

THE NORMANDY MANIFESTO FOR WORLD PEACE

Issued in Normandy, 4 June 2019

"Shall we put an end to the human race; or shall mankind renounce war?"

Russell-Einstein Manifesto, 1955

The existential question posed by the Russell-Einstein Manifesto in the midst of the Cold War is even more pressing today than it was then. Nuclear weapons are several thousand times more deadly. Over 2500 warheads are on hair-trigger alert. Deadly pathogens may threaten life as we know it. And with major powers preparing to deploy killer robots, we are on the edge of a black hole; the possibility of machines determining our fate is morally repugnant. Global military expenditure has doubled since the end of the Cold War. It is set to increase further with plans to modernize existing weapons and develop new systems of destruction and decimation. The risk of a war by accident, incident or intent remains a distinct possibility against the backdrop of climate crisis, growing inequality, ultra-nationalism, and the erosion of ethical values.

An international treaty to ban and eventually eliminate nuclear weapons was recently concluded, though it awaits universal acceptance. Efforts are underway to prohibit lethal autonomous weapons and bring the weaponization of genes and biotechnology within the purview of the Biological Weapons Convention. Despite these positive signs, we still face the risk of human extinction. The major powers oppose the new arms control initiatives; they are abandoning existing treaties. They are dragging their feet to reverse global warming and gross socio-economic inequality. Historical evidence shows that no empire lasts forever. The collapse of each and every strong nation in history is a testament to naiveté of the arrogant. Technology was much less advanced when earlier empires collapsed, killing millions but sparing the earth.

War is not innate to human nature. It is a function of choice. Cooperation, much more than conflict, underpins evolution. Life became possible two billion years ago when cells learnt to thrive together. Civilization came into existence 12,000 years ago when human beings learnt to live together in communities. We can draw strength from the fact that the human spirit has shown resilience for millennia. It has bounced back after every crisis to create a better world. The world possesses a vast pool of wisdom. Time and again, we have proved ourselves capable of reason. We have banned mustard gas, blinding laser weapons, landmines and cluster munitions. We must now make war implausible and gradually renounce it so that we can go ahead and solve the real problems such as poverty, climate change, and disease.

We have come together in Normandy to appeal to all people of the planet that we are one. We all breathe, think, love, hate, fear and hope. What we have in common is greater than our differences. We recall here what Russell and Einstein told us: Remember your humanity; forget the rest.

In order to render war implausible, establish sustainable peace, reconstruct ethical values, and harness our common humanity, we need a New Global Contract underpinned by a fresh approach to international security. We must build an inclusive international security system rooted in the rule of law, respecting universal human rights. We need to design a reliable collective security architecture that everyone can have confidence in. Unless there is such a security alternative, states will continue to acquire weapons of war. We need to develop a time-bound integrated action plan for the elimination of all weapons of mass destruction, including nuclear, biological, chemical and lethal autonomous weapons systems.

We believe that the phased elimination of weapons of mass destruction will not compromise security, quite to the contrary; twenty two countries without standing armies have not been attacked from the moment they disavowed the idea of military. The evidence shows that security arrangements that do not depend on weapons are more effective than the ones that depend on the potential use of force. We must reengineer our collective security system guided by evidence of success rather than fear of failure.

Peace is not the absence of war; the implausibility of war is. We need to transform the United Nations, particularly the Security Council, into a robust instrument of conflict prevention and conflict resolution. We must harness the power of dialogue in order to pre-empt the use of force.

A sustainable peace thrives only when there is sustainable development. The Sustainable Development Goals, the Kyoto Protocol on greenhouse gas emissions, and the Paris Agreement on combating climate change provide elements of the New Global Contract. We require a global budget to underpin these agreements, with resources raised from future decrease in military expenditure, increase of development partnership commitments, and the consideration of new and creative sources of revenue.


We must ensure every day, every minute and in every corner of the world that all human beings are treated with dignity and are equal and empowered participants, without distinction of any kind such as race, gender, colour or faith.

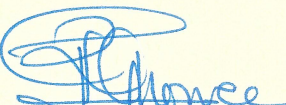
Our call for a universal, inclusive, rule-based collective security system, global budget for sustainable development, and the commitment to human dignity and human rights of all is enshrined in the core values of tolerance, trust and cooperation. It is an appeal to ignite the spirit of Ubuntu, which means "I am because we are". In the seventeenth century, John Donne reminded us, "Any man's death diminishes me, because I am involved in mankind."

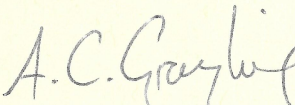
We have a tendency to establish peace only after a prolonged devastating war. The Treaty of Westphalia, the Final Act of Vienna, the League of Nations, the United Nations, were all conceived after millions of young men lost their lives, families were ruined, and humanity was shamed. There will be no opportunity to negotiate a new Peace Agreement after the next world war, because there will be no negotiators, no people, no flowers and no trees.

Let us conceive and establish sustainable peace before someone initiates the next war. If we do not, we will be sleep walking into collective suicide. If we do, we will have the possibility of achieving the apex of humanity and entering an era of Summum Bonum.

Signed in Caen

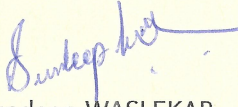

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