Toward Peace

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In an idealistic conception of peace, peace is not merely the absence of physical violence in a shooting war, whether between states, between large organized nonstate parties and states, or between multiple nonstate parties. Peace requires, in addition, the absence of the threat of war and the absence of circumstances of hostility and mutual distrust, which are most convincingly achieved by the absence of military preparations altogether, even those made in the name of defense—given that such military resources can be adapted for the purposes of offense, and that doing so is sometimes claimed to be preemptively necessary for defense.

With these absences, there can be no practical possibility of war, because there is neither reason nor resource for it. But even this is not yet the fully ideal conception of peace, for these absences constitute negative desiderata only. They do not rule out a return to conditions in which the absences could be reversed; and even among polities in formal alliances, with strong historical bonds, there is rarely such a state of unalloyed mutual trust that they do not spy on each other and keep sensitive political, technological, and intelligence matters reserved from each other. This is the norm even among NATO partners. For the fully idealistic version of peace, a set of further *positive* factors is required, consisting in the fulfillment of conditions of peaceful coexistence between the parties on either side of what, in familiar circumstances—if the absences did not exist—could constitute a conflict-inducing divide.

The chief requirement for fulfilling these conditions is that there must be "buy-in" from the populace to a set of cultural commitments, in which individuals and groups shed old resentments, historical antipathies, xenophobia, tribalism, and sectarianism. The chief requirement, in short, is a genuinely embraced cosmopolitanism; the foundation of peace is full cultural entente (friendly

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understanding, mutuality, and accord), not merely military, diplomatic, and political entente. The reason for this is best explained by noting some of the factors that undermine the hope that peace can be achieved by the promotion of trade relations and social exchanges—namely, nationalistic politics, populism, ideals of patriotism, and identity commitments and their constitutive national-historical myths. These factors are still actively promoted, with different degrees of vigor, in all states today; and they are directly antithetical to the cosmopolitanism that is an essential condition of ideal peace.

A further requirement for ideal peace is justice. Only a just peace is sustainable; in any relationship, the absence of mutual assurance that justice will prevail means that the relationship is effectively one of truce rather than of peace. Without cultural entente, national sentiment in practice often expresses itself in the form of security sensitivities and efforts to maximize the economic competitiveness of one's own state. These factors are a barrier to ideal peace because they fall short of implying complete confidence in the relationship between the parties.

A Taxonomy of Peace

The conditions described above mark the minimum requirements necessary to arrive at a full version of the idealistic conception of peace, which I have called "ideal peace," or which might better be described—for reasons that will become clear—as "strong positive peace." In the current and foreseeable state of the world, such peace looks unattainable. The practical question therefore is this: How closely might it be possible to approximate such a state of peace? Answering this requires coming up with a taxonomy of versions of negative and positive peace, which will help us identify elements that will take us closer to where we want to go.

Among states in firm alliances with each other—the NATO states for example—there is what might be described as "weak positive peace," to suggest that there is a fairly high degree of mutual cultural acceptance among them, together with the absence of the threat of war and the opposite of circumstances of hostility and distrust. The question of how both the absence of the threat of war and the absence of hostility and distrust relate to the condition of mutual cultural acceptance is an important one. In a condition of weak positive peace, the causality by which one condition prompts the other is not necessarily unidirectional: the cultural condition could be either the cause or the effect of the alliance. But it is at

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least highly plausible that the absence of sentiments of distrust and hostility between two communities or peoples is a sufficient ground for the absence of threat and the initiation of alliances (not just military alliances), even if it is not yet sufficient for ideal peace. *Fully* mutual cultural acceptance (not just a "high degree" of it) and *complete* absence of distrust—which therefore means *complete* absence of reasons for hostility—are obviously two sides of the same coin. For strong positive peace, fully mutual cultural acceptance is a necessary ground.

Weak positive peace does not fully meet the conditions of peace to which idealism aspires because the parties to the relationship are still armed; they still have at least defensive militaries; and even if it is unlikely that they would turn their militaries against each other, their alliance almost certainly rests on mutual undertakings of aid and defense if either is threatened by a state or agency not party to the pact between them. These conditions, in turn, serve as a premise for the existence of possible or actual military threats in the world; an acceptance, in short, that the world remains a place of possible war. The conditions of ideal peace, a necessary component of which is the absence of the means of violent conflict altogether, are therefore structurally unachievable in the current state of the world, and because a pacific people or state cannot unilaterally make matters otherwise, it would seem that weak positive peace is the most one can hope for. This indicates that the practical alternatives are "strong negative peace" and, very differently, "weak negative peace." Examination of what is implied by these labels takes us further into the realm of the possible.

Strong negative peace obtains for a given set of armed parties in the absence of hostility and distrust among them, even if the degree of mutual cultural recognition remains weaker than acceptance, but is, say, closer to tolerance, indifference, or ignorance. This latter fact is a point of sufficient concern to merit attention. Tolerance or indifference—often associated with a large degree of ignorance about the lifestyle, interests, values, and experiences of members of another community—is probably typical of how things stand between, for example, an ordinary citizen of Britain and her counterpart in China. Tolerance or indifference might evolve in either direction under the pressure of circumstance—that is, over time it might either become positive cultural acceptance or become distrust and hostility. As a psychological and historical generalization, one might venture that the latter direction of evolution is the more usual on a community basis, as happens when an immigrant population reaches a critical mass in a host population, their presence triggering resentment. Moving from indifference to positive

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cultural sentiment is more apt to take place at the individual level, as when a person visits a country, learns its language, and becomes friendly with some of its citizens.

Strong negative peace can obtain among parties outside formal alliances and nonaggression pacts, but typically this occurs when there are numerous bilateral relationships (often for trade) in place. The extent of visa requirements and immigration controls between states might be taken as one indication of the degree of warmth or coolness to which negative peaceful relations subsist between them.

Weak negative peace is the absence of shooting war in conditions where there are degrees of diplomatic and cultural distrust, mutual watchfulness, and a low level of bilateral relations. There is a range of factors that can take this type of relationship into the zone of cold war and hostility short of physical violence. For example, states between which there exists a weak negative peace may still try to destabilize each other by forming alliances against each other, imposing sanctions on each other, and otherwise making each other a target of diplomatic hostility. They may also interfere in each other's internal affairs covertly and otherwise, employing espionage and cyber warfare techniques, and giving aid—ranging from financial to material—to each other's active enemies.

A situation like this is unstable and historically has often been the precursor to violent conflict. It is the reason why mutual distrust and hostility against a background of military preparation, even in the absence of physical violence, can only be described as weak, or fragile, negative peace at best.

The Value of Peace

If one is in agreement with the pessimists (the "realists," as they would call themselves) that ideal peace is unattainable in the current and foreseeable circumstances of the world, our question becomes this: is weak positive peace, as the best that can be hoped for, achievable on a global scale, and not just between alliances such as NATO?

The answer turns in large part on noting the reasons for which we value peace. It would be uncontentious to say that at the very least most people value peace because it provides stability, order, safety, and freedom from fear. Further, it provides opportunities to secure freedom from want, exploitation, and injustice. In democracies, most people would add that peace is the condition of personal liberty and pluralism, the circumstance in which a variety of lifestyles and choices are

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accepted, thus maximizing the liberty in question. In wartime, such liberties are curtailed, as are freedoms from want and fear; the contrast is illustrative.

It is clear that weak positive peace—peace enjoyed by residents of states that are in firm alliances with other states, predicated on a high degree of mutual cultural acceptance even as they maintain armaments—makes the realization of these values of peace possible. The risk remains that conflict could arrive from outside the network of the peace-enabling arrangements, thus negating the states' stability and safety. In the current state of the world, that is a fact of life. But it is not necessarily an irreducible one, as I will suggest shortly in saying that the possibility of globalizing weak positive peace turns on promoting a determined global effort to realize the circumstances for which peace, as just described, is valued.

It is also clear that even the less advantageous condition of strong negative peace can permit realization of the values of peace, though in declining from "positive" to "negative" peace we mark an acceptance of a relative thinness, and therefore greater fragility, in mutual cultural perceptions. Peacemaking endeavors that focus exclusively on intergovernmental relations thus leave out a crucial—perhaps *the* crucial—component for achieving lasting benefits from peace, in that cultural perceptions lie with the *people* and what they think and feel about *others*.

Culture, Justice, and Hospitality

Let us consider again, therefore, this crucial component: mutual cultural acceptance or entente. What is connoted here is the kind of mutual perception that consists in goodwill, respect, and confidence. A good example is provided by citizens of the member states of the European Union with respect to differences in language, customs, tastes, and other national traits they encounter in relating to fellow EU citizens. Assuming they have sufficient education and travel experience in the surrounding regions, it is safe to claim that they generally not only find no barrier to mutual cultural acceptance in such differences but might well regard them in a positive light; they might appreciate and enjoy them. This suggests the obvious conclusion: promotion of such an attitude between communities and peoples is a highly important means of laying the groundwork for positive peace.

It is natural to think, and for good reason, that aid and education NGOs and, in particular, cross-cultural exchange organizations such as the British Council, the Goethe-Institut, and Institut Français, occupy the front line of these endeavors

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by offering opportunities for intercultural understanding and appreciation. This raises a material question about the enormously disproportionate amounts of state money that go into military spending, on the one hand, and cultural efforts to promote peace, on the other. Though it would be unrealistic to claim that proportionate investment in the latter might make the former unnecessary, greater equity would assuredly strengthen the "strong" in strong negative peace premised on the cultural acceptance factor.

Education is the key component here, and not merely in the work of the organizations mentioned but in public schools and in the promotion of educational exchanges and cooperation. Any attempts to save money in the near term by reducing opportunities for language learning in primary and secondary education, or cutting budgets for school trips both to go abroad and to visit foreign institutions in one's own country, are shortsighted.

These "soft approaches" to peace promotion are often regarded as a sideshow to the main events of diplomacy and deterrence through military preparedness. This is a mistake. Despite the babel of peace theories, whose very numerousness appears to call each of them into question, it is clear from the historical record that bonds of trade, exchange, and social intercourse between states and peoples, while not guarantees of peace, tend to promote it far more than does their absence. After all, this is a founding principle of the European Union, a project instituted in a region of the world that had made a bloodbath of itself for millennia.

At this point, it is necessary to return to the question of "justice" in the relations constituting cultural entente. Colonizers, occupiers, conquerors, and slavers might enter into relations with those whom they colonize or enslave that come to involve a high degree of mutual understanding and interdependence. We would never, however, characterize these relationships as meeting sufficient requirements even for strong negative peace, let alone ideal peace. The missing element is justice, which requires respect and equitability. I say "equitability" because equality cannot be expected, at least not yet, in a world whose economic arrangements are so skewed; but fair treatment is a different matter, and there cannot be peace without it. In its absence, one cannot hope to develop the goodwill that generates mutual trust, and without trust there can be no true security. There is a virtuous circle in these considerations: educational and cultural exchanges are, at their best, confidence-building activities that form pathways—through goodwill, trust, and respect—to the mutual cultural acceptance that is the enduring basis of peace.

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These reflections call to mind Immanuel Kant's idea of "universal hospitality," as laid out in his essay "Perpetual Peace." On his view, this type of hospitality would make certain alternative routes to achieving and sustaining peace—such as world government—unnecessary in practice, because peace would consist in the friendship between peoples who would forge just the kind of mutual cultural acceptance I advocate. If we could implement just one of Kant's ideas, this one would be a fine candidate. The reason, paradoxically, is that it has a good chance, by itself, of inclining the peoples of states and nations to see the merit in doing what Kant thought it would render *unnecessary*—namely, the forming of combinations and cooperatives, and the entering into comity with other states and nations to promote mutual interests. The historical tendency has been for states to enter such arrangements for security purposes when they are of a military nature, although in some significant cases—such as the federalizing of the former British colonies of North America in the late eighteenth century—defense was not the only consideration.

Conclusion

I will conclude by taking a closer look at the European Union, which serves as an outstanding example of countries choosing *non*-military cooperation and resource pooling. At a regional level, it has achieved something close to the idealistic vision of peace. A skeptic might point out that the early phases of European integration took place under the four-power arrangements following the conclusion of World War II, and soon thereafter under the shield of NATO. That is true; but these circumstances enabled the creation of relationships not expressly predicated on creating a primarily military alliance for external defense, but instead on creating an internal zone of cooperative freedoms (of capital, labor, services, and people) aimed at so intertwining the fortunes of the participating states that peace would be an indisputable assumption of the structure. For this, cultural acceptance is a necessary condition. In the immediate aftermath of a devastating war, cultural acceptance could not be assumed; it had to be an aspiration, and a bold one: namely, that it would be normalized and entrenched. Individual leadership and setting of examples among French and German statesmen of vision played a key part in the early steps, but it was the realization of positive acceptance by the broader populations that brought genuine peace to a region of world that, arguably, had seen the most and worst wars in the history of humankind.

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The idea that cosmopolitan attitudes are essential to the best kind of peace may seem obvious. However, it is no less important for being so. This level of peace entails a definite program of action for peoples and states committed to attaining a global version of the best kind of peace attainable. It involves investing at least as much in promoting mutual understanding and cultural entente as in preparations for war. If spending on cultural entente were as big as military expenditures, the world might have a chance of becoming a different and far better place.

Abstract: As part of the roundtable "World Peace (And How We Can Achieve It)," this essay argues that an ideal state of peace might not be attainable, but a positive form of peace could be achieved on a global scale if states and peoples made a serious investment—comparable to their investment in military expenditure—in promoting the kind of mutual cultural understanding that reduces tensions and divisions and fosters cooperation. Peacemaking usually focuses on diplomatic and military détente; the argument in this essay is that these endeavors, though obviously important, are not by themselves enough for the best attainable kind of peace, for which the further and even more important aim of cultural entente is essential. This implies that peacemaking activities need to apply vastly more effort to intercultural and interpersonal exchange and education.

Keywords: peace, culture, justice, trust, understanding, exchange, cultural investment, positive peace, negative peace

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