

HISTORIC DECISIONS

A large, billowing mushroom cloud from a nuclear explosion, rendered in a sepia or brownish tone. The cloud is the central focus of the background image, with a smaller, similar cloud visible in the distance to the right. The overall image has a historical, grainy quality.

1945—

**Learning From Catastrophe:
What Should We Do To Prevent
World War III?**

Institute for Peace Studies
Hofstra University Center for Civic Engagement
<https://www.hofstra.edu/civic-engagement/>

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History is not simply a series of inevitable events, each unfolding one after the other. Rather, history consists of the difficult choices that people make in response to challenging problems. When people make a choice, that decision can affect the lives of people and nations for generations to come.

Historic Decisions forums foster the development of deliberative democratic skills through examining the difficult choices Americans faced in the past. Participants are invited to deliberate about three options that were available to Americans in 1945. Each option is based on a thing everyone values, such as freedom, being treated fairly, or safety. As they consider these options participants work together to identify benefits, trade-offs, and consequences of possible actions and reflect on what they have learned.

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Front cover photo: Everett Collection/Shutterstock

What is deliberation?

It is a way of thinking that involves weighing the benefits and trade-offs of various options to make a sound decision about what should be done. In addition to facts, it includes a consideration of the experiences, beliefs, values, and priorities of everyone affected by the decision. Deliberation is used to address ethical—not technical—problems.

What is a deliberative forum?

A deliberative forum offers space & time for people to make thoughtful decisions about a public problem. It includes the following components:

- ▶ **A personal stake.** Participants share stories and experiences to establish personal connections to the issue.
- ▶ **Deliberation.** Participants weigh the benefits and drawbacks of each option.
- ▶ **Reflections.** Participants review the deliberations in to identify tradeoffs, things-valued, any common ground and areas of disagreement or uncertainty.

Ninety minutes is an ideal amount of time, but an hour can work. Here are some timing suggestions:

- ▶ Introduction—10 minutes
- ▶ Personal stake—10 minutes
- ▶ Deliberation—30-45 minutes (10-15 minutes for each option)
- ▶ Reflections—10-20 minutes

The forum **moderator** remains neutral, has a light touch, reminds participants of the guidelines if necessary and listens carefully. The moderator should ask questions that foster deliberation through directing attention to the trade-offs and benefits of each option; encourage a fair hearing for each one; and keeps track of time.

Guidelines for Deliberation

1. **Everyone is encouraged to participate.**
2. **No one or two individuals should dominate.**
3. **All the options should be considered fairly, and include a consideration of things-valued and tradeoffs.**
4. **Maintain an open and respectful atmosphere.**
5. **Listen to each other.**



1945—

Learning From Catastrophe: What Should We Do To Prevent World War III?

EVERETT COLLECTION/SHUTTERSTOCK

IT'S LATE SUMMER OF 1945 AND THE WAR IS OVER. The world is bringing to a close the most catastrophic and all-enveloping event in human history, a truly global war that has consumed 50-80 million people (about three percent of the world's population), most of them civilians. Moreover, the war concluded with the bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, the first-time deployment of weapons capable of historically unprecedented mass destructive power. For Americans, the pressing question of the moment is: How do we prevent a recurrence of catastrophe on this scale? How can we best avoid World War III?

National security questions have traditionally been the province of governments and elites, even in a democracy such as the United States, in part because they are especially complicated, in part because they are so central to the

raison d'être of governments and countries themselves, and in part because of the tradition over millennia of hierarchical decision-making by monarchs about issues of war and peace. But 1945 marks a watershed of sorts. Never have publics all around the world been called upon to make such sacrifices as in World War II, raising people's stake in future decision-making greater than ever. And democracy is on the rise at this moment, certainly in the Western and developing worlds, and indeed its preservation formed no small part of the rationale for fighting both world wars of the twentieth century.

As both the need and the desire to reshape the world have arisen from the ashes of the war, this question of global security is being considered in many contexts, both within countries and amongst them. For example, earlier this year,

in April, representatives of fifty nations met in San Francisco to create an international institution with a grand purpose: to prevent yet another catastrophic world war. Building on the legacy of the failed League of Nations, the men and women deliberating there envisioned an institution based upon sovereign equality among nations that would provide a forum to peacefully settle disputes, facilitate cooperation, and provide collective security for all.

In short, the time is ripe for public deliberation about the most consequential decisions countries can make, and for ordinary citizens to join elites in deciding how best to provide for national security. This moment presents something of a blank slate upon which a genuinely new world order can be written, both domestically and internationally. Americans—as individual citizens, as voters, as members of civic organizations—have the power and opportunity to reshape the world as never before. And, because the old order has been so thoroughly destroyed, we have the need. It is going to be a new post-war world, for sure. The only questions are who will shape it, and what will it look like?

In a democracy, such opportunities are also civic responsibilities shared by all. It is at this great turning point in American and world history that citizens are called upon to wrestle with the grave moral and strategic question of how best to provide a secure world going forward, for themselves and for generations to come.

The work in San Francisco offered one approach to addressing the question of international security looking forward from today. But there are other options as well.

The Road To 1945

America has been a country blessed by good fortune in many respects. The very history leading to its inception, for example, was instrumental in fostering a tradition of liberty and relative tolerance as part of its political culture. It has abundant natural resources and no powerful rivals in the Western Hemisphere. Perhaps most significantly, the US had a huge ocean between it and the constant warfare that was the hallmark of great power struggles in Europe for centuries, and an even bigger ocean separating the country from Asia. This meant the United States could choose to develop over the course of its history in political isolation from the power struggles between the great powers of Europe—Britain, France, Prussia, Austria-Hungary, Russia, and so on—if America so chose.

That is indeed the path that US foreign policy makers largely followed from 1783 until 1945. This ‘isolationism’ was not complete. Wars were fought with Britain, Spain, Mexico, Germany and others during this era. Nor did such isolation-

ism extend outside of politics. The United States has in fact been one of the preeminent trading nations of the world, par excellence. But our power status and policy choices have meant that the US—a relative military mouse during most of this period—wisely avoided playing where elephants stomped. In practical terms, this entailed letting the world go its way as events unfolded, and decommissioning the American military down to a skeleton crew in-between the occasional wars in which the US did engage.

Clearly, by the turn of twentieth century, America began to feel its oats, and was starting to show interest in playing ‘the great game’ of international power politics, and in colonialism (albeit by other names). Yet, because of both our political traditions and the desire for peace, Americans originally wanted no part of World War I as it unfolded in Europe. Similarly, despite that President Roosevelt could by the late 1930s see the handwriting on the wall for eventual American involvement in another European war, the national mood was perhaps best captured by Republican Party isolationists, who were resisting his every effort to bring American onto a war footing, or even to arm the those other actors fighting to resist German and Japanese aggression.

Of course, Pearl Harbor changed everything on December 7, 1941. We spent the better part of the next four years mobilized for total war against two major foes. Ultimately, we and our allies prevailed in that struggle, bringing the last fighting to a conclusion with atomic detonations over Hiroshima and Nagasaki, just recently, in August 1945.

Departing from the historical and cultural continuity of isolationism marked a sea change in the way America relates to the rest of the world. It is perhaps the most critical question facing the United States in 1945. And, since we are a democracy, that is a question over which the American people can exert tremendous influence.

In addition to the fear of nuclear war, there are other challenges to our security: How can defeated Germany and Japan, not to mention the nearly equally ruined victors in the war—China, Britain, France and most of the rest of Europe—be stabilized? Should America actively engage the world in a manner that would enhance our security instead of reacting to events? And, in particular, what to do about the threat—perceived by some, though not all—of a rising Soviet Union with potential imperialist ambitions, driven by an ideology antithetical to American economic and political freedoms? Since the US is a democracy, these are questions which the American people can and should address.

What should we do on the heels of World War II to make sure there is no World War III?

The Homefront: Civil Rights During WWII

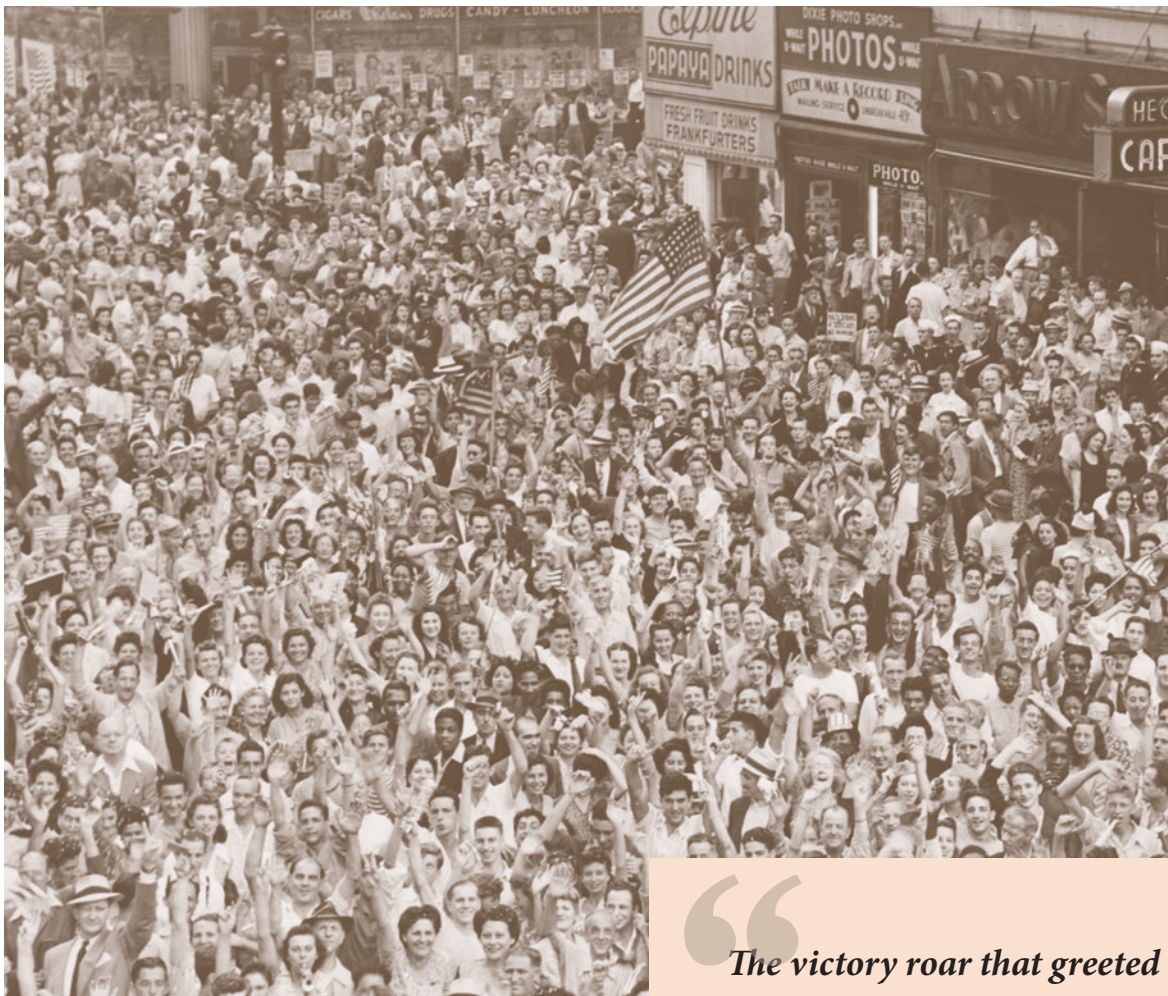
In 1926, speaking to the black experience, Langston Hughes asserted, “I, Too, Sing America.” He ended that same poem with the even more emphatic, “I, too, am America.” And yet, more than a decade later, during WWII and beyond, the U.S. has remained deaf to this other America, its songs and rally cries. Nonetheless, there have been tremendous changes for African-Americans during the war years. Huge numbers have come north looking for industrial jobs, particularly in the Midwest and California. Finding employment has been a constant struggle for blacks, and those who have found a job rarely end up in managerial positions. Given these racial injustices, it’s no surprise that riots erupted with regrettable regularity, culminating in the Detroit Race Riot of 1943 in which 34 people were killed and 433 were wounded, the vast majority of whom were black. Segregation and the Jim Crow of southern states also crept into the armed forces, and so, tensions have also run high on military bases. Given these struggles, it is no surprise that there was a general apathy towards war initiatives in black communities. To counteract this, concerned African Americans launched what was known as the “Double V Campaign,” encouraging support for the war and the struggle against racism in

America simultaneously, as related drives. Alongside the many fights and frustrations of the time, the call for civil liberties began to crescendo in these years, and out of that necessary noise, key organizations emerged, like the Congress of Racial Equality (CORE) in 1942 with its practice of non-violent, active resistance. CORE, the institution and its method, would later form the foundation of the civil rights movement of the 1960s.

Those of Japanese ancestry in the U.S., like their African-American counterparts, could also have claimed, “I, Too, Sing America”; “I, too, am America.” But, after Pearl Harbor, their status, humanity and hard work building up this country was simply disregarded. Fear and hysteria won out over democracy, civil rights and civil liberties. On February 19, 1942, Executive Order 9066 was issued, demanding that Japanese-Americans and legal residents evacuate their farms, shops and homes with just one pack of luggage and head to “Relocation Centers,” in particularly barren locations in California, Arkansas, Wyoming and Utah. There, Japanese-American citizens and US residents would live in heavily restricted communities behind barbed wire, with curfews and minimal rations.



Pulling a man off a streetcar, Detroit Riot, 1943



NEW YORK WORLD-TELEGRAM AND THE SUN STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER: DICK DIMARSICO, VIA WIKIMEDIA COMMONS. PUBLIC DOMAIN.

The Situation Today

This year, 1945, marks one of the great inflection points in human history. Great tectonic-scale changes are emerging in the aftermath of history's most devastating conflagration. These include an opportunity to reorder the international political system, the inevitable rise of the nuclear era and its threat to all life on the planet, the threat of a rivalry between two massively armed great powers, the destabilizing processes of decolonization, massively accelerated globalization in all its economic, cultural and political forms, the hope that living standards for the peoples of the West will improve, astonishingly rapid technological innovation, the beginning of worldwide civil rights movements, huge demographic changes, and much more.

Not all these looming developments can be clearly seen at this moment, but what can be known are a few especially salient points. First, the war's devastation is so complete that—with the exception of the United States—even the winners have been reduced to rubble. The Soviet Union lost some 20 million people in its struggle to repel the German invasion.

“The victory roar that greeted the announcement beat upon the eardrums until it numbed the senses. For twenty minutes wave after wave of that joyous roar surged forth . . . with atomic force.”

—The *New York Times* front page story, August 15, 1945, one day after the Japanese surrender brought two million people into the New York City Times Square area

In Britain, Germany and Japan (among others), entire cities are leveled, and despite the UK being part of the winning Allied coalition, it is now so poor it can hardly feed its people and urban bomb sites continue to threaten civilian populations.

Second, the centuries-old structure of a world ruled by a handful of relatively equal 'great powers' is now clearly dead. The United States now sits far and away above all the others in the world with respect to military, economic, political and cultural power. In addition to emerging from the conflict relatively unscathed, participation in this total war has also

unleashed a globally unprecedented economic dynamo in the US that can now be turned toward commercial and consumerist purposes.

In this new era of air power and aircraft carriers, America also has the capacity to project its military in strength anywhere in the world. So great is the change from the prior system that a new term has to be coined for the United States. 'Great power' is no longer sufficient to describe the situation—America is now the first example of a new beast appearing in the international politics jungle, a 'super-power'. So, as well, is the Soviet Union, but to a considerably lesser extent, given its wartime devastation and its anemic economy. Nevertheless, the old club of great powers that had structured the international order is gone forever, replaced by two superpowers, their respective spheres of influence, their ideological commitments, and a profound rivalry growing between them.

Finally, of course, the nuclear era has just been born, and few believe that the genie can be returned to its bottle. Hiroshima and Nagasaki gave the world a glimpse of a future that was conceivable for the first time in Earth's history—a world in which all life might be destroyed, quite literally in a flash (approximately 75,000 people perished on the day of those bombings, and the number was roughly doubled within a few months' time, accounting for fatalities from radiation poisoning). Though the United States currently possesses a monopoly on nuclear technology, it is inevitable that other nations will seek to acquire the secret to this weaponry through spycraft or independent research. This is indeed now a new world, and—despite having just emerged from the most destructive event in all of human history—ironically an even scarier one than the blood-soaked nightmare looming just behind us in the rearview mirror.

The public mood today is a bubbling mix of powerful simultaneous emotional currents ranging from relief to excitement, pride, anxiety, grief, energy and hopefulness. We have defeated two great enemies in two great theaters of the war, and are proud of the immense national effort that yielded victory in the name of our core principles such as freedom and democracy. However, after a decade-and-a-half of depression and war, many are also anxious to turn their attention to the more mundane tasks of building careers, buying homes, raising families, enjoying consumer prosperity, and ceasing to fret about foreign dictators with grand ambitions presenting threats to our national security.

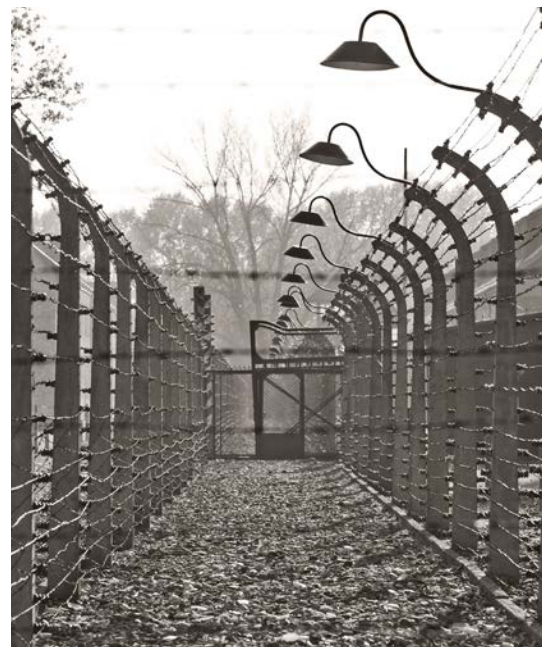
But an America that is both giddy with anticipation and simultaneously weary from over fifteen straight years of

despair and sacrifice cannot now escape the call of great decisions just because we might want to take a breather. Now, more than ever, we have to grapple with the question of how best to secure the peace, how to keep Americans safe.

Determining how best to provide for national security is arguably the most significant, and one of the most chronically difficult, choices any country faces. In 1945, the United States stands before an array of options, opportunities, challenges and dangers unlike those of any other moment in our prior history. America has never before been the dominant economic, military, political and cultural power in the world. Now it is. It has never before had the capacity to strategically engage the entire world simultaneously. Now it can. It has never before been the sole possessor of fearsome weapons capable of catastrophic annihilation. Now it is.

What should we do? How can we keep Americans safe, and guarantee that a third world war—likely far worse, as hard as that is to imagine, than this last one—will not expose the country to more death and destruction? Technological changes, disruption of the traditional global balance of power, new capabilities and opportunities—all of these make the decision much harder and more complicated than it has been previously, when isolationism seemed to work, and indeed to be the only sensible choice. We now have an opportunity, but also a responsibility, unique in history: to choose between some very different options as to how best to keep ourselves safe.

What should we do?



POSZTOS/SHUTTERSTOCK.COM

Unite Globally to Prevent War



WIKIMEDIA COMMONS. PUBLIC DOMAIN.

Upper portion of frontispiece of Leviathan engraved by Abraham Bosse, with input from Thomas Hobbes, the author

IN HIS FAMOUS SEVENTEENTH CENTURY philosophical treatise on governance, the English philosopher Thomas Hobbes describes the natural form of societies, pre-government, as having the character of an atomized, chaotic “war of all against all”. He argues that the only solution to this unfortunate condition is the forcefully imposed law and order that can only be provided by an iron-fisted Leviathan—or muscular national government—which must have a monopoly on the possession and use of coercive power within the society. In short, people must trade a bit of their

freedom to do anything and everything they might want to do for the safety and stability provided by a government that keeps others from doing anything and everything they might want to do, including harming their neighbors.

Many people are wondering if that same principle might not apply at the international level as well, to the community of states. That is, having just emerged from the most recent of a series of wars of all against all (and not metaphorical ones, either), some argue that an international Leviathan is the only solution: In order to ensure our own safety and

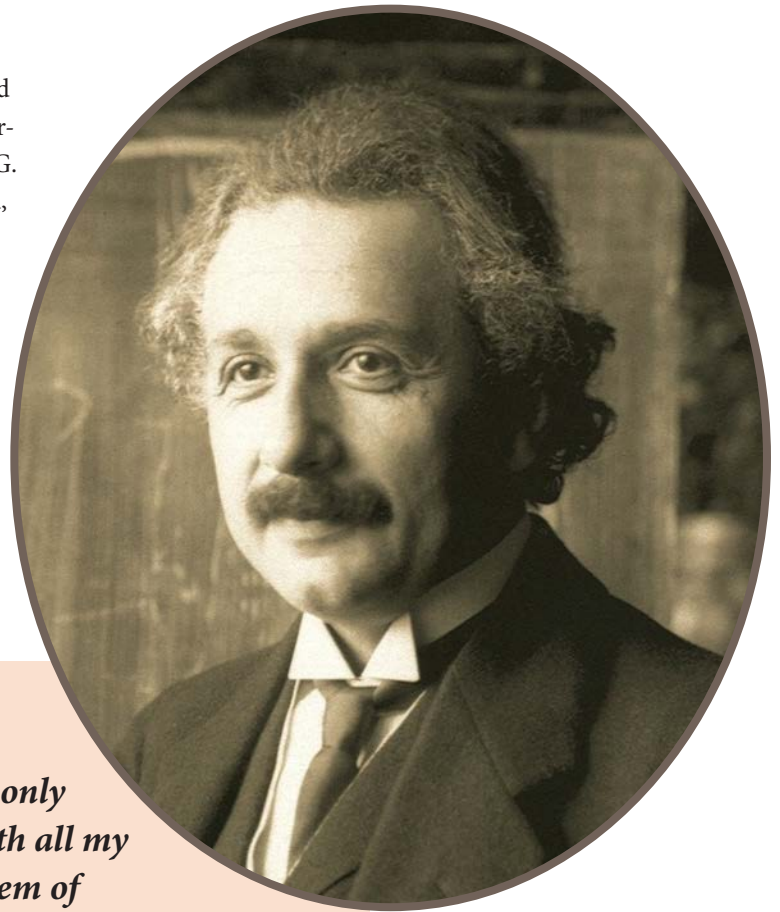
stability, we must prevent global conflicts. A global government with a monopoly on the use of force could prevent countries from fighting each other, because they would be stripped of the military means for doing so.

The idea of a world government is actually as ancient as human history itself, and has recurred throughout the ages. Though it has sometimes taken the form of one nation dominating all the rest (e.g., Pax Romana), political philosophers from recent centuries have envisioned a more benign construction, in which such a world government would take a democratic and representative form, and would share power with the member countries—hence the term adopted by some advocates: ‘world federalism.’

In the fourteenth century, for example, Dante—as many Europeans had done for a thousand years—was lamenting the loss of the Roman Empire and the security it had brought when he called for a world government with the words: “Behold, how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity!” Likewise, Immanuel Kant outlined a detailed plan for world government in his 1795 essay “Perpetual Peace”. Later, figures as diverse as Ulysses Grant, H.G. Wells, Arnold Toynbee, Pope John XXIII, Jawaharal Nehru, Walter Cronkite, Bertrand Russell, Joseph Smith, Wendell Wilkie, and Winston Churchill joined with Albert Einstein in the belief, as the latter put it, that “Mankind’s desire for peace can be realized only by the creation of a world government. With all my heart I believe that the world’s present system of sovereign nations can only lead to barbarism, war, and inhumanity”.

The League of Nations and the Atlantic Charter were among history’s significant milestones, tentatively and partially nodding toward the concept of preserving peace through world governance, but they did not contemplate a world government with real enforcement capabilities. Today, thousands of people in dozens of countries are part of a world federalist movement calling upon all of Earth’s people and states to take the final step and create a true world government to serve as planetary sheriff and keep the peace.

WHAT IT ENTAILS: This option calls for creating a world government with real enforcement powers to outlaw significant national military forces, and to develop intelligence capacities to monitor against the creation of military, criminal and other disruptive threats to



“*Mankind’s desire for peace can be realized only by the creation of a world government. With all my heart I believe that the world’s present system of sovereign nations can only lead to barbarism, war, and inhumanity.*”

—Albert Einstein

international peace—thus ending the possibility of war. To do this in a manner that is democratically legitimate, it would likely involve replicating at the international level the federalist model of power-sharing that is used by countries like Germany, Canada and the United States. A democratic, global governing structure would be created to handle limited, key responsibilities, with particular focus on international security. The location of each governmental function would be assigned to lowest level pragmatically possible within the vertical arrangement of governing bodies ranging from local to provincial to national to global. Thus, most political power and sovereignty would still belong to national governments, but crucially, not the decision or even the capability to fight wars.

MAIN ARGUMENTS IN FAVOR OF AND AGAINST THIS OPTION: The world has become dangerous to the point where planetary destruction is now conceivable if weapons and other threats are not regulated or contained. These are global problems which can only be solved globally, not by national actors pursuing narrower interests. This option secures the peace by means of prioritizing stability.

That said, such a huge change in world history itself comes with equally enormous trade-offs. Political power largely follows the logic of a ‘zero-sum game’, meaning that any gain in power of one actor necessarily implies an equal loss to another. A world government strong enough to keep the peace thus implies that all countries, including and indeed especially the United States at this moment, would have to give up almost all of their military power (while also contributing troops and materiel to the new global military). Ultimately, this also means countries giving up a significant slice of their sovereignty too. War would no longer be an option decided by the United States, no matter how strongly Americans felt about a certain issue. Some might also fear the anti-democratic, tyrannical possibilities of an unchecked singular military power on the planet, and the personal and national liberties such a world government could conceivably trample.

Examples of What Might Be Done and Their Trade-offs

- 1. The United States government should lead an international effort toward creating a democratic, limited, federal world government. This would include a representative parliament, a robust executive authority, and a fair judicial dispute adjudication process.**

TRADE-OFF: Countries that have political or legal conflicts with each other will have to accept the decisions of

the world government. This will mean a loss of sovereignty in some areas, most significantly with respect to national security and foreign policy. Countries will no longer be able to employ force or the threat of force to achieve their goals.

- 2. Americans should support the creation of an international military force and command structure, and contribute troops and materiel toward building this force. The international military force should be employed as a global police force, for the purpose of preventing states and other actors from fighting wars against each other.**

TRADE-OFF: Individuals in every country will be required to serve in the international military force. Also, the challenges of military recruitment, cost-sharing between countries, etc., will require time-consuming negotiations.

- 3. All militaries on the planet, including America’s, should be dramatically reduced in size.**

TRADE-OFF: In the event that the new world government ceases to be democratic in nature or becomes otherwise illegitimate and unacceptable to member-states, the latter would lack the immediate military power to challenge that government.

- 4. America should support and help finance the creation of a global intelligence agency whose primary focus would be on military, criminal and other disruptive networks that are a threat to global peace and cooperation. This agency should operate with secrecy but be accountable to the world federal government—not any individual country—serving as an early-alert system for threats and information gaps.**

TRADE-OFF: Following the horrors of the last war, many individuals and governments might be uncomfortable with secret information being collected by a centralized authority without their approval or review. Also, clandestine activities by such an agency might violate the privacy of citizens.

- 5. Citizens and businesses should push for the government to foster conversion of war jobs to employment for peace, dismantling armament programs and substituting those using analogous worker skills.**

TRADE-OFF: This much government intervention in the economy is antithetical to the laissez-faire principles of traditional American capitalism.



THE DEPARTMENT OF NAVY — NATIONAL ARCHIVES AND RECORDS ADMINISTRATION, PUBLIC DOMAIN.

Flag Raising on Iwo Jima, 02/23/1945

Maintain Military Dominance to Preserve Our Way of Life

FROM AT LEAST THE TIME OF WASHINGTON'S FAREWELL ADDRESS warning against foreign entanglements and John Quincy Adams' admonition against going abroad "in search of monsters to destroy", Americans have largely favored an isolationist foreign policy in which we avoided Europe's wars on the other side of our 3,000 mile castle moat, the Atlantic Ocean. But the experience of fighting two world wars in as many generations had caused a number of Americans to rethink both the country's place in the world and the best way to guarantee its security.

With almost 400,000 American GIs killed in WWII and a million more wounded, now the US is all-powerful (and in sole possession of nuclear weapons). This second option holds that America must use this power to guard against

external threats and ensure our security and freedom, and also the security and freedom of our allies. Therefore, as President Truman said to Congress in October of this year, "The surest guarantee that no nation will dare again to attack us is to remain strong in the only kind of strength an aggressor understands: military power".

The United States is uniquely situated, and 1945 is a uniquely fortuitous moment, for this approach to be adopted. Europe and Japan were destroyed in the war, and China, India and virtually the entire Southern Hemisphere still live in historic poverty. At the same time, the United States has now grown into the world's overwhelmingly dominant economic actor, a single country accounting for nearly half of total global GDP.

Moreover, in an age of industrial warfare, this economic prowess translates into great military power as well. During the war, the US industrial base produced almost 100,000 planes and 30,000 tanks per year, with factories generating \$37.5 billion in armaments, compared to just under \$14 billion in Germany and the Soviet Union, \$11.1 billion in Britain, and \$4.5 in Japan. As the war ended, US air power was unrivaled, especially with the possession of strategic bombers, aircraft carriers and associated forces, along with a monopoly on atomic weapons. Altogether, these allow the US to project power nearly anywhere in the world.

Although the United States (and Britain) had a remarkably well-functioning alliance with the Soviet Union during the war—despite massive cultural, ideological and strategic differences between East and West—now that the common threat of Nazi Germany has been vanquished, those differences are coming to the fore. There is widespread concern that the Soviets might take advantage of the war's devastation to spread their ideology through an unofficial but very real imperialist-like domination of other lands, including those the Red Army currently occupies in Central and Eastern Europe.

Thus some contend that to protect the American homeland, the US should develop 'defense in depth', built around a substantial standing military force and an overseas basing

system that would ensure any threat will be addressed far from America's shores. Others are beginning now to develop and argue for a 'containment' policy, in which the United States would seek to counter Soviet power anywhere and everywhere it appears in the world, using means ranging across the spectrum of available tools, from cultural to political, moral, economic and, where necessary, military.

In any case, this option is built around the notion of the United States guaranteeing its own security through the means of developing overwhelming American military power.

WHAT IT ENTAILS: This option requires the US to make sure that its military is not only vastly superior to all others on the planet, but even to that of other coalitions of rival states. This powerful military force could be used assertively rather than merely reactively, for the maintenance of world order and our own security. The American military would need to be capable of effectively serving as the global police officer and thus possibly managing multiple active deployments simultaneously. Moreover, America would need to build an arsenal of weapons of mass destruction—led by a powerful nuclear force—that would not only deter any attack upon the US, but also discourage behavior by other actors that would be contrary to American preferences.



US AIR FORCE VIA WIKIMEDIA COMMONS, PUBLIC DOMAIN.

Mass production of Consolidated-Vultee B-24 Liberator heavy bombers at the Consolidated factory in Fort Worth, Texas, in 1943. More than 18,000 B-24s were built between 1940 and 1945.

MAIN ARGUMENTS IN FAVOR OF AND AGAINST THIS OPTION: International governance (as contemplated by Option One) may work at some point in the future, but in the world of 1945 it remains an idealistic dream. And, like the idealistic notions that opened the door to World War II, it is a very dangerous dream to rely upon for our nation's security and preservation of our democracy. America is the world's predominant military, economic and political power at this moment. Moreover, its values of freedom and democracy are superior to those promulgated and practiced by rival countries, and this power could be used to protect and maintain those principles. As John Winthrop, the first governor of the Massachusetts Bay Colony stated, we should be "as a city upon a hill", for others to willingly emulate. America cannot rely upon others for its security—it must provide for it through its own military power. This option is the best for maintaining America's freedom and independence while securing the peace.

Yet history also teaches that military buildups do not transpire in a vacuum. And history also warns against the unintended consequences of the 'security dilemma', wherein military buildups of purely defensive intent are seen as threatening on the other side of the border and responded to in kind, thus leading to an arms race and perhaps actual conflict that neither side originally wanted. This option is also problematic in its tendency to 'bet the house' as a matter of ongoing foreign policy. If American power intimidates other countries or the alliances they might form into acquiescence, all is fine, at least from the American perspective. If that does not happen, however, nothing less than global annihilation from a massive nuclear exchange is put at risk in every major foreign policy confrontation.

Examples of What Might Be Done and Their Trade-offs

1. Science and industry should work with government to rapidly develop the new technology of nuclear weapons, especially while the US has a monopoly on these devices. America should create newer and more powerful classes of these weapons, along with a substantial coercive/deterrent arsenal to provide the US with the power to defend itself, and the leverage to enforce global order.

TRADE-OFF: This 'all-in' bet that wagers the risk of total destruction in order to win total peace. These weapons are dangerous to develop and maintain. They

incentivize other countries to respond by building their own. They are morally controversial and their proliferation by the US might damage America's reputation. And, if they are ever actually used, they are potentially destructive to the point of annihilation.

2. Rather than decommissioning the massive military force that was created to fight World War II, it should be maintained and deployed throughout all parts of the world in order to serve American national security interests.

TRADE-OFF: Other states will also expand their military power over time and work to 'balance' against American military power. Any advantages the US has in the postwar era may be short-lived. This may even encourage other countries to arm themselves. There is also the question of 'guns versus butter' spending priorities: How many schools or healthcare clinics must be foregone in order to adopt this approach?

3. Institute mandatory military service. All young men should be compelled to serve in the military for a minimum of two years after graduating from high school.

TRADE-OFF: This would make the draft permanent, requiring all young men to likely defer the start of their careers and families.

4. Americans from all walks of life should maintain/develop close relationships with our most reliable and trusted international partners. This could include the development of permanent military alliances. Other countries will be grateful to have close relationships with America and will gladly participate in these pacts, which will thus also serve to increase American security.

TRADE-OFF: Countries that are not included in US-initiated alliances are likely to feel vulnerable and seek to build their own support coalitions.

5. Civil society (citizens, corporation, universities, etc.) should work toward contributing to the national project of military preparedness and domination, encouraging and fostering efforts such as science and engineering training toward those ends.

TRADE-OFF: This will again mean resources, energy and ideas not devoted to other domains, such as infrastructure, science, education, culture, etc.

Create a Just World to Preserve Peace

WAR, LIKE ANY OTHER HUMAN BEHAVIOR, is governed at least in part by the moral underpinnings of societies, which, in turn, affect the ethics of individuals within their borders. People generally resist at almost all cost doing what they have been trained to hold as taboo. Many contemporary societies once tolerated such behaviors as slavery and colonialism, but have since rendered those institutions so morally objectionable as to be dismissed out of hand in almost every circumstance.

Both America and international society should seek to create a new ethical paradigm that, for the first time in human history, regards the practice of war as entirely unacceptable. Following Marianne Moore's dictum (from "In Distrust of Merits"), "There never was a war that was not inward; I must fight till I have conquered in myself what causes war", we should all struggle toward a new morality in which the very concept of fighting wars is unacceptable.

As we move into a dangerous new era in which war could lead to the annihilation of all life on the planet, we

must solicit the efforts of every American citizen as an initial step towards permanent world peace. For many in 1945, the lessons of recent horrors demand that citizens, the American government, and ultimately partners around the world come to understand that war is ethically unthinkable, and therefore obsolete. Our campaign for the annihilation of war on the basis of pure ethics must be fought with the same moral intensity that we've heretofore brought to war itself. That is, we must make war on the very concept of war.

The US is well-positioned to lead this campaign. It has literally been "a nation of nations" because of its immigration history, and it can therefore effectively foster a welcoming spirit of diversity and inclusion. Organizations like the Carnegie Endowment for Peace, universities and 'think tanks' (supported by renowned American philanthropy) can develop 'global threads' to connect peoples from many nations, using expanded media vehicles.

However, Americans would need to jettison any sense of cultural superiority in order to be able to learn and teach,



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Suffragist Peace Delegates on NOORDAM, 1915— Mrs. P. Lawrence, Jane Addams, Anna Molloy

and to collaborate for peace, including sponsoring a web of artistic and cultural connections, especially with former enemy states. We would need to focus on global education and stress the learning of foreign languages and cultures, perhaps making one or two non-Western languages mandatory from an early age.

Much of this work has already begun, and some of it is part and parcel of American history and cultural tradition. In celebrating the achievements of the Revolutionary generation, John Adams frequently noted that Americans were leaving an inspiring legacy for all people and for posterity. Alexis de Tocqueville picked up this theme, emphasizing our distinctive democratic achievements (with some qualifiers).

Theodore Roosevelt frequently asserted: "This will not be a good country for any of us unless we learn how to make it a better nation for all of us". Writing during the 1940s, Gunnar Myrdal and the American historian Henry Steele Commager highlighted the themes of America's noble principles, but also the gaps in practice. Myrdal asserted that everyone, everywhere, had a right to expect more of the United States because nowhere on the globe had a nation been established with such explicit and repeated noble principles of human rights. Commager furthered Myrdal's line of argument, emphasizing the diversity that made America a nation of nations, and the unusual degree to which Americans had been the most "future-oriented" and "change celebrating" people in the history of the world. Both he and Myrdal underscored that America had always been a "protest" nation, as activists strove to close the gaps between words and deeds in the nation's creed.

In 1915, the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom (WILPF) gathered 1,200 women from diverse countries at The Hague in protest of WWI. WILPF's principles were subsequently adopted by President Wilson, constituting 9 of his 14 Points used for peace negotiations in November 1918. As World War I drew to a close, WILPF (whose co-founder was Jane Addams, recipient of the Nobel Peace Prize) advocated for "the concept of mutual security—urging that security be based on justice and freedom from want, rather than on military might and prestige".

On the international stage, in WWII Americans were inspired by what FDR called the Four Freedoms (Freedom of Speech; Freedom of Worship; Freedom from Want; and Freedom from Fear). But, ironically, in the national arena, we have flagrantly violated these self-same civic and ethical values. For the 'moral entrepreneurship' of this option to work, America must base its authority to lead not simply on long-held American ideals, but also actions. As long as there is unrest, violence, riots and inequitable policies, the

peace we seek to create will not help us to feel safe, secure and satisfied at home. To succeed, we will need to channel the energy and enthusiasm of all Americans, but that will be impossible to muster in communities whose basic needs and freedoms have not been respected. Eventually, our moral entrepreneurship will 'go global', and as part of that effort, we will need to end the demoralizing domination and colonization that leads to discontent and violent outbreak.

The new peace campaign should involve all members of society, including minorities and women. These efforts will highlight the key connection between civil rights and harmony within communities, and global peace. In that spirit, the African-American Double V Campaign launched during WWII can serve as a model. In its post-war manifestation, Double V's message would change from 'Victory in War' to 'Victory over War' while continuing the struggle for 'Victory at Home' against segregation, discrimination and injustice. This could also provide African-Americans with a new-found role as moral "managers" for the new non-violent and integrated world order.

WHAT IT ENTAILS: This transition would occur through the activity of individuals, small organizations, religious groups, schools, universities, NGOs, and governmental bodies, all seeking to ensure war is no longer an appropriate means for resolving conflict. This ideational shift would be reinforced by efforts to promote cultural interaction and understanding, as well as the conversion from an aggressive wartime economy and ethos to an economy and campaign devoted to permanent peace. In addition, the government should convert wartime agencies (e.g., the War Resources Board, the War Production Board, the Office of Economic Stabilization and the Office of War Mobilization) to focus instead on ensuring peaceful relations among all nations, with similar levels of funding and intensity of commitment as seen during the war. With its current standing as a superpower (while others around the globe are suffering extreme physical devastation and economic chaos), its 'noble ideals' (as articulated by FDR's Four Freedoms), and perhaps as atonement for its own moral failings at home and abroad during the war, America has a responsibility to take the lead in this campaign, and to reach across ethnic, cultural, religious, socio-economic, regional and philosophical lines toward eradicating the practice of war.

MAIN ARGUMENTS IN FAVOR OF AND AGAINST THIS OPTION: As long as war remains an option for countries, there will always be temptations to justify it in pursuit of some goal or another. Just as in the domestic context, where the greatest force against crime is not government or policing but rather self-policing by individual citizens based

on agreed-upon norms, the best method to prevent war is to promote a widespread international ethos that puts the practice itself beyond the pale in the minds of almost all individuals. Moreover, given that we are now in a moment in which war could for the first time lead to annihilation of all life on the planet, any sane society must seek under such circumstances to eradicate it completely as even a remote possibility. This option values the moral and intellectual growth of all people as the means for securing the peace.

That said, changing attitudes that seem to be embedded into our psyche is hard work, to the point where it might even be a fool's errand. Perhaps it is the case that the tendency to identify in- and out-groups and treat them very differently is deeply woven into the fabric of our very DNA as human beings. And even if that is not true, would many Americans really subscribe to the notion that war is never the answer? Having just struggled mightily, and at enormous cost, to vanquish the implacable moral threat to humanity posed by Hitler's purported thousand-year Reich of terror, racism and wholesale murder, does anyone think it would have been better instead to have acquiesced rather than resisting in the only manner that was possible—by warfare? Might this notion be considered simply too idealistic an idea to be pursued at this particular moment, when the world has just witnessed destruction and depravity on such an unprecedented scale?

Examples of What Might Be Done and Their Trade-offs

1. Local groups such as schools, churches, labor unions, etc., should pressure the United States government, and the various states and localities, to establish a cabinet-level Peace Department whose task would be to implement an education program that exposes the hazards of war and the benefits of peaceful means of addressing problems.

TRADE-OFF: Instead of having parents instill particular values in their children, the school system would be stepping in, usurping the right of parents to choose an appropriate moral code for their children, and forcing individuals to pay taxes in support of projects they oppose.

2. Individuals, working alongside churches and civic groups—such as CORE (Congress of Racial Equality) and WILPF (Women's International League for Peace and Freedom)—striving for reform in the US and globally, should work to create activities to promote cross-cultural awareness, acceptance and celebration of difference, and the forging of commonalities. Such

groups could now expand their work with governmental aid, and help spread this philosophy of global security and harmony.

TRADE-OFF: Those who do not share these values will not want their government and their tax dollars supporting and funding projects they oppose.

3. Wartime initiatives—including gender and race awareness campaigns—and the spirit of volunteerism, so prevalent during the preceding years, should be turned toward fueling the new peace campaign. Leaders and celebrities of all stripes who had used their influence to promote the war bond drives, should now mobilize again around the enterprise of peace.

TRADE-OFF: Co-opting these organizations with money and pressure runs the risk of diminishing an independent civil society in America, which is one of the most essential bulwarks of democracy. Additionally, it might also prove highly challenging to get various groups to respect different leaders and different paths to similar goals.

4. American citizens should push the United States government to sponsor a comprehensive program to enlist and fund the cooperation of other countries in conducting a substantial moral education campaign along these same lines within their borders. The US—as the most powerful country in the world, possessing extensive resources, and least affected by the war's destruction—should lead in creating initiatives to connect people in many nations in win/win personal relationships.

TRADE-OFF: Despite the agonies of war, it is not easy to get people to look beyond racial, ethnic, nationality and religious differences. The US itself has not seriously begun to deal with its own segregation, racism, sexism and related human rights issues. How then will it be equipped to foster inclusion for diverse peoples in many nations?

5. As this campaign 'goes global', the US government should persuade and provide incentives, when necessary, to its allies—Great Britain, France, etc.—to put their remaining colonies in Africa, Asia and the Middle East on paths to independence, with internationally coordinated support for relief, recovery, and economic growth.

TRADE-OFF: Pressuring our allies to do something they view as deeply contrary to their own interests risks alienating them from other goals, such as the joint pursuit of peace.

OPTION ONE: Unite Globally

Arguments in Favor of This Option	Examples of What Might Be Done	Some Consequences and Trade-Offs to Consider
<p>The world has become dangerous to the point where planetary destruction is now conceivable if weapons and other threats are not regulated or contained. These are global problems which can only be solved globally, not by national actors pursuing narrower interests. A centralized world government with exclusive control of military power is necessary to keep the peace.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The United States government should lead an international effort toward creating a democratic, limited, federal world government. This would include a representative parliament, a robust executive authority, and a fair judicial dispute adjudication process. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Countries that have political or legal conflicts with each other will have to accept the decisions of the world government. This will mean a loss of sovereignty in some areas, most significantly with respect to national security and foreign policy.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Americans should support the creation of an international military force, which should be employed for the purpose of preventing countries from fighting wars against each other. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Individuals in every country will be required to serve in the international military force.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> All militaries on the planet, including America's, should be dramatically reduced in size. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> If the new world government ceases to be democratic in nature or becomes otherwise illegitimate and unacceptable to member-states, they would lack the immediate military power to challenge that government.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> America should support and help finance the creation of a global intelligence agency whose primary focus would be on military, criminal and other disruptive networks that are a threat to global peace and cooperation. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Many individuals and governments might be uncomfortable with secret information being collected by a centralized authority without their approval or review.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Citizens and businesses should push for the government to foster conversion of war jobs to employment for peace, dismantling armament programs. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> This much government intervention in the economy is antithetical to the laissez-faire principles of traditional American capitalism.

OPTION TWO: Maintain Military Dominance

Arguments in Favor of This Option	Examples of What Might Be Done	Some Consequences and Trade-Offs to Consider
<p>America cannot rely upon others for its security—it must provide for it through military power. This option is the best for maintaining America’s freedom and independence while securing the peace.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Science and industry should work with government to rapidly develop the new technology of nuclear weapons, and more powerful classes of such weapons, giving the US the power to defend itself and the leverage to enforce global order. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> This ‘all-in’ bet that wagers the risk of total destruction in order to win total peace. These weapons are dangerous to develop and maintain. They incentivize other countries to respond by building their own.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The massive military force that was created to fight World War II should be maintained and deployed throughout all parts of the world in order to serve American national security interests. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Other countries will also expand their military power to balance against American military power, and thus any advantages the US has may be short-lived. This policy may even encourage other countries to arm themselves. Also, money spent on arms is money not spent on schools or healthcare clinics.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Institute mandatory military service. All young men should be compelled to serve in the military for a minimum of two years after graduating from high school. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> This would make the draft permanent, requiring all young men to likely defer the start of their careers and families.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> America should maintain/develop close relationships with our most reliable and trusted international partners including through the development of permanent military alliances. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Countries that are not included in US-initiated alliances are likely to feel vulnerable and seek to build their own support coalitions.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Civil society (citizens, corporation, universities, etc.) should contribute to the national project of military preparedness and domination, especially by encouraging science and engineering. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> This again means resources, energy and ideas not devoted to other domains, such as infrastructure, science, education, culture, etc.

OPTION THREE: Create A Just World to Preserve Peace

Arguments in Favor of This Option	Examples of What Might Be Done	Some Consequences and Trade-Offs to Consider
<p>As long as war remains an option of statecraft, there will always be temptations to justify it in pursuit of some goal or another. The best method to prevent war is to promote a widespread international ethos that puts the practice beyond the moral pale in the minds of almost all individuals.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Local groups — schools, churches, labor unions, etc. — should pressure all levels of government to establish a cabinet-level Peace Department to implement education programs that expose the hazards of war and the benefits of peaceful means of addressing problems. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Instead of having parents instill particular values in their children, the school system would be usurping the right of parents to choose an appropriate moral code for their children, and forcing individuals to pay taxes in support of projects they oppose.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Individuals, working with churches and civic groups and supported by governmental funding, should promote global cross-cultural awareness and celebration of difference, and the forging of commonalities. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Those who do not share these values will not want their government and their tax dollars supporting and funding projects they oppose.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Wartime initiatives should be turned toward fueling the new peace campaign. Leaders and celebrities of all stripes who had used their influence to promote the war bond drives, should now mobilize again around the enterprise of peace. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Co-opting these organizations with money and pressure runs the risk of diminishing an independent civil society in America.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> American citizens should push the government to sponsor a program to enlist and fund the cooperation of other countries in conducting a substantial moral education campaign. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The US itself has not seriously begun to deal with its own segregation, racism, sexism and related human rights issues. How then will it be equipped to foster inclusion for diverse peoples in many nations?
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The US government should persuade and incentivize its allies to put their remaining colonies in Africa, Asia and the Middle East on paths to independence, with internationally coordinated support for relief, recovery, and economic growth. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Pressuring our allies to do something they view as deeply contrary to their own interests risks alienating them from other goals, such as the joint pursuit of peace.



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The United Nations Option: What Happened

ELEMENTS OF ALL THREE OF THE ABOVE OPTIONS were adopted in American policymaking following World War II, along with what might be described as the ‘institutionalized diplomacy’ of the United Nations, founded in October 1945 and continuing to the present day. With this option, all countries retain their sovereignty and military power, yet also participate in a standing organization—the United Nations—whose chief purpose is to keep the peace by providing both a forum for dialogue and a mechanism for coordinated action.

That mechanism is the concept of ‘collective security’, and it is at the heart of the UN’s design (though it has suffered considerably in implementation over the decades). Collective security represents a rather brilliant solution—on paper, at least—to the quandary of how to supersede national autonomy (and thus the ability to launch wars) without eliminating the national sovereignty and military capability that countries do not want to give up. The idea is that all agree to a treaty (the UN Charter) in which they pledge mutual defense against any aggression. Thus, an attack by Country A against

Country B effectively instead becomes an attack by Country A on the entire rest of the world. The problem with making this work in the real world can be simply described by the single word ‘politics’. If you are Country X and you have an historic affinity with Country A, you may be unwilling to condemn it, let alone fight against it. If you are the prime minister of Country Y and you are half a world away from Country A, you may have hard time explaining to your public why blood and treasure should be expended on some remote conflict between two actors no one’s even heard of before.

Many of the founding ideas of the United Nations—the elimination of territorial expansion and ensuring all peoples the freedom to choose their own form of government—were previously enshrined in the Atlantic Charter, first signed by US President Franklin Roosevelt and British Prime Minister Winston Churchill in 1941, and joined by many others afterward. Along with further consultations between the United States and other great powers in 1942-1945, the foundation was laid for the structure of the United Nations.

The United Nations is not a world government. Rather, the UN Charter, which defines the structure of the UN as well as the rights and responsibilities of UN member nations, is a treaty acceded to by sovereign nations. Thus, the UN functions as an entity made up of legally equal actors that essentially institutionalizes diplomacy between countries. In this way the United Nations provides a forum for diplomacy, but— with the rare exception of certain Security Council resolutions—is not hierarchically superior to any member country and acts only in accordance with the interests of its member-states.

The United Nations General Assembly (GA) reflects the principle of equality among countries. Each member country is represented in the GA and has one vote, no matter its size or power. The GA could be considered a type of world parliament that debates resolutions on important global topics, but this body has highly limited power. Most importantly, GA resolutions are generally non-binding on member-states. Beyond the GA, the United Nations also contains a host of other organs related to economic and social concerns, human rights, world health and labor issues, among others, that often operate with little fanfare but do important work globally.

What real power there is in the United Nations structure resides in the Security Council (SC). Made up five permanent and ten rotating members (increased from six rotating members in 1965), the SC is responsible for maintaining international peace and security. The SC is able to define threats to international peace as well as pass resolutions to



‘Going Global’ and the Problem of Colonization

Do we still believe in democracy? And do we believe in it for all men? Or are we determined still to hug to our breasts the once popular idea that democracy is excellent for white Europe and North America but unworkable Asia, Africa and probably South America?

—W. E. B. DuBois,
Trek, Johannesburg, South Africa, April 5, 1946

In 1945, W. E. B. Du Bois, co-founder of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) and author of the influential *Souls of Black Folks* (1903), voiced his concerns regarding the fate of colonized people at the United Nations Convention in San Francisco. In a set of articles commissioned by the *New York Post* after the convention, Du Bois wrote up a fierce condemnation, calling for an end to both colonization and racial inequity worldwide. In a follow-up piece on May 15, 1945, he pointed out that, although America ostensibly fought the war against Hitler and Mussolini to keep democracy alive, in fact, we do not practice it at home with the illegal disfranchisement of African Americans at the voting polls, nor do we support it around the world, given our positions vis-à-vis our European allies.



WIKIMEDIA COMMONS: PUBLIC DOMAIN.

punish aggressor countries with economic sanctions, and can even authorize the use of military force to restore the peace.

When the UN was formed, the United States and the other major World War II Allies felt they had a special responsibility to prevent another major war. But as great powers, they also wanted to preserve the freedom of action

such actors have traditionally enjoyed. Thus, the U.S., the United Kingdom, France, the Soviet Union, and China enshrined their positions in the international system as permanent members (P5), with the power to veto any substantive SC resolution. The composition and powers of the SC can be seen as a compromise between large and small countries, and as a compromise between real world government and complete state sovereignty. Smaller states desired an international organization to protect them from aggression through a type of collective security, but powerful states like the US were unwilling to submit to an international institution that could substantially constrain their freedom of action. The SC structure balances these desires by creating a body responsible for peace and security with powerful members taking the lead, but by simultaneously allowing each of these most powerful states a way to block actions they see as contrary to their national interests.

In addition to the problems inherent in trying to straddle the untenable line between state sovereignty and global governance, the UN also had the great misfortune of being born at precisely the same moment that the Cold War began unfolding, and the organization was very much captive to the dynamics of this rivalry for the first two-thirds of its history, often rendering it unable to act meaningfully. If the US favored a policy at the UN the Soviet Union was almost assured of opposing it, and vice versa. Still, the great hope of the United Nations—this body that was forged at the height of the most destructive war in human history—endures. The UN has proven a durable institution, even with its flaws and shortcomings, and has contributed to humanity in myriad ways. Perhaps the single greatest manifestation of these efforts is the fact that the world has not suffered a third catastrophic world war, though the UN's significance in contributing to that outcome is highly debatable.

“

Without such an organization, the rights of men on earth cannot be protected.... The responsibility of the Great States is to serve and not dominate the world.”

—President Harry Truman, April 16, 1945

Atlantic Charter: A joint statement issued by the United States and the United Kingdom in 1941, affirming their values and their vision for a free and peaceful world following the conclusion of World War II.

Civil Rights: The social, moral and legal relationship between groups within a society. Such groups might be constituted on the basis of race, gender, sexual orientation or other categories, and their rights are often determined by a process of struggle and negotiation.

Civil Society: Sometimes defined as everything in the cultural and political sphere in-between the levels of the family and the state (national government), this domain includes organizations such as labor unions, church congregations, the media, fraternal societies, etc.

Collective Security: The mechanism by which both the League of Nations and the United Nations have sought to produce a peaceful world without having to do so by disarming all countries and creating a global police force. The idea of collective security is built on a mutual pledge of support, such that any attack by one country upon another will be seen by the entire world and responded to as if it were an attack on all countries.

Colonialism: The domination of one people and their territory by another people. Examples include the Roman Empire, the British Empire, etc.

Containment: A foreign policy strategic architecture which calls for meeting the expansionary tendencies of another power with an appropriate level and kind (economic, moral, political, ideational, military) of response, wherever and whenever that country takes aggressive action. This was the guiding principle of American foreign policy during the Cold War. It represented a middle ground between the extremes of, on the one hand, doing nothing about Soviet expansion (as would likely previously have been US policy – see ‘Isolationism’) and, on the other hand, the horror of having to fight World War III in 1945 in order to seek ejection of the Soviets from the Eastern European countries they’d gobbled up on their march to Berlin.

Decolonization: The process, which accelerated massively in the post-World War II era though was arguably begun by Americans in 1776, of peoples liberating themselves or otherwise being freed from colonial domination. Since 1945, the vast majority of colonies throughout the world have been replaced with countries now controlling their own destinies (see ‘Sovereignty’).

Defense In Depth: A strategy for defeating a powerful military force, often involving trading territory in exchange for time. The idea is to yield space rather than to meet massive force with massive force, forcing the attacker to dissipate its strength.

Deterrent Arsenal: Weapons, typically of mass destruction, which are not created with the intent of using on offense, but rather with the intent of dissuading others from attacking because of the catastrophic response a potential attacker knows this arsenal will be used to inflict.

Double V Campaign: An effort during World War II by African Americans to simultaneously contribute to two victories, one for America in the war against the Axis Powers, and one to achieve equality for themselves at home.

Federalism: A system for sharing power within a multi-level governing structure. In the United States, for example, this means that the federal government in Washington possesses certain powers, but also that the fifty state governments do so as well. At the global level, this would mean a real international government possessing specified powers while the countries of the world (currently about 195 of them) would also have certain powers reserved to them.

Four Freedoms: A statement of America’s foreign policy values articulated by Franklin Roosevelt before US entry into WWII. In support of those already fighting fascism and oppression, FDR committed the US to the pursuit of freedom of speech, freedom of worship, freedom from want and freedom from fear for all peoples throughout the globe.

Globalization: The process, chiefly driven by advances in technology ranging from steamships to satellites to digital communication, of ‘shrinking’ the world. That is, the cultural, economic, linguistic, environmental and political integration of formerly isolated societies into tightening relationships.

Great Game: The continuing power struggle of international politics, especially during the era of European colonialist expansion, when major players (see ‘Great Powers’) sought to carve up the world for their own benefit, and competed with others seeking to do the same.

Great Powers: The handful of most significant players in international politics during the modern (or Westphalian) era. The countries on this short list changed a bit over time, but usually included Britain, France, Prussia/Germany, Austria-Hungary and Russia.

Imperialism: See ‘Colonialism’.

Isolationism: The policy of withdrawing from the competition of international high politics (war and peace issues), except in cases of defense against an attack. The United States famously (mostly) practiced isolationism from the time of its founding until after WWII, just as Washington had recommended in his presidential farewell address, when he urged the country to avoid ‘foreign entanglements’.

Laissez-faire Capitalism: An economic system in which the government plays a very minimal role, and outcomes are determined by the largely unfettered actions of individuals and other economic actors such as corporations. From the French for ‘let go’, the term refers to the idea of the government standing aside, rather than directing a country’s economy.

League of Nations: The predecessor organization to the United Nations, founded on the basis of President Woodrow Wilson’s post-WWI vision for a mechanism to end war (see ‘Collective Security’). However, in part because the US never joined due to Republicans in the Senate blocking ratification of the treaty (see ‘Isolationism’), and in part for other reasons, the League failed to accomplish much and was dead in all but name by the eve of WWII.

NGOs: Non-governmental organizations, some of which are international in scope (INGOs). These are not countries or intergovernmental organizations (IGOs) like the UN or EU, but some of them (e.g., the Red Cross,

Greenpeace, Oxfam) can nevertheless be quite consequential in a direct manner, and also indirectly by influencing governments.

Sovereignty: The power of countries to make their own decisions and chart their own destinies, unimpinged by the power and influence of other countries or actors.

Spheres of Influence: Zones, usually physically proximate to powerful countries (see ‘Great Powers’), in which those major actors exert a large degree of control, and which they claim as off-limits to other powerful players. A bit like colonialism/imperialism, but not quite as far-reaching in terms of degree of domination and status under international law.

Superpowers: A term to describe the two countries which emerged from the ashes of WWII as vastly superior in power to any others on the planet. Because of the reduced number of actors in question, and especially the vast increase in relative power, the term ‘great powers (see above) was no longer sufficient to describe the United States and the Soviet Union in the post-WWII era.

World Federalism: Power-sharing between a real international government and the countries of the world (see ‘Federalism’), similar to what countries like the United States and Germany practice internally. While there are different ways to configure federalist power-sharing, the most basic model would reserve certain powers exclusively for the world government, and certain others exclusively for the member-states.

World Government: An international governing body or structure with the genuine authority to make policy and the genuine capacity to enforce those laws. A bit like the United Nations, except that the UN generally lacks these autonomous powers and is thus more like a club of sovereign countries which coordinate policy when it suits them to do so. Such a world government could be democratic in nature, but needn’t necessarily.

Zero-sum Game: A concept employed by scholars who use game theory in order to model and understand the behavior of people and countries. A zero-sum game is one in which any gains achieved by Player A are, by definition, precisely equal to the losses sustained by Player B. Hence, addition of the two values equals zero. Other games can be non-zero-sum by their nature, such that, for example, both players could come out ahead.