwoven potential is what is referred to as the “mutual possession” of the ten worlds.

While each of the ten worlds might be thought of as a single “frame” encapsulating a momentary portrait of life, their mutual possession reveals the unbroken continuum of life. Different states of life become manifest, recede into latency and emerge again in a complex and multilayered dynamism. This is how Buddhism understands human experience.

Like much of Eastern thinking, Buddhism refuses to regard life as simply the object of intellectual analysis or manipulation. Rather, its goal is to enable us to activate the positive potentials that exist in the depths of our being so that we may live in a self-directed manner. In this sense it shares profound ties with the Socratic project of striving always to “live well.”

If we permit ourselves to fall into habits of mental and spiritual sloth, we will find our life condition under the sway of the negative, destructive energy that characterizes the worlds of hell, hunger, animality and anger. In contrast, the ceaseless endeavor to

strengthen our will and mind brings forth the positive, compassionate energy of the worlds of bodhisattva and Buddhahood. In this way, life reveals its innate brilliance when polished. Neglected, it quickly becomes dull and tarnished.

It is thus imperative that we maintain clear focus as we continue the inner spiritual struggle to awaken the forces of good within. This ceaseless effort to polish our lives empowers us to avoid stagnation, the tendency to view present conditions as fixed and immutable. We can then exercise the self-mastery required to respond creatively to the unique problems and possibilities of each moment. It is through sustaining and ingraining this habit of struggle that the most positive and creative energy becomes established as the fundamental tenor of our lives and the basis for our life-activity. As individuals, it is in this way of life marked by ceaseless striving and growth that we find the true significance of the Buddhist concept of the mutual possession of the ten worlds.

### **The Humanism of the Middle Way**

Next, I would like to explore the humanism of the Middle Way as it applies to our understanding of society and social phenomena. This is a point that I set out in detail as far back as July 1973.

The ways of thinking prevalent in society tend to be restrictive and exclusive. Liberalism, for example, embraces restrictive concepts that oppose and contradict the idea of socialization. The same holds true with socialist and communist ideologies. Materialism rejects spiritualism, and vice versa. Even artistic principles are no exception. They all are inclined to force people and society into the molds that they claim to be ideal. Ideological ways of thinking will always entail a degree of rigid categorization. The Buddhist-based philosophy of the Soka Gakkai, however, does not require uniformity. Rather, it focuses on understanding the actual conditions of the times and, from there, extrapolating the optimal choices.

This should not be mistaken for unprincipled adaptation or simply “going with the flow.” This is the Middle Way; we do not attempt to “improve” individuals or society by imposing preexisting ideals or forms on them. ... The hallmark of our philosophy is that we are capable of encompassing even contradictory entities and bringing out the positive potentials inherent in them. This, however, in no way suggests the absence of a system of consistent, underlying principles. (*Nayami* 187–89)

These remarks were made at a gathering of students, and what I was trying to stress was the relativity and mutability of all things. Just as the condition of an individual's life changes in a ceaseless flow, with various possibilities alternately becoming manifest and latent, in the same way all social phenomena are relative and subject to change. In the famous expression: All things are transient and even the prosperous must decline (McCullough 13).

If we fail to understand this basic truth and are attached to the idea of unchanging, universal categories, we run the risk of repeating the mistakes of the rigid ideologies that so violently dominated the twentieth century. The rise and decline of socialism, for example, was one of the great dramas of the last century. In recent years, economic liberalism, too, seems to have lost some of its luster. Both socialism and liberalism serve as excellent and ironic examples of the relative and mutable nature of all things.

### **The Spirit of Self-mastery**

This is the first aspect of the humanism of the Middle Way that I want to stress: its embrace of the relativity and mutability of all things. This is why it is so important to gain an accurate understanding of the actual conditions of the times and society, resisting the urge to impose some preconceived notion of the ideal on complex human realities. This is not limited to questions of ideology, such as materialism and spiritualism. The concepts of relativity and mutability can also be seen in such questions as good and evil, happiness and unhappiness, and even war and peace.

In the clear light of the theory of the ten worlds, we see that the tormented world of hell carries within it the potential state of enlightenment. In this way, the human experiences of happiness and suffering are like intertwined strands of a single rope in constant mutual transformation.

Similarly, it is possible to discover the seeds of peace amidst the horrors of war. By the same token, a seemingly peaceful environment can be fragile and contain the seeds of disintegration when it is built on a lazy failure to distinguish between real peace and mere complacency. This would appear to be the case with contemporary Japan.

The second point I wish to stress is the importance of establishing self-mastery based on the realization of the true aspect of things. What I mean by self-mastery is the ability to be the protagonist of one's life, maintaining genuine independence and direction amidst the kaleidoscopic evolution of phenomenal reality.

This requires an unclouded cognitive precision, achieved, as I mentioned above, by polishing one's life so that it reflects even the most subtle changes and developments—those things that lie beneath the surface of a transient reality and cannot be fully grasped or expressed by existing language or ideational categories. In other words, we are charged with the task of establishing—through self-mastery—the kind of robust and adamant inner world in whose light we may experience the undisguised, true nature of all things and events.

Based on this concrete appreciation of the actual realities of life, we must decide how we should live and the kind of world we wish to create. This effort represents the essence of the multilayered humanism of the Middle Way.

In my peace proposal last year, I quoted the striking words of the Japanese philosopher Arimasa Mori (1911–76) as one key to opening the way to a new era: “The world is a competition in self-mastery. It is in this sense that the political is superior to the military. In this is also to be found the true meaning of peace” (163).

This admonition applies equally to individual human beings as to whole states and societies. Just as countries have a distinctive national character, each one of us has a distinctive personality. Only when the individual or society manifests the positive aspects of their character through the exercise of self-mastery can they hope to enjoy true respect or esteem.

### **“Kill the Will to Kill”**

In this connection, I would like to share an intriguing episode from the life of Shakyamuni Buddha. Someone once asked him, “We are told that life is precious. And yet all people live by killing and eating other living beings. Which living beings may we kill, and which living beings must we not kill?” To this question, which invites the kind of labyrinthine speculation one might associate with medieval Scholasticism, Shakyamuni replied, “It is enough to kill the will to kill” (qtd. in “Soft Power” 210).

Shakyamuni's response is neither evasion nor deception. No other answer could be as accurate or correct in addressing this question. The realities of violence and killing are immensely difficult and complex. It is impossible to draw a simple and uniform line between the permissible and impermissible taking of life. It is for this reason that self-mastery—the “conquest” of the inner realm in order to uproot hatred and kill the will to kill—is ultimately of greater value than the attempt to establish inflexible definitions of right and wrong. As long as the determination to master oneself remains firm and unswerving, we will be able to transcend confusion and hesitation,

to face and make those difficult choices and decisions that will produce the greatest good. This, I believe, was the true intent of Shakyamuni.

Last year I was pleased to see the publication of a dialogue I conducted with the brilliant Cuban scholar, Dr. Cintio Vitier, about the life and ideas of the poet, journalist and freedom-fighter, José Martí (1853–95), known as “the apostle of Cuba.” In the dialogue, I drew a comparison between Martí and M. K. Gandhi, stating, “While Martí’s life was not characterized solely by nonviolence, in terms of his core spiritual stance, it was remarkably similar to the path which Gandhi was later to tread” (42). Dr. Vitier observed, “Martí called for something that was even more difficult than Gandhi’s civil disobedience. He sought to eliminate hatred from the inevitable violence of revolution.... With this prayerful wish, he wrote, ‘God! That this be a just war, perhaps the only important, decisive war that can liberate people—a war against hatred’” (Vitier 274; Martí 22:210).

I share Dr. Vitier’s belief that what seems like a simple choice between two alternatives on the phenomenal level is in fact supported by a deeper synthesis.

“When you are being strangled by a rope and will die as things stand, and there is no hope that the rope will come loose of its own accord, you have no choice but to tear it loose” (4:192). When Martí finally felt forced to take up arms, it was only with the deepest sense of moral repugnance. His view of revolution and war differs in its essential vector from the views of some revolutionaries, who actually welcome social evils and violence as the “midwives” of revolution. Such views have only accelerated and expanded the scope of bloodshed.

Taken to their logical conclusion, Martí’s methods, which were centered on education and culture, and his determination to conquer hatred are certain—however painful the process of trial and error—to arrive finally at a path to peace and human dignity.

For Martí and Gandhi the struggle to free people from oppression may have taken the contrasting forms of violence and nonviolence. But while the outward form may have differed dramatically, in their determination to overcome hatred—the example each demonstrated of the power of self-mastery to “kill the will to kill”—these two great souls resonated deeply.

### **Encompassing Contradictory Entities**

This brings me now to the third aspect of the humanism of the Middle Way that I would like to discuss: the way that it probes the depths of the inner life of humanity until it strikes the rich vein of universal qualities shared by all people. As a result, it

rejects no one, embracing all people by the simple virtue of their being human. As mentioned earlier, according to the Buddhist theory of the mutual possession of the ten worlds, within the “world” of hell there is still the latent potential for the worlds of bodhisattva and Buddhahood. The clear implication is that regardless of the situation or the behavior of the other person, it is always possible to find an opening toward an avenue of genuine communication.

In the teachings of Buddhism we find this statement: “Freedom is to be without any impediments” (Hori 736). This illustrates Buddhism’s approach to humanity and to life itself, namely equality and nondiscrimination. This stance never judges people or tries to force them into preestablished categories based on such factors as race, religion, class, nationality, ideology or gender.

This is what I sought to emphasize in my earlier statement that the hallmark of our philosophy is our capacity to encompass even contradictory entities and bring out the positive potentials inherent in them. In other words, to compel people to make a binary choice between apparently contradictory entities fosters discrimination where there need be none.

In the light of the humanism of the Middle Way, the rallying cry of “I am human; nothing human is foreign to me (*homo sum, humani nihil a me alienum puto*)” (qtd. and trans. Honda 104) shines with new brilliance. Before us suddenly opens the great way of dialogue, the capacity to transcend differences and share innermost sentiments with any and all people. This has been the guiding principle for my own efforts to promote what I like to describe as human diplomacy.

In the autumn of 1974, as I was preparing to make my first visit to the Soviet Union, I was asked by a number of people why I was going to a country whose ideology is openly hostile to religion. I replied simply that I was going because there are people there. This was at a time when the winds of ideological conflict were blowing fiercely.

This visit to the Soviet Union came a few months after my first visit to China. At the time, tensions between the two countries were running very high, and they had even sparked armed clashes along the Wusuli River. Yet I visited both countries over a short period of time, and was able to engage in a frank exchange of views with the top leaders of the two great communist powers. I was convinced that the prevailing state of conflict would not continue indefinitely, a belief that was borne out by subsequent events.

Six years ago in June 1996, after visiting the United States, I took the opportunity to visit Cuba, where I conferred with President Fidel Castro. At that time, Cuba’s

relationship with the United States was shadowed by thick, dark clouds. But it has always been my belief that if we are truly dedicated to engaging in human diplomacy, there are no walls of difference that cannot be surmounted.

It was the Spanish philosopher José Ortega y Gasset (1883–1955) who said that, “Civilization is before all, the will to live in common” (76). This can be understood as the determination to transcend differences, while respecting human and cultural diversity, in the effort to clarify and share universal human values. Where this will is maintained without compromise, the mutually stimulating and catalyzing effects of dialogue give rise to a world where differences are celebrated. Through vibrant dialogue among civilizations a richly fertile humanism arises in which the birth-pulse of a global civilization may be felt. This is my unflinching faith.

Former US Secretary of State Henry Kissinger has noted that last year’s terrorist attacks had the paradoxical effect of creating a rare opportunity to build international consensus in order to combat terror. While this is certainly true, at the same time we must recognize that each country has its own complex domestic conditions and interests, and it is far from clear how robust and enduring the present consensus will prove. But at the very least, a common awareness has developed that terror cannot be effectively countered through the efforts of any one country acting alone, and that international cooperation is indispensable.

The youth membership of SGI-USA is currently engaged in a “Victory Over Violence” campaign that seeks to raise awareness of the need to counter and overcome violence in all its forms. We must make victory over violence a global movement, and turn the struggle against violence into the blueprint for a truly global civilization.

We must never give up on the ideal of dialogue among civilizations, whatever the obstacles we may encounter.

### **Transforming Competition from Conflict to Harmony**

In this sense, Arimasa Mori’s call for a “competition in self-mastery” is extremely rich in its implications and suggestions.

In *Jinsei chirigaku* (The Geography of Human Life) written almost a century ago, Tsunesaburo Makiguchi (1871–1944), founder and first president of the Soka Gakkai, proposed the idea of “humanitarian competition.” This can be understood as anticipating the concept of competition in self-mastery. As I mentioned in my proposal of four years ago, “humanitarian competition” is not simply a shift in the

mode of competition but represents a qualitative transformation in its very nature. As Makiguchi describes it:

There is no simple formula for this humanitarianism. Rather, all activities, whether of a political, military or economic nature, should be conducted in conformity with the principles of humanitarianism. What is important is to set aside egotistical motives, striving to protect and improve not only one's own life, but also the lives of others. One should do things for the sake of others, because by benefiting others, we benefit ourselves. This means to engage consciously in collective life. (399)

Makiguchi's call to "engage consciously in collective life" likewise anticipates Ortega y Gasset's definition of civilization as "the will to live in common." Makiguchi called for a shift away from the kind of competition that is based on conflict and in which the strong feed on the weak, to a cooperative competition of coexistence and shared flourishing in all fields, including military, political and economic. He called for the construction of a global society, a global civilization in which the happiness of self and other would be realized.

This is not an easy process, as the British historian Arnold Toynbee (1889–1975) noted: "the reception of a foreign culture is a painful as well as a hazardous undertaking..." (81). While it is naive to expect such encounters always to proceed smoothly and without difficulty, by the same token they are not necessarily fated to end in distorting, destructive clashes. As Toynbee was able to document through his prodigious reading and research, there are innumerable instances in which such contact has had a stimulating, catalytic influence. We must make all possible efforts to assure that intercultural encounters are creative in their outcome, and never hide behind the term "clash of civilizations" as if it somehow forgives failure.

### **Dialogue: the Lamp to Dispel Darkness**

On this point, the words of President Seyed Mohammad Khatami of Iran, the advocate of the idea of dialogue among civilizations, are worthy of our renewed attention.

No great culture and no great civilization has ever evolved in isolation. In other words, only those cultures and civilizations have survived that have been empowered with 'communication,' 'speaking' and 'listening.' In addition to 'speaking,' 'dialogue' requires 'listening.' ... Listening is not only a passive activity; it is active. An activity which enables the listener to open

his being to the world which the speaker creates or discovers. Without real listening, any dialogue is doomed to failure.

I likewise believe that the value of dialogue is to be found in its processes, perhaps even more than in its concrete results. For the vibrant and mutually catalytic process of dialogue between individuals and between whole civilizations dynamically illustrates humanitarian competition, the competition in self-mastery.

My own meetings with leading figures and thinkers from the nations of the world are motivated by the belief that dialogue indeed has the power to unite humankind. At the same time, I am moved by the desire to try to find, through dialogue, solutions to the many problems that loom before us.

The constituent organizations of the SGI as well as SGI-affiliated research centers—the Institute of Oriental Philosophy, the Boston Research Center for the 21st Century and the Toda Institute for Global Peace and Policy Research—are actively engaged in promoting dialogue among civilizations and interfaith dialogue. In all cases, the emphasis is not on debate for its own sake or to prove the abstract superiority of a philosophical position. Rather, dialogue is directed toward focusing the collective wisdom of humankind on such concrete issues as preventing conflict, eradicating poverty and protecting the global environment.

Without dialogue, humans are fated to walk in the darkness of their own dogmatic self-righteousness. Dialogue is the lamp by which we dispel that darkness, lighting and making visible for each other our steps and the path ahead.

The great nineteenth-century Japanese philosopher and educator Fukuzawa Yukichi (1835–1901) stressed this same point when he wrote the following:

Man is by nature a social animal. A man in isolation cannot develop his innate talents and intelligence. The community of the family does not exhaust the possibilities of human intercourse. The more social intercourse there is, the more citizens of a nation meet one another; the more human relationships broaden and their patterns evolve, so much the more will human nature become civilized and human intelligence develop (35).

It is through interactions and mutual catalyzation that civilizations develop and mature. Those traditions that refuse interaction cannot but fall into decline. This is a principle to which human history gives ample evidence and from which even the most dominant civilizations are not exempt.

We are presently faced with a severe trial, the outcome of which will determine whether humanity will be able to greet the dawn of a global civilization in this century. I firmly believe that the paradigms of humanitarian competition and competition in self-mastery will be key in deciding that outcome.

### **Building International Consensus and Cooperation**

So far, I have offered some thoughts on a more spiritual or philosophical plane on how we can respond in such a way as to transform the crisis wrought by the terrorist attacks into the occasion to build a consensus that can grow into the basis for a global civilization. I would next like to examine different legal and institutional approaches toward this same goal.

The first point I would like to emphasize is that, as a prerequisite for the prevention of terrorism, we must make the principle of “punishment before the law” the firm and united stance of the international community. Similarly, it is vital that any response to terror be based on a universal set of principles and rules that impartially judge and punish any such act regardless of its nature or motivation.

With regard to the military actions led by the US and the UK, UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan stated that this action should be viewed in light of the UN Security Council’s reaffirmation of the right of individual and collective self-defense in accordance with the UN Charter (Statement). Even acknowledging this view, we must be aware of the fact that military action leaves important problems unresolved, creating new ones that must be dealt with in the future.

I believe that it is crucial to aim for the creation of a transparent system that is universal in its application to suppress acts of terror, regardless of the political or ideological motives of the perpetrators. Even in the case of police action (entailing the minimum use of force necessary to restrain and apprehend the criminals), locating such action within the context of a comprehensive system can prevent the situation from escalating.

It is therefore important to strengthen the structures and systems of international law, international law enforcement and the international judiciary. Together, these constitute the institutional basis for a comprehensive and coordinated response to terrorism.

The UN must play a central role in this effort. As Secretary-General Annan has stressed, the UN is uniquely positioned to help develop a broad and sustained strategy to eradicate terrorism (Address).

### *International Law, Law Enforcement and Judiciary*

First, to strengthen international law, it is urgent that the comprehensive treaty for the prevention of international terrorism be completed and adopted. To date, twelve different international treaties and protocols against terrorism have been adopted, starting with the 1963 Tokyo Convention for the prevention of hijacking. Typically, these were drafted in response to specific crimes of terrorism, but over the years, the terrorist organizations have developed increasingly broad international networks and adopted ever more sophisticated methods, so there is now a clear need for a convention that will support more comprehensive efforts to counter terrorism.

Each of the individual antiterrorism conventions is significant as a cornerstone of international cooperation to deter and prevent such grave criminal acts. Further efforts to assure the widest possible ratification of these treaties are important, as has been stressed at various summit meetings to date.

Complementing existing conventions, the comprehensive treaty for the prevention of terrorism would be a signal of international solidarity never to permit a repeat of the recent tragic events (*Measures*).

Second, regarding law enforcement, I would like to promote the idea of establishing a specialized standing organization within the UN to combat international crime as the core of an international law enforcement network. This new body would carefully coordinate its efforts with those of the International Criminal Police Organization (ICPO), or Interpol, and the domestic law enforcement agencies of each country.

Further, consideration should be given to the future possibility of establishing a constabulary force under direct UN control to respond in cases when national law enforcement agencies are inadequate to the task of identifying or arresting members of criminal terrorist organizations. Police action through international cooperation would thus become established as an option to be exercised in lieu of either the use of force authorized by the Security Council (under Chapter VII of the UN Charter) or actions taken as an exercise of the right of individual or collective self-defense. As such, this would contribute to a more robust and flexible system to prevent and respond to terrorism.

Third, to strengthen the international judiciary, it is vital that the International Criminal Court (ICC) be established with all possible haste. The Rome Statute to establish a permanent international court for the purpose of trying individuals who have committed genocide, crimes against humanity, war crimes, etc., was adopted in

1998. But it has yet to be ratified by the necessary sixty signatory states and has therefore not become binding. As a result, the court has yet to be established and begin functioning.

I have repeatedly called for the early establishment of the ICC as a means to begin supplanting the rule of force with the rule of law. This would help break the interlocking chain reactions of hatred and retribution that have brought such suffering to humankind. As such, it has the potential to effect a qualitative transformation in the way we human beings have conducted our collective affairs to date. At present, such movements as the NGO Coalition for an ICC (CICC) are working to encourage ratification, an effort to which the SGI will offer active support.

In the meantime, we should consider an ad hoc tribunal to try terrorist crimes, similar to those created by the UN Security Council for crimes of genocide and other grave offenses committed in Rwanda and the former Yugoslavia. It is crucial that we make last year's terror attacks the occasion for establishing the principle that the crime of terrorism be brought to justice before an international judiciary.

### *Supporting Reconstruction*

Looking now at longer-term measures to prevent the recurrence of terrorism, I would like to discuss the role that Japan can play in the reconstruction of Afghanistan. In December of 2001, an interim government was established in Afghanistan. However, as a result of twenty-three years of war, some four million people have been forced to flee their homes, and most of the infrastructure that supported people's lives has been destroyed (UNHCR *Refugees*). The international community is called on to provide timely humanitarian assistance and sustained support for the reconstruction effort. I believe that this is an area in which Japan should play an active and contributory role.

Historically, Japan is not burdened by a military or diplomatic legacy of colonization or invasion in the region. It has developed relations of trust with many of Afghanistan's Central Asian neighbors, under the banner of its "Eurasian Diplomacy" and "Silk Road Diplomacy" (*Bluebook 1998*). Concretely, prior to the terrorist attacks, Japan brought representatives of both the Taliban and the Northern Coalition to Tokyo for talks. Japan has also played a constructive role in providing humanitarian assistance to the people of Afghanistan. Most recently (January 21–22, 2002), Japan hosted the Ministerial Level Conference on Reconstruction Assistance to Afghanistan and made strong efforts to support the development of a reconstruction plan. In these and other ways, Japan has energetically engaged the issue. While I certainly applaud such efforts, at the same time I hope they will be ongoing, persistent and guided by a long-term vision.

One of the tragic hallmarks of the twentieth century was the large-scale uprooting of people from their homes, their uncertain flight as refugees. It is now crucial to develop comprehensive strategies to prevent and resolve the regional and ethnic conflicts that have displaced people. We must also support post-conflict reconstruction to enable people to return to their homes and live normal lives.

### *Support for Peace-Building*

Many of the conflicts of recent years have resulted in what are called complex emergencies, marked by the simultaneous occurrence of armed conflict, refugee movements, famine and destruction of the natural environment. Responding to complex emergencies requires the careful coordination of multifaceted, multilevel actions. In concrete terms, Japan should become actively engaged in the UN's peace-building initiatives that support the efforts of societies to recover from destruction and build the foundations for a stable peace. Among the many aspects of peace building are: promoting reconciliation among ethnic groups; encouraging respect for human rights; disarming and facilitating the social reintegration of the members of armed groups; establishing order under the rule of law; supporting the development of democratic institutions; and rebuilding basic infrastructure. The UN has opened, on a pilot basis, a peace-building office in the Central African Republic and elsewhere (SC "Peace-Building").

Japan has to date engaged in such efforts as the Azra and Tizin project to support the return and resettlement of Afghan refugees (Machimura). Japan should strengthen its institutional capacity to cooperate with different UN agencies in support of such projects. It should work toward establishing a system that trains people with specialized skills who can be dispatched at any time as required. Demining is an especially urgent focus at present, and this is one area in which Japan can make a substantial contribution, providing technical cooperation and assistance.

Further, as a first step toward demonstrating that we have truly learned the bitter lesson of the world's abandonment of Afghanistan, I would like to propose that an Afghanistan peace center be established in Japan. This center would be engaged in providing up-to-date information to the world community regarding the progress of efforts toward peace and reconstruction. At the same time, it would seek to promote widespread understanding and appreciation of Afghanistan's unique cultural heritage.

### *Overcoming Racism and Xenophobia*

Thus far, I have discussed the need for a more effective institutional framework to suppress terrorism and support post-conflict peace-building. Ultimately, however, we need to create an environment in which armed conflicts and terrorism do not occur, in which their root, structural causes are eliminated. Here also, global cooperation holds the key.

For a number of years now, I have expressed my strong belief that we must work together toward the goal of human security—the idea that security is more than a matter of states and the integrity of their borders, but concerns the actual lives of real people. In this regard, I would like to offer some concrete proposals for long-term measures centered on three themes: human rights, poverty eradication and disarmament.

The promotion and safeguarding of human rights is absolutely crucial. Human rights education can play a particularly vital role in uprooting the deep-seated psychological causes of violence and terror.

In August of last year, the World Conference against Racism, Racial Discrimination, Xenophobia and Related Intolerance (WCAR), which had been called for by the UN General Assembly, was held in Durban, South Africa. At an NGO forum prior to the conference, an SGI delegation introduced my proposal for the establishment of a Decade of Human Rights Education for Peace. This would succeed and follow up the work of the United Nations Decade for Human Rights Education (1995–2004). It is my belief that continuous, hands-on efforts in the field of human rights education hold the key to creating a more humane world. It would also promote the universal ideal of a “just, comprehensive and lasting peace ... in which all people shall co-exist and enjoy equality, justice and internationally recognized human rights and security” called for in the Conference’s final declaration.

Obviously, no one is born with racist or exclusionary ideas. It is most often the case that feelings of prejudice and discrimination—hatred for groups other than one’s own—are implanted in people’s minds in the process of growing into adulthood. From this perspective, the SGI has been working to raise popular awareness of the importance of tolerance in support of the UN Decade for Human Rights Education. These have included the traveling exhibition “Toward a Century of Humanity: Human Rights in Today’s World” as well as grassroots seminars and symposiums on human rights organized throughout the world.

Last year, to encourage human rights education for children, we launched the “World Picture Books” exhibition, which brings together illustrated children’s books from 120 countries and territories. In an accessible manner, this exhibition introduces the

culture and lifestyles of various regions around the world, offering an opportunity for children to experience and accept differences as an expression of the world's diversity. Using the various events and occurrences of daily life to foster the spirit of tolerance and appreciation of others, striving always to manifest this spirit in our concrete actions, we can create a rich and robust culture of human rights.

### *Eradicating Poverty*

Another theme I would like to discuss is the need to accelerate efforts to eradicate global poverty, which must be recognized as an important underlying factor in both armed conflict and terrorism. I have repeatedly stressed the need for international cooperation to eliminate the grotesque disparity between poverty and wealth in our world—a gap that has expanded as globalization advances. It is particularly crucial that people be freed from the degrading experience of what is referred to as absolute poverty—a state in which some 1.2 billion people live. Poverty threatens and undermines human dignity on Earth.

I would like here to restate my call for the implementation of the equivalent of a global Marshall Plan in which monies freed by debt relief to the most heavily indebted poor countries (HIPC) would be applied to the alleviation of poverty, to education, health care and medical treatment, as well as to enhancing the social infrastructure.

In its 2001 annual report, *The State of the World's Children*, the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) cites the example of Uganda as a society where funds from debt relief were successfully redirected to education and health care for children. In the words of the report: "Changing debt liability to investment in children is the key to ending poverty."

In May of 2001, the Third UN Conference on the Least Developed Countries adopted a Programme of Action outlining policies and measures for overcoming poverty. In July, the communiqué of the Genoa Summit of the G8 gave priority focus to assistance to developing countries. These are signs, in my view, of a growing global commitment to ending poverty. We must look again in earnest at the measures that can be taken to realize the goal, expressed in the UN Millennium Declaration, of halving, by the year 2015, the proportion of the world's people whose income is less than one dollar a day.

Japan played a positive role in the establishment of the UN's Trust Fund for Human Security (*Bluebook 2001*) and should exercise strong leadership toward the eradication of poverty. In terms of the institutional resources of the UN, serious

consideration should be given to Secretary-General Annan's proposal to establish a high commissioner to deal with the world's poorest countries. The time has clearly come to take a coordinated, people-centered approach to ending poverty.

### *Reforming the Conference on Disarmament*

Encouraging disarmament is an important systemic means to help prevent the escalation and spread of conflict. In recent years, there has been a heightened sense of the need to create a truly effective nonproliferation regime for nuclear, chemical and biological weapons of mass destruction—whose possible use by terrorists has become a matter of grave concern. As one means to create a breakthrough toward thoroughgoing and effective disarmament efforts, I strongly urge reform of the rules by which the Geneva-based Conference on Disarmament (CD) operates.

Since the Conference on Disarmament evolved from the Ten-Nation Committee on Disarmament established in 1960, it has undergone various changes in nomenclature and constituent membership. But throughout, it has, as the sole multilateral body for disarmament negotiations, contributed to the realization of a number of important disarmament conventions, among them the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT), the Biological Weapons Convention (BWC) and the Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC). Since the adoption of the 1996 Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty (CTBT), however, the CD has failed to produce any concrete results and at present is unable even to agree on an agenda for the next round of disarmament negotiations.

In order to get beyond this deadlock, I would like to propose a change in the consensus rule, which requires unanimous agreement among all participants to a negotiation. This rule is the single most distinctive feature of the CD; at the same time, because it gives each country an effective veto, it is the single greatest factor in its present deadlocked state.

As one reform measure, in August of last year, Japan informally proposed the partial introduction of a majority vote, whereby procedural issues could be decided by a two-thirds majority. If it is felt that "majority rules" voting is not appropriate for deciding substantive security issues, the alternative of "consensus minus one"—used by the World Trade Organization (WTO) and in which the consensus of the whole is recognized as overriding a single dissenting vote—might be considered. Unless some action is taken to reform the procedures by which the CD operates, it runs the risk of becoming irrelevant. Some measures must be taken to keep negotiations from bogging down even before they have begun. Procedures that facilitate agreement on the broad outlines of negotiating themes, with details worked out in subsequent talks, will prove far more productive.

Any effort in this direction, because it represents a major change in the standing traditions of the CD, is certain to raise objections. But the time has come, in my view, to give serious attention to the kinds of reform that will reprioritize concrete progress toward disarmament.

### *Preventing Nuclear Terror*

It is essential to reenergize efforts in the field of nuclear disarmament. Since September 11, there has been increasing anxiety about the possible use of nuclear weapons by terrorists. Nobel Peace Laureate (1995) Sir Joseph Rotblat of the Pugwash Conference is among those to have expressed his concern.

The International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) has adopted a resolution urging that effective steps be taken to prevent the illicit use of nuclear material and to protect various nuclear facilities against terrorist attack. At the UN, there is ongoing debate on an international convention for the suppression of acts of nuclear terrorism (*Measures*). It is important to raise international public opinion in support of the earliest possible adoption of such a treaty.

But the nuclear threat is not limited to terrorism. Indeed, preventing the further spread of nuclear weapons and making further progress toward nuclear disarmament is literally a life-or-death issue for humankind in the twenty-first century. In December 2001, the US and Russia fulfilled their obligations under the Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty I (START I) by reducing the number of nuclear warheads to 6,000 each. However, no concrete schedule for further nuclear disarmament has been established. In 2000, the sixth review conference of the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) unanimously adopted a final declaration that included an “unequivocal undertaking by the nuclear-weapon States to accomplish the total elimination of their nuclear arsenals.” It was not possible, however, to reach agreement on concrete steps toward this goal or set a time limit by which it must be achieved.

The efforts of the New Agenda Coalition, led by a group of seven non-nuclear-weapon states and supported by a network of NGOs, were crucial in pushing the nuclear-weapon states to make this “unequivocal undertaking.” In order to keep moving forward, we must further strengthen the network of global popular opinion to press the nuclear-weapon states to implement this commitment in good faith.

The second president of the Soka Gakkai, Josei Toda (1900–58), in 1957 called for the prohibition of all nuclear weapons. His call was based on the Buddhist appreciation for the sanctity of life, from which perspective nuclear weapons must be

condemned as an absolute evil. As heirs to this spirit, the SGI has worked to spread and strengthen popular solidarity for nuclear abolition. These activities have included the international traveling exhibition “Nuclear Arms: Threat to Our World” and support for the Abolition 2000 signature campaign. The members of the SGI are determined to continue and accelerate their efforts toward the adoption of a treaty for the comprehensive ban on all nuclear weapons.

### *Eliminating Landmines from the Planet*

Along with the question of nuclear weapons, I feel compelled to address that of landmines. As the conflict in Afghanistan has again demonstrated, landmines cause an enormous toll of death and suffering among the civilian population, particularly children, in the countries in which they have been deployed. The abolition of these inhumane weapons has been one focus of the post-Cold War world, and I have added my voice to those calling for a treaty banning them.

Through the vigorous efforts of NGOs such as the International Campaign to Ban Landmines (ICBL), the historic landmines treaty became part of international law in 1999. Despite this ban, it is said that some 110 million landmines remain deployed and another 250 million are stockpiled worldwide. Needless to say, the most terrible aspect of these weapons is that their impact is not limited to the period of actual conflict; they continue to threaten lives and livelihoods long after the conflict has ended. According to one study of the period since the landmines ban went into effect, more than half of the countries in which people have been injured or killed by landmines and unexploded munitions have been technically at peace.

The landmines treaty bans not only their use but also their production, stockpiling and transfer; it further requires the destruction of existing stockpiles and in this sense is a truly groundbreaking piece of international law. But without the participation of all countries in this treaty, the number of landmine victims will continue to mount.

I strongly believe that the complete elimination of this form of inhuman weaponry is crucial. First, a full ban on the export of landmines should be implemented immediately. Then, the international community should unite behind the promotion of demining and the provision of support to the victims of landmines. This is a necessary first step toward creating a twenty-first century free from the scourge of war and truly a century of humanity.

### *The World Summit on Sustainable Development*

Having considered human security from the perspective of human rights, poverty eradication and disarmament, I would now like to discuss the environmental issues which will have a decisive impact on the shape of the global society of the twenty-first century. June 2002 marks the tenth anniversary of the Earth Summit (World Conference on Environment and Development) held in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil. In August of this year, the World Summit on Sustainable Development (WSSD) will be held in Johannesburg, South Africa. Convened immediately in the wake of the Cold War and amidst greatly heightened interest in environmental issues, the Rio Earth Summit was an international gathering of unprecedented scale, attended by the representatives of 183 countries and territories. It produced important results, including the signing of treaties on climate change and biodiversity, as well as the adoption of the Agenda 21 plan of action. Then UN Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali described the Rio Summit as “an epistemological break,” suggesting the significance of its impact on people’s awareness.

Since then, however, global environmental degradation has advanced apace as there has been little progress in implementing these agreements. Taking global warming as one example, it took nine years after the adoption of the treaty aimed at preventing climate change before agreement was finally reached in November of last year on the operational details of the Kyoto Protocol that commits signatory states to the reduction of greenhouse gases.

To be meaningful the WSSD must bring about a transformation in behavior corresponding to the revolution in awareness of a decade ago. The WSSD will of course review the progress made over the past ten years. But even more important is the need to muster a strong, new determination, to offer new proposals and ideas, unconstrained by previous thinking, and to make the conference the point of departure for decisive action for the future.

#### *High Commissioner for the Environment*

Here I would like to propose three ideas for consideration by the WSSD, ideas that I feel could help enhance international cooperation. These are: 1) The establishment of the office of the UN high commissioner for the environment; 2) the phased consolidation of the secretariats overseeing the implementation of the various environmental treaties and the establishment of a global green fund; and 3) a convention for the promotion of renewable energy.

The UN High Commissioners for refugees and human rights have proven effective advocates for their respective constituencies and concerns. In the same manner, a high commissioner for the environment would be charged with coordinating the

activities of various agencies, exercising strong and visible leadership toward the resolution of global environmental issues.

At present, in addition to the UN Environmental Programme (UNEP), the UN Development Programme (UNDP), the World Health Organization (WHO) and a number of other international agencies are all involved in activities related to the environment. These activities are conducted under the separate mandates of these organizations, and there is a strong need for improved information exchange and coordination guided by a shared vision.

The holder of this new post could enunciate such a vision. She or he should be accorded authority equivalent to an undersecretary-general with a mandate to issue international recommendations and advisories, convene meetings or panels of experts and eminent persons, and draft and release reports that envisage the future.

My second proposal is designed to alleviate the problems arising from having separate secretariats for each international treaty on the environment. Bringing together and eventually consolidating these should have the effect of strengthening the linkages between their activities, as well as realizing cost reduction through streamlining reporting and other procedures. Under many treaties, signatory states are required to report on the status of their activities to fulfill their treaty obligations, and the costs of preparing these reports could also be reduced. Monies saved through such cost-cutting measures could be pooled into a global green fund that would promote protection of the ecosystem, reforestation activities, etc.

The SGI has been engaged in research at its Amazon Ecological Research Center in Brazil aimed at the preservation and revitalization of the rain forest. Based on this experience, we are committed to working in all ways possible to resolve the global environmental crisis.

#### *Promoting Renewable Energy Sources*

The third proposal I would like to offer would encourage the accelerated implementation of renewable energy and help smooth the transition away from today's fossil fuel-dependent society. UNEP, which has been actively engaged in this issue, has stated that "accelerating the introduction of green, 'environmentally friendly' energy, such as solar, wind and wave power, is one of the most pressing issues facing mankind in the new millennium..." In March of last year, UNEP published a report on this subject, titled *Natural Selection: Evolving Choices for Renewable Energy Technology and Policy*.

Within the leadership of the advanced industrial economies there has been an increasing awareness of the importance of this issue. At the 2000 Kyushu-Okinawa Summit, the G8 Renewable Energy Task Force was established; it presented its final report at the 2001 Genoa Summit. Further, the joint Communiqué of the Genoa Summit included this statement in the section “A Legacy for the Future”: “We will ensure that renewable energy sources are adequately considered in our national plans and encourage others to do so as well” (art.27). This was the first time that a G8 communiqué had clearly called for the promotion of renewable energy.

In Europe, concrete planning has already begun. In September 2001, the European Union Council issued a directive on the promotion of renewable energy sources that calls for doubling the share of total energy consumption produced from renewable sources by the year 2010. At the same time, developing countries have been the site of many innovative efforts led by NGOs or as part of the UNDP’s Sustainable Rural Energy Project, which has introduced solar energy into remote villages in Bangladesh.

In this regard, I would like to propose that a convention for the promotion of renewable energy sources be considered at the WSSD as a means of consolidating and strengthening consensus on this crucial issue in both the developed and developing worlds.

#### *The Earth Charter*

In connection with the WSSD, I would like here to make mention of the Earth Charter. This document, which elucidates the values and principles for a sustainable future, has developed through a drafting process guided by the Earth Charter Commission headed by Mikhail Gorbachev, president of Green Cross International, and Maurice Strong, secretary-general of the 1992 Rio Earth Summit. The final draft was completed in June 2000, and it is hoped that it will be officially acknowledged at the WSSD.

Within the SGI, there has been widespread support for the goals and principles of the Earth Charter; activities to promote the Earth Charter process have been organized in many countries around the world. In addition, the SGI-affiliated peace research institute, the Boston Research Center for the 21st Century (BRC), organized symposiums and publications that offered multifaceted input into the drafting process.

The Earth Charter is not limited in its concerns to environmental issues but contains important language related to social and economic justice, democracy, nonviolence and peace. In this sense, it is a comprehensive statement of the norms and values required for effective global governance. It may be considered a guideline for

humanity in the twenty-first century. Only with a shared vision, and shared effort toward the realization of that vision, will we be able to greet a more hopeful future. For this reason, it is imperative that the Earth Charter be given the support and recognition of the international community.

Further, it is vital that there be ongoing grassroots efforts to raise awareness so that the Earth Charter may become the fulcrum for the common struggle of humankind. The SGI is determined to continue working with the Earth Council and other organizations to support the translation of the Earth Charter into various languages and the development of pamphlets, videos and other materials that will publicize its ideas.

We need a global consensus behind environmental education, especially aimed at the new generations who will bear the burden of the future. I understand that the WSSD is being promoted with poster and essay contests for young people. There is a similar need to develop materials that will introduce the message of the Earth Charter to children and young people in language that is easily accessible to them. With this in mind, the SGI is committed to the promotion of environmental education and the dissemination of environmental information through a wide variety of means and channels.

#### *A Global Alliance for Children*

In this connection, I would like to make several proposals related to the UN Special Session on Children to be held this May. The purpose of this meeting is to review progress toward the goals agreed upon at the 1990 World Summit for Children. Originally scheduled for last September, its postponement was forced by the terror attacks in the United States.

When societies break down, it is always children whose lives, health and best interests are sacrificed. There are some 2.1 billion children under the age of eighteen on Earth today. Of these, however, fewer than one in ten live in countries where their health and growth is afforded adequate protection. In the decade since the holding of the World Summit for Children, we have seen definite progress. It has been possible to reduce the number of children dying from preventable diseases and to increase the number able to receive basic education (UNICEF Bellamy).

Despite such advances, and perhaps because the plan of action adopted by the 1990 Summit was not given sufficient international attention, progress has been checkered. UNICEF has responded by initiating a global movement for children, calling for participation from governments, NGOs, educational institutions and the media. The

Special Session on Children is being held within this context, and, as UNICEF Executive Director Carol Bellamy has stated, its purpose is to clarify the link between healthy children today and a healthy world tomorrow.

Among the activities organized by the SGI in support of UNICEF has been the exhibition “Treasuring the Future: Children’s Rights and Realities” originally held in New York in June 1996 to commemorate the fiftieth anniversary of the founding of UNICEF. Since then, this exhibition has traveled to venues throughout the United States as well as to Cape Town, South Africa. There are plans to show an updated version in New York in conjunction with the Special Session.

I call on leaders from all countries who gather for the Special Session to make this the occasion for creating a global alliance for children, based on the vow to put children first and to always give the interests of the child the top priority. As a first step toward this, I strongly urge the ratification by all countries of the two optional protocols to the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC). These protocols are designed to protect children from those actions that most heinously abuse their rights—the use of children as soldiers and their sale or use in prostitution.

In addition, I hope that either at the Special Session or elsewhere in the near future consideration will be given to creating a world charter on education. The shared commitment of 155 countries and territories throughout the world to promote literacy and other forms of basic education was first expressed in the World Declaration on Education for All adopted in Thailand in 1990 (UNESCO). A world charter for education would develop and extend this agreement. It would encourage international cooperation to enhance the educational environment globally. It would set forth a vision for education in the twenty-first century, prioritizing the lifelong happiness of the learner as the true goal of education, putting the full resources of each society at the service of education. It would also express a moral commitment to peace education and education for global citizenship—the foundations on which human security in the twenty-first century must be built.

#### *Promoting Exchanges among China, South Korea and Japan*

Turning now to specific regional issues, I would like to make two proposals that I feel will contribute to the long-term prospects for peace in Asia. This year, 2002, is a year of particular significance to Japan, China and the Republic of Korea (ROK), as it marks the thirtieth anniversary of the normalization of relations between China and Japan and the tenth anniversary of normalization of China-ROK relations. Additionally, South Korea and Japan are this year cohosting the soccer World Cup.

These significant events have been marked by designating 2002 The Year of Japan-China-Republic of Korea National Exchange.

Efforts to increase trust received an important boost at the 1999 ASEAN+3 Summit Meeting in the Philippines, when the leaders from these three countries met. In 2000, it was decided that summits among the three should be regularized, and last year agreement was reached on the holding of regular meetings of foreign and finance ministers. In this way, an ongoing process of dialogue developed and it was within this context that the national exchange program was established. It represents an exciting opportunity to deepen ties of mutual friendship and trust (*Bluebook 2001*).

The Soka Gakkai International, in particular our Japanese membership, has worked to promote grassroots exchange with China and South Korea in order to contribute to the peace of Asia. This year, the youth members of the Soka Gakkai in the Chubu region around the city of Nagoya have organized an exhibition, “The Great Leader Zhou Enlai,” commemorating the life and achievements of the late Chinese premier who was instrumental in laying the foundations for China-Japan friendship. From Nagoya, the exhibition will travel to eight venues within Japan. For my part, I am now engaged in a dialogue, which is being published in serialized form, with Dr. Cho Moon-Boo, former president of Cheju National University. In this dialogue, we are exploring the prospects for furthering friendship between Japan and the Korean Peninsula.

Building peace in Asia requires creating multilayered networks of friendship and trust among all the peoples of the region—it cannot be led by one country but must include all. By its nature, this is a time- and effort-intensive project.

Among the activities slated for this year is the Japan-China-Republic of Korea Young Leaders Exchange Program. I believe that it would be valuable to encourage this kind of exchange throughout Asia, in order to provide more opportunities for members of the rising generation, in particular for young women, to establish bonds of friendship that transcend national boundaries. For example, as a parallel event to the annual ASEAN+3 summit, various exchanges could be organized at which participants would have the opportunity to deepen their understanding of each others’ culture and history. Likewise, meetings with the national leaders participating in the summit could be organized, offering the top leaders of each country a chance to hear the directly expressed views of the region’s young women. The Soka Gakkai in Japan is planning to hold an exhibition entitled “Women and the Culture of Peace” at venues throughout Japan. It is my hope that this exhibition will provide the opportunity to deepen understanding among the women of different Asian countries.

Another proposal I would like to make is for a joint research project that will build the foundations for a shared understanding of history in Asia. Last year there was again controversy surrounding the view of history presented in Japanese textbooks. Since the 1980s, there have been repeated instances in which the way the Japanese understand history and the gap between these views and those of other Asian countries have given rise to tensions.

The impact is not limited to diplomatic relations; there is even greater cause for concern when we consider the long-term influence of the historical perspectives absorbed by children. In his 1997 book *On History*, Eric Hobsbawm warned of the danger of separating any historical event from its larger human context. “Historians, however microcosmic, must be for universalism... because it is the necessary condition for understanding the history of humanity, including that of any special section of humanity” (277).

Europe, where two world wars started in the last century, has in recent years seen a variety of bilateral and multilateral dialogues on history education. In 1992, an *Illustrated History of Europe*, jointly edited by historians from twelve European countries, was published (Delouche). While the content of the book appears to have both supporters and detractors, I believe that there is great significance in this effort to transcend a single-country perspective and discover a more universal view of history. I urge that a similar undertaking be attempted within Asia.

### **Advancing to Expand Dialogue**

To examine the past with humility and honesty is to earnestly confront the future. The cumulative impact of a dialogue-centered effort to create the foundations for a shared sense of history is indispensable to the future prospects for peace—in Asia, of course, but also in the entire world.

Dialogue, trust and collaboration rooted in humanitarian competition, a competition in self-mastery—this is the basis on which a global society can be built, a global civilization for the twenty-first century.

In his book, *Soka kyoikugaku taikai* (The Pedagogy of Value-creating Education), Soka Gakkai founder Tsunesaburo Makiguchi called for a fundamental transformation in the way people live their lives. Decrying a passive, dependent way of life, and declaring even an active, independent way of life to be insufficient, what he called for was a consciously *interactive, interdependent* mode of existence (184–86). Such a way of life is centered on what we would now call empowerment, in particular the empowerment of others through instilling confidence, offering them the

gifts of hope and courage. This is a value-creating and contributive way of life dedicated to realizing happiness, both for oneself and for others. This way of life, taking root among countless individuals, has the power to transform communities and indeed change the entire world, moving the tide of history in a truly creative and peaceful direction.

This year, under the theme of expanding dialogue, the members of the SGI reaffirm our determination to pursue the humanism of the Middle Way, building human solidarity as responsible citizens of our respective societies, in order to create a world of peace and harmonious coexistence.

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