

The Illness of War
By Samuel Cowdery

Imagine a society devoid of preventative medicine, where physicians are only called to action once an illness envelops an individual or an entire community. A society such as this one would have no thought for the avoidance of disease epidemics, but would hold an ignorant and debilitating mindset that suffering is inexorable. Any logical person can recognize in this example the damaging impact of viewing sickness as an unavoidable incidence, but holding the same viewpoint of inescapability towards war and conflict has comparable negative effects.

When war is viewed as an inevitable occurrence, weapons development becomes prioritized above humanitarian efforts and international political exchanges are deadened by the conviction that conflict will take place. Similarly to the aforementioned example, preventative action is perceived as futile and thus little to no action is taken to avert the disease of war. If peace is to be achieved in our era, the preventative medicine of multilateralism and non-proliferation must be sought after and applied by the governments of the developed world.

It is rooted in the nature of warfare that weapons do not prevent conflict, they merely prepare for it. Whenever a sub machine gun is manufactured or a missile is fitted to the belly of a fighter jet, there is an unspoken anticipation that those objects may be required to carry out their intended purpose. Therefore, any hopes by governments that their ever growing militaries will not engage in destruction are akin to a man who fuels a fire while praying it does not become exacerbated. This blatant hypocrisy in modern countries to peruse peace through proliferation must be vigorously condemned by all people if global tranquility is to exist.

It is worth noting, that the importance of conflict mitigation is more crucial in our lifetime than in any other portion of human history. This is because nowhere previous in human history has the threat of war ever held the potential for the complete annihilation of the human species. When the Mongols marauded through Asia or Napoleon led his conquest through Europe, no possibility of humanity's extinction was present. Even the imperialist regimes of the early 20th century held no power to altogether extinguish the spark of human existence. Only until the conception of mutually assured destruction did Earth stand to lose not only some, but all of her sons and daughters. In the words of Cold War President John F. Kennedy, "mankind must put an end to war, before war puts an end to mankind." The world must learn before it is too late that through increased nuclear proliferation, we only arm ourselves with the instruments of our own destruction. How strange is it, that in a time where food and supplies can be delivered from one continent to another, governments focus primarily on their capacity to send missiles from one continent to another. Peace truly is underfunded, and every day that newer and more deadly weapons are developed, humanity grows weaker in its immunity toward the illness of war.

Footnotes: John F. Kennedy, Address to the UN General Assembly on September 25th 1961 <http://www.state.gov/p/io/potusunga/207241.htm>