

Essay by Claire McCammon

Today, conditions exist that are far different and more dangerous to the survival of humanity than any that have come before. Humanity's capacity for destruction is such that in a single day it could wipe itself off the planet. The scope of warfare is no longer limited to the distance an army can march. Rockets, missiles, ICBMs and nuclear warheads have taken war to another level. This requires, as Einstein said, a different way of looking at the world: the peoples of Earth must accept each other, regardless of race, religion, country or culture.

A problem exists at the core of human behavior—the propensity to form divisions and groups. Humanity can no longer afford to hold the mindset of us versus them, the war mindset. The tribal view of the evil “other” must be cast off. People must embrace their common identity. We are all human.

Every person has the same basic needs. Whether we be Muslim, Buddhist, atheist, or Christian; communist, anarchist, socialist—anything at all—we have human worries and wants. We all struggle to live decent lives and provide a secure future for our children. We should no longer divide ourselves along the lines of country, clan, and religion. To continue to do so will have disastrous consequences for the future.

In the modern global economy, rebellion and political upset in small corners of the world can have drastic consequences in the United States. Similarly the recent economic recession in America has slowed many foreign economies. Suddenly, what people in other countries are doing matters.

The world wide media has made it easier to accept diversity. People across the world can see the human struggle in every way of life. It becomes possible to recognize even the Taliban as simple farmers trying to protect their religion and culture when we see them as up close as people.

In one way, the danger of nuclear warfare can be seen as constructive. Now it is world leaders who are on the frontlines, not just soldiers. Politicians and their families are as vulnerable in cities as any army is on the battleground. This threat forces them to be wary of starting wars—it is one thing to cause the death of an unknown soldier and quite another to endanger oneself. Thus leaders today have more personal motivation to negotiate and come together rather than resort to warfare. Tolerance has become a political necessity.

In short our world has become a global one since the dawn of the nuclear age. To prevent total devastation we have to stop focusing on cultural differences and come together as one species and one people.