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PLOUGHSHARES CALGARY SOCIETY
PRESENTS:

Hearts and Minds in a Digital Landscape: What Shapes Individuals' Sensitivity to Misinformation?

JOIN US FOR AN EDUCATIONAL MEETING
FEATURING JEAN-CHRISTOPHE BOUCHER AND ERIN GIBBS VAN BRUNSCHOT

JOIN US ON ZOOM
WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 17TH
7:00PM MDT

Contact Us:



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THE ENDLESS DROPPING OF BOMBS IS SABOTAGING HUMANITY'S ABILITY TO EVOLVE

Robert C. Koehler
December 9th, 2023
Summary

- A recent article in the New York Times, headlined: "A U.S.-Iranian Miscalculation Could Lead to a Larger War, Officials Say." The story is about the possibility of Iran becoming involved in the Israeli assault on Gaza. Quietly referred to as a "larger war," a U.S.-Iran confrontation could pull in the whole nuclear-armed world, East vs. West.
- As the Times notes, "National security officials fear a miscalculation amid tit-for-tat attacks, combined with each side's belief that the other does not want a larger fight, could trigger exactly that: a regional conflict, just two years after the United States ended 20 years of war in the Middle East and South Asia."
- The NY Times story's primary takeaway: The game of war is beyond human control.
- As Dennis Rucinich put it in a recent interview with Chris Hedges: "We have almost a closed-loop system that guarantees that we will continue to go to war. There is no counterbalance for diplomacy or peace. That doesn't exist."
 - War, in other words, does nothing but create the certainty of more war. And peace is no more than an occasional pause as the combatants reload.
- Ali Abu Awwad, co-founder of the Palestinian resistance organization Taghyeer (Arabic for "change") says "Now more than ever, we all must refuse to use violence to justify more violence. We should not allow our pain to blind us to what is most needed: mutually guaranteed sovereignty, security, and dignity for both Israelis and Palestinians."



THE ENDLESS DROPPING OF BOMBS IS SABOTAGING HUMANITY'S ABILITY TO EVOLVE

- “This began,” he wrote, “my painful journey of adopting nonviolence as a path toward a normal future for all the people of this bleeding land.”
- Ali Abu Awwad adds: “As a leader on the West Bank, I am doing everything possible to end this madness. I am engaging local and international leaders in all that I have said in this statement. I am trying with my colleagues and partners – locally and around the world – to guarantee support for families and activists under a total closure and increasing violence against them on the West Bank. Many people today are being led by their emotions and pain. I understand this challenge all too well. Like so many caught up in this conflict, I am torn in pieces by the inner struggle between my Palestinian national identity and my belonging to all humanity.”
- The following words are part of the Nonviolence Charter Taghyeer puts forth: “The past carries unforgettable trauma and pain across the land and among generations of refugees; yet we choose to transform victimhood into agency. We want to be the authors of our future.”



Ali Abu Awwad

Photo Credits: Ali Abu Awwad, 2023



UNITED NATIONS SUMMIT OF THE FUTURE IN 2024 TO TALK ABOUT UN EMERGENCY PEACE SERVICE

Earl Turcotte
The Hill Times
December 14th, 2023
Summary

- In 1992, then-United Nations secretary general Boutros Boutros-Ghali proposed that the UN Security Council be provided forces and resources to enable it to intervene—militarily if necessary—in an imminent or ongoing conflict when all efforts at mediation and negotiation have been exhausted.
- He wanted to create a standby UN force with the mandate and might to challenge belligerents if necessary in order to prevent or bring violent conflict to a summary end; UN ‘peacemakers,’ as distinct from ‘peacekeepers.’
- The Brahimi Report on United Nations Peace Operations, issued in 2000, echoed the need for such a capacity.
- The latest iteration of this general concept is a proposal to establish a UN Emergency Peace Service (UNEPS) that would provide a rapid UN response to prevent or end armed conflict, protect civilians at extreme risk, prepare for peacekeeping operations if required, and provide the basic necessities for survival in conflict zones where others either cannot or will not.
- UNEPS is envisioned as a permanent, integrated, multi-functional unit of up to 1,300 well-equipped and highly trained personnel who are well-equipped and ready for almost immediate deployment when authorized by the Security Council: a body that could respond in a matter of days.
- This proposal will be discussed during the upcoming 2024 United Nations Summit of the Future in September.





DR. JILL CARR-HARRIS: NONVIOLENT SOCIAL ACTION SHARING EXPERIENCES IN WAR, CONFLICT AND WITH CLIMATE CHANGE

Dr. Jill Carr-Harris, an International Peace Specialist at the International Gandhi Institute for Peace and Nonviolence, has lived and worked with marginalized communities in India, as well as promoting international peace initiatives. She earned her PhD from OISE, U of T, with her thesis focusing on nonviolence. Jill has learned from experience how nonviolent action inspires strategies and shifts in perspectives for meeting some of the most critical problems of our time.

Thank you to Science for Peace for this [video](#)





UPCOMING PLOUGHSHARES CALGARY MEETINGS IN 2024

- On Wednesday, January 17th, **Calgary Ploughshares Society** will host **Hearts and Minds in a Digital Landscape: What Shapes Individuals' Sensitivity to Misinformation?** featuring **Jean-Christophe Boucher and Erin Gibbs Van Brunschot**. As our lives become intertwined with digital technologies, the information environment is increasingly confrontational, particularly on social media platforms. The current conflicts in Ukraine and Gaza demonstrate daily how strategic communication is now an essential aspect of modern warfare, using narratives and images to bolster domestic and international support, as well as spread confusion and undermine the morale of adversaries. As such, mis/disinformation is a menace to democratic resiliency as it limits the ability of citizens to access verified information and for governments to find the needed public support to engage in policymaking. Thus, democracies are now investing significant resources to understand better what factors increase the susceptibility of their citizens for mis/disinformation. This event takes place on Zoom starting at 7:00pm. Please register for free on our Eventbrite page or by emailing our office at: office@ploughsharescalgary.ca.
- On Wednesday, February 7th, **Calgary Ploughshares Society** will host **Sexual Violence In Contexts Of Mass Atrocities** featuring **Daniela Kravetz**, an international human rights lawyer.
- On Wednesday, March 13th, **Calgary Ploughshares Society** will host **People Power Peace: How Civil Society Stops War** featuring **Rivera Sun**, award-winning author, internationally-respected nonviolent strategy teacher and program director for Pace e Bene/Campaign Nonviolence.



EVENTS

- On Saturday, January 20th, **P2ACE Foundation** will be hosting **Resilience Rendezvous, an exclusive fundraiser and silent auction evening, where every bid and donation directly impacts the lives of individuals battling chronic pain and PTSD.** This event embodies our mission to illuminate pathways toward holistic healing and empowerment. Through a captivating evening filled with community, compassion, and generosity, we aim to raise crucial funds to support our initiatives and programs at P2ACE. This event takes place at The Canadian Brewhouse (80 Longview Common, SE); doors open at 6:00pm. Tickets are available on Eventbrite.ca.
- On Saturday, January 27th, **Aphrodit Espanioli** will be hosting **Zumba Fundraiser for the Children of Gaza.** Aphrodit Espanioli would like to emphasize that this fundraiser is purely humanitarian and stands apart from political affiliations. All proceeds will be donated to PCRF'S Urgent Relief for Gaza's Children. This event takes place at Rosscarrock Community Association (4411 10 Ave SW); this event runs from 2:00pm-3:30pm. Tickets start at \$20 and are available on Eventbrite.ca.





GOOD NEWS

- WestJet unveiled its holiday hero for the 2023 year's Christmas Miracle campaign, Ionia Nedrick-Lawrence, a nurse at Calgary's Trico LivingWell. The theme "Holiday Heroes," sought to shine a light on the one-in-four Canadians who will be separated from a loved one over the holidays. The company asked Canadians to nominate who they thought was worthy of a reunion and amidst the entries, Nedrick-Lawrence's stood out. Nedrick-Lawrence was nominated by a family whose mom lives at Trico LivingWell. Nedrick-Lawrence and her family will be using the gift of flight to visit her home country, Jamaica. She has not been back in 11 years and says the reunion with the rest of her family is long overdue. (Global News Calgary. December 22nd, 2023).
- According to a new study of almost 8,000 participants, caring for a pet helps stave off cognitive decline for people over 50 who live on their own. The study included 7,945 mostly-white British participants from the English Longitudinal Study of Ageing with an average age of 66. The study took place over an eight year period, more than a third of the group (35.1 percent) owned pets; about 30% of the group lived alone. The findings showed that pet ownership offset the associations between living alone and declining rates in verbal memory and verbal fluency. It was "a significant modifier" in all 3 associations—composite verbal cognition, verbal memory, and verbal fluency. (Good News Network, December 30th, 2023).



Photo Credits: Pietro Schellino





GOOD NEWS

- Derek Brown, A Phoenix elementary school teacher organized a “Secret Santa Club” to teach children about the value of kindness and giving, using a hit CBS News story of a wealthy businessman who gives out money around Christmas time as an inspiration. For the 2023 holiday season, Brown organized the students into a giving gang, wearing uniforms of red plaid shirts and caps, and instructed them to call local businesses and organizations to ask for money for their own Secret Santa project. Browns students raised around \$8000 and then tracked down the people most in need in the city, handing them \$100 in cash. (Good News Network, January 5th, 2024).
- Ken McRae and Jim Tomas, two 93-year-old Calgarians, make the trek to the Calgary Curling Club every week for the plus-50 Silver Fox Curling League. McRae and Tomas have been playing the game for a long time, ever since the two were in high school. McRae feels fortunate every time he hits the ice. He says he wasn't sure if that was going to be a possibility a couple of years ago when he suffered a stroke. Both McRae and Tomas feel blessed they can still play the game they love at 93 and they don't plan on giving it up anytime soon. (CTV News Calgary, January 3rd, 2024).



Ken McRae and Jim Tomas

Photo Credits: Glenn Campbell/CTV News Calgary

