**Education for Conflict Resolution:
Can We Learn to Live Together?**

David A. Hamburg

In the fall of 1994, Mikhail S. Gorbachev, former president of the Soviet Union, reflected on a decade of intensive involvement with political leaders all over the world. One of his outstanding conclusions was the large extent to which they see "brute force" as their ultimate validation. His observation, based on abundant experience, highlights a long-standing, historically deadly inclination of leaders of many kinds from many places to interpret their mandate as being strong, tough, aggressive, even violent. For all too many, this is indeed the essence of leadership.

Gorbachev, in control of a vast nuclear arsenal, not to speak of immense power in conventional, chemical, and biological weapons, was wise enough not to interpret his own leadership in terms of brute force. But the world is full of leaders who do. More and more often, they will have massive killing power at their disposal in the twenty-first century. Look at the scale of slaughter in Rwanda with penny-ante weapons!

It is time to take seriously the remark of Archibald MacLeish in the aftermath of World War II: "Since wars begin in the minds of men, it is in the minds of men that the defenses of peace must be constructed." He was writing about the mission of the emerging international institutions that were vividly mindful of the carnage of World War II and the Holocaust, but his words apply to the furious small wars of today.

The human species seems to have a virtuoso capacity for making harsh distinctions between groups and for justifying violence on whatever scale the technology of the time permits. Moreover, fanatical behavior has a dangerous way of recurring across time and locations. Such behavior is old, but what is historically new and very threatening is the destructive power of our weaponry and its ongoing worldwide spread. Also new is the technology that permits rapid, vivid, widely broadcast justifications for violence. In such a world, human conflict is a subject that deserves the most careful and searching inquiry. It is a subject par excellence for public understanding. Yet today's education has little to say on the subject. Worse still, education almost everywhere has ethnocentric orientations.

Can we do better? Can we educate ourselves to avoid conflict or peacefully resolve it? Is it possible for us to modify our attitudes and orientations so that we practice greater tolerance and mutual aid at home and in the world? Perhaps it is unlikely. But the stakes are so high now that even a modest gain on this goal would be exceedingly valuable. This essay explores a few, and only a very few, of the possibilities brought to light by recent inquiry and innovation. The examples are meant to be evocative - better ones may well be available. They are meant to move this subject higher on the world's agenda.

Insights into Intergroup Hostility

The challenge is immense. Both in field studies and experimental research by social scientists, the evidence is very strong: We humans are remarkably prone to form partisan distinctions between our own and other groups, to develop a marked preference for our own group, to accept favorable evaluations of the products and performances of the in-group,

and to make unfavorable evaluations of other groups that go far beyond the objective evidence or the requirements of a situation. Indeed, it seems difficult for us to avoid making invidious distinctions even when we want to.

Orientations of ethnocentrism and prejudice are rooted in our ancient past and were probably once adaptive. Over the millennia, our estimate of personal worth if not our very survival has been built on the sense of belonging to a valued group - a sense that seems to go hand in glove with the impulse to assign negative value to those who are not of our group. Both these tendencies historically have been reinforced by parental and social education beginning in early childhood in nearly every human society.

Today, reinforcement occurs at home, in the schools, in the streets, and in the mass media. The cumulative effect of widespread frustrating conditions also exacerbates the development of prejudice and stereotyped thinking. Political firebrands put gasoline on the embers. Worldwide, the education received from multiple sources is still remarkably ethnocentric. In some places ethnocentrism and prejudice are inflamed by official propaganda, the cultivation of religious stereotypes, and political demagoguery, leading to intergroup violence that is justified in the name of some putatively high purpose.

The global outburst of intergroup violence, with its explosive mixture of ethnic, religious, and national strivings, is badly in need of illumination. People everywhere need to understand why we behave as we do, what dangerous legacy we carry with us, and how we can convert fear to hope.

Must Children Grow up Hateful? A Developmental Perspective

Education, via the family, schools, the media, and community organizations, must be turned into a force for reducing intergroup conflict. It must serve to enlarge our social identifications in light of common characteristics and superordinate goals. It must seek a basis for fundamental human identification across a diversity of cultures in the face of manifest conflict. We are, in fact, a single, interdependent, meaningfully attached, worldwide species.

The question is whether human beings can learn more constructive orientations toward those outside their group while maintaining the values of group allegiance and identity. From an examination of a great deal of laboratory and field research, it seems reasonable to believe that, in spite of very bad habits from the past, we can indeed learn new habits of mind.

There is an extensive body of research on intergroup contact that bears on this question. For example, experiments have demonstrated that the extent of contact between groups that are negatively oriented toward one another is not the most important factor in achieving a more constructive orientation. Much depends on whether the contact occurs under favorable conditions. If there is an aura of mutual suspicion, if the parties are highly competitive or are not supported by relevant authorities, or if contact occurs on the basis of very unequal status, then it is not likely to be helpful, whatever the amount of exposure. Contact under unfavorable conditions can stir up old tensions and reinforce stereotypes.

On the other hand, if there is friendly contact in the context of equal status, especially if such contact is supported by relevant authorities, and if the contact is embedded in cooperative activity and fostered by a mutual aid ethic, then there is likely to be a strong

positive outcome. Under these conditions, the more contact the better. Such contact is then associated with improved attitudes between previously suspicious or hostile groups as well as with constructive changes in patterns of interaction between them.

Other experiments demonstrate the power of shared, highly valued superordinate goals that can only be achieved by cooperative effort. Such goals can override the differences that people bring to the situation and often have a powerful, unifying effect. Classic experiments readily made strangers at a boys' camp into enemies by isolating them from one another and heightening competition. But when powerful superordinate goals were introduced, enemies were transformed into friends.

These experiments have been replicated in work with business executives and other professionals with similar results. So the effect is certainly not limited to children and youth. Indeed, the findings have pointed to the beneficial effects of working cooperatively under conditions that lead people to formulate a new, inclusive group, going beyond the subgroups with which they entered the situation. Such effects are particularly strong when there are tangibly successful outcomes of cooperation - for example, clear rewards from cooperative learning. They have important implications for child rearing and education.

Developing Constructive Orientations in Childhood and Adolescence

Ameliorating the problem of intergroup relations rests upon finding better ways to foster child and adolescent development. This fact should present crucial new opportunities to educate young people in conflict resolution and in mutual accommodation.

Pivotal educational institutions such as the family, schools, community-based organizations, and the media have the power to shape attitudes and skills toward decent human relations or toward hatred and violence. If they really wish to be constructive, such organizations need to utilize the findings from research on intergroup relations and conflict resolution. They can use this knowledge in fostering positive reciprocity, cross-cutting relations, superordinate goals, and mutual aid.

Education everywhere needs to convey an accurate concept of a single, highly interdependent, worldwide species - a vast extended family sharing fundamental human similarities and a fragile planet. The give-and-take fostered within groups can be extended far beyond childhood to relations between adults and to larger units of organization, even covering international relations.

All research-based knowledge of human conflict, the diversity of our species, and the paths to mutual accommodation constitutes grist for the education mill. What follows is a sketch of some possibilities for making use of many different educational vehicles for learning to live together within nations and across national boundaries.

Fostering Prosocial Behavior in Early Life

In the context of secure attachment and valued adult models, provided by either a cohesive family or a more extended social support network, a child can learn certain social norms that are conducive to tolerance and a mutual aid ethic. Children can learn to take turns, share with others, cooperate (especially in learning and problem solving), and help others in everyday life as well as in times of stress.

These norms, though established on a simple basis in the first few years of life, open the way toward constructive human relationships that can have significance throughout the life span. Their practice earns respect from others, provides gratification, and increases confidence and competence. For this reason, both family care and early intervention programs need to take account of the factors that influence the development of attachment and prosocial behavior. This is important in parent education, in child care centers, and in preschool education.

There is research evidence, both from direct observation and experimental studies, that settings that promote the requirements and expectations of prosocial behavior do in fact strengthen such behavior. For example, children who are responsible for tasks helpful to family maintenance, as in caring for younger siblings, are generally found to be more altruistic than children who do not have these prosocial experiences.

In experimental studies, typically an adult (presumably much like a parent) demonstrates a prosocial act like sharing toys, coins, or candy that have been won in a game. The sharing is with someone else who is said to be in need though not present in the experimental situation. The adult plays the game and models the sharing before leaving the child to play. The results are clear. Children exposed to such modeling, when compared to similar children in control groups, tend to show the behavior manifested by the models, whether it be honesty, generosity, or altruism. Given the child's pervasive exposure to parents and teachers, the potential for observational learning in this sphere as in others is very great. Prosocial behavior is particularly significant in adaptation because it is likely to open up new opportunities for the growing child, strengthen human relationships, and contribute to the building of self-esteem.

Empathy Training

Empathy, defined as a shared emotional response between observer and subject, may be expressed as "putting oneself in the shoes of another person." Empathy training has been tested with eight- to ten-year-olds in elementary school classrooms. In one program, children were given thirty hours of exercises in small groups of four to six. Activities were designed to increase their skill in identifying emotional responses and in taking the perspective of another. The intervention group was compared with two kinds of control groups.

The participants in empathy training showed more prosocial behavior, less aggression, and more positive self-concept than did children in either control group. This elementary school training model may provide a guide for the enhancement of empathy in other contexts - for example, in learning to take the perspective of other ethnic or religious groups. In any event, responding empathically in potential conflict situations helps to reduce hateful outcomes.

A Framework for Conflict Resolution in the Schools

Much of what schools can accomplish is similar to what parents can do - employ positive disciplinary practices, be democratic in procedure, teach the capacity for responsible decision making, foster cooperative learning procedures, and guide children in prosocial behavior in the various spheres of their lives. They can convey in interesting ways the truth of human diversity and the humanity we all share. They can convey the fascination of other cultures, making understanding and respect a core attribute of their outlook on the world - including the capacity to interact effectively in the emerging global economy.

Professor Morton Deutsch of Teachers College, Columbia University, a distinguished scholar in conflict resolution, has delineated programs that schools can use to promote attitudes, values, and knowledge that will help children develop constructive relations throughout their lives. Such programs include cooperative learning, conflict resolution training, the constructive use of controversy in teaching, and the creation of dispute resolution centers.

In his view, constructive conflict resolution is characterized by cooperation, good communication, perception of similarity in beliefs and values among the parties, acceptance of the other's legitimacy, problem-centered negotiations, mutual trust and confidence, and information sharing. Destructive conflicts, in contrast, are characterized by harsh competition, poor communication, coercive tactics, suspicion, perception of basic differences in values, an orientation to increasing power differences, challenges to the legitimacy of other parties, and personal insecurity.

Efforts to educate on these matters are most effective where there is a substantial, in-depth curriculum with repeated opportunities to learn and practice cooperative conflict resolution skills. Students gain a realistic understanding of the amount of violence in society and the deadly consequences of such violence. They learn that violence begets violence, that there are healthy and unhealthy ways to express anger, and that nonviolent alternatives to dealing with conflict are available and will always be useful to them.

Cooperative Learning

A substantial body of information during the past two decades has been generated from research on cooperative learning. These efforts stem in part from a desire to find alternatives to the usual lecture mode and to involve students actively in the learning process. They are inspired, moreover, by a mutual aid ethic and appreciation for student diversity. In cooperative learning, the traditional classroom of one teacher and many students is reorganized into heterogeneous groups of four or five students who work together to learn a particular subject matter, for instance, mathematics.

Research has demonstrated that student achievement is at least as high - and often higher - in cooperative learning activities as it is in traditional classroom activities. At the same time, cooperative learning methods promote positive interpersonal relations, motivation to learn, and self-esteem. These benefits are obtained in middle grade schools and also high schools, for various subject areas and for a wide range of tasks and activities.

In my view, there are several overlapping yet distinctive concepts of cooperative learning that offer a powerful set of skills and assets for later life: learning to work together; learning that everyone can contribute in some way; learning that everyone is good at something; learning to appreciate diversity in various attributes; learning complementarity of skills and a division of labor; learning a mutual aid ethic. There is good reason why cooperative learning has lately stimulated so much interest. It deserves more widespread utilization along with continuing research to broaden its applicability.

Early Adolescence: Learning Life Skills

The Carnegie Council on Adolescent Development's Working Group on Life Skills Training, chaired by Dr. Beatrix Hamburg, in 1990 provided the factual basis and organizing principles on which such interventions can be based. It also described a variety of exemplary programs.

One category of life skills is being assertive. An example of assertiveness is knowing how to take advantage of opportunities - for example, how to use community resources such as health and social services or job training. Another aspect is knowing how to resist pressure or intimidation by peers and others to take drugs, carry weapons, or make irresponsible decisions about sex - and how to do this without spoiling relationships or isolating oneself. Yet another aspect of assertiveness is knowing how to resolve conflict in ways that make use of the full range of nonviolent opportunities that exist. Such skills can be taught not only in schools but in community organizations.

Required community service in high schools, indeed even in middle grade schools, can also be helpful in the shaping of responsible, sharing, altruistic behavior. It is important to have serious reflection on such community service experience, to analyze its implications, and to learn ways to benefit from setbacks. How we help others is crucial. "Help" must not imply superiority over others but rather convey a sense of being full members of the community, sharing a common fate as human beings together. This orientation can usefully be an important part of parent education as well. As the development of parental competence increasingly comes to be based on explicit courses of education and preparation for parenthood, the elements of caring for others, of reciprocity and of mutual understanding must be a key part of the task.

Violence Prevention in Adolescence

A public health perspective suggests that the prevention strategies that have been successful in dealing with other behavior-related health problems, such as smoking, may be applicable to the problem of adolescent violence. Adolescent experimentation with behavior patterns and values offers an opportunity to develop alternatives to violent responses. A pioneering example is provided by the Boston Violence Prevention Program - a multi-institutional initiative with the goal of reducing fights, assaults, and intentional injuries among adolescents. It trains providers in diverse community settings in a violence prevention curriculum, promotes incorporation of this curriculum into service delivery, and creates a community consensus supportive of violence prevention. The program targets two poor Boston neighborhoods characterized by high violence rates. Its four principal components are curriculum development, community-based prevention education, clinical treatment services, and a media campaign.

The curriculum was first developed in 1983 by Dr. Deborah Prothrow-Stith. It acknowledged anger as a normal and potentially constructive emotion; alerted students to their high risk of being a perpetrator or victim of violence; helped students find alternatives to fighting by discussing potential gains and losses; offered positive ways to deal with anger and arguments; encouraged students to analyze the precursors of fighting and to practice alternative conflict resolution by playing different roles; and created a classroom climate that is nonviolent.

During the initial stages of curriculum development, it became clear that intervention in the schools alone was insufficient. In 1986 a community-based component was initiated in which community educators provided violence prevention training to youth-serving agencies. Additional materials included informational flyers, a videotape, a rap song, cartoon characters, church sermons, and Sunday school sessions.

The project seeks to reach as many community settings as possible, including multi-service centers, recreation programs, housing developments, police stations and courts, religious

institutions, neighborhood health centers, and schools. There is a referral network for health, education, and social services. The community campaign has produced television and radio public service announcements, posters, and T-shirts using the slogan, "Friends for life don't let friends fight." It focuses on peer influences and the responsibility that friends have for helping to defuse conflict situations. It also includes a public television documentary.

Violence prevention efforts of such a systematic and extensive sort are very recent. It would be surprising if the first efforts were highly successful, because of the great complexity and difficulty of the tasks in terribly impaired neighborhoods. One clear finding is that the adolescents - and especially disadvantaged males - are urgently in need of dependable life skills and constructive social supports that foster health, education, and decent human relationships.

Television and Prosocial Behavior

Research has established causal relationships between children's viewing of either aggressive or prosocial behavior on television and their subsequent behavior. Children as young as two years old are facile at imitating televised behaviors. Television violence can affect a child's behavior at an early age and the effects can extend into adolescence. In general, the relationship between television violence and subsequent viewer behavior holds in a variety of countries. Cross-national studies show this in countries as diverse as Australia, Finland, Israel, the Netherlands, Poland, and the United States.

There is some research evidence that television need not be a school for violence - that it can be used in a way that reduces intergroup hostility. The relevant professions need to encourage the constructive use of this powerful tool to promote compassionate understanding, nonviolent problem solving, and decent intergroup relations.

Television can portray human diversity while highlighting shared human experiences. It can teach skills that are important for the social development of children and do so in a way that both entertains and educates. So far we have had only glimpses of its potential for reducing intergroup hostility.

Professor Gerald Lesser at Harvard University has summarized features of the children's educational television program, "Sesame Street," that are of interest in this context. The program originated in the United States in 1969 and appears today in 100 other countries. Each program is fitted to the language, culture, and traditions of a particular nation. The atmosphere of respect for differences permeates all of the many versions of "Sesame Street."

Research from a variety of countries is encouraging. For example, the Canadian version of "Sesame Street" shows many sympathetic instances of English- and French-speaking children playing together. Children who see these examples of cross-group friendships are more likely to form such friendships on their own than are children who do not see them. The same is true for Dutch, Moroccan, Turkish, and Surinamese children who see "Sesame Street" in Holland. The findings suggest that appealing and constructive examples of social tolerance help young children to learn such behavior. These are tantalizing results, making us wish for a wide range of similar programming and experimentation.

Learning from All Kinds of Conflicts

Processes of conflict resolution in any sphere should be examined for their implications in other spheres. It may well be that understanding of the processes of conflict resolution between groups within a nation will concomitantly enhance our ability to reduce conflict between nations - and vice versa.

Are there lessons to be learned from decent human relations in various spheres of life? Abundant experience and study at the level of interpersonal relations and small-group and community relations provide a way of thinking about decent relations between large groups and even nations. What are the major requirements?

1. Each party needs a basis for self-respect, a sense of belonging in a valued group, and a distinctive identity.
2. Each party needs dependability of communication with the other.
3. Each party needs from the other a recognition of some shared interests and the fact of interdependence.
4. Each needs civil discourse, including the ability to understand the perspective of the other - even if they do not always agree. Disagreements can also be considered in a civil way. And both parties need to keep in mind their common humanity even - and especially - in times of adversity.
5. Each party has the possibility of earning the respect of the other - in a differentiated way, admiring some attributes but not others.
6. Boundaries for competition and disagreement can be recognized, even if they are sometimes dimly seen.
7. When boundaries fundamentally have to do with violence, each party can seriously consider and reconsider from time to time the balance between interests of self and the interests of the other.

Such concepts of decent human relations have considerable operational significance in daily living. On the whole, they serve the human species well at various levels of social organization. Could we learn to utilize them in relations between ethnic groups and even adversarial powers? The experience of ending the Cold War suggests that this may be possible.

Role of the International Community

The growing threat of prejudicial ethnocentrism as a path to hatred, violence, and mass killing has to emerge as one of the major educational challenges of the next century, with international institutions playing an important role. The international community can be a powerful force in broad public education on the entire problem of intergroup violence. It can help and reward conflict resolution leaders, build education systems worldwide, and provide useful, sensitive, early intervention.

It is of utmost importance for contending parties throughout the world to be educated on the nature, scope, and consequences of ethnocentric violence, particularly the action-reaction cycles in such violence, with the buildup of revenge motives; the tendency to assume hatred as an organizing principle for life and death; and the slippery slope of proliferation, escalation, and addiction to hatred and killing that emerges so readily in festering intergroup conflict.

Adversaries need to grasp how violent extremists and fanatics tend to take increasing control of the situation; they need to face up to the probable degradation of life - even annihilation - that will occur for all concerned in areas of intense fighting. The international community must make these dangers clear and vivid in the minds of populations involved in potential hot spots.

The policy community in much of the world is not deeply familiar with the principles and techniques of conflict resolution. It must become so, with the United Nations and the Secretary General playing one of the leading roles. The United Nations, respected widely throughout the world, could do more than it has done historically to educate publics to the need and possibilities for resolving conflicts without violence. The Secretary General has a bully pulpit of formidable proportions.

Among other initiatives, the U.N. can sponsor world leadership seminars in cooperation with qualified nongovernmental organizations such as universities and research institutes. These leadership seminars might well include new heads of state, new foreign ministers, and new defense ministers.

Ongoing leadership seminars could also clarify how the U.N. and other institutions and organizations can help. Given the contemporary climate, it is singularly important that such seminars deal objectively and in a penetrating way with problems of nationalism, ethnocentrism, prejudice, hatred, and violence. Through the leadership seminars and a wider array of publications, the U.N. can make available the world's experience bearing on conflicts in general and on particular conflicts; on the responsible handling of weapons by governmental leaders and policymakers; on the likely consequences of weapons build-up, especially weapons of mass destruction; on the skills, knowledge base, and prestige properly associated with successful conflict resolution; on economic development, including the new uses of science and technology for development; and on cooperative behavior in the world community, including the handling of grievances.

The Global Reach of Radio and Television

The role of media is a powerful one, for better and for worse. Books, films, music, television, and radio all carry a variety of messages, both cognitive and emotional. The power of the mass media, and particularly television, has revised our concept of what constitutes reality.

Television directs attention to a subject beyond any previous medium's ability. It has the power to focus on one situation and instantly raise the world's awareness. Unfortunately, this power can be and often is used to exacerbate conflict. Terrorists, for instance, have long recognized the power of television to give a small, fanatical group international exposure to their cause.

Political power is more and more associated with media coverage. The primacy of television's linkage with political power was well demonstrated in the recent revolutionary events in Eastern Europe and the former Soviet republics, when control of television output was at the center of the struggle.

Television has immense latent capacity as a force for global transformation. The medium is deeply international, readily crossing boundaries. Each side in a war may be able to watch the other's television broadcasts. In divided Germany, most East Germans watched West German television, which provided an effective antidote to Communist government

propaganda. With new digital technologies and more powerful satellites, it will be increasingly difficult to isolate a country from the global media. Cable News Network already has had a powerful effect through its global news distribution and extensive use of live broadcasting from sites on every continent. Although this was most vivid during the Gulf war, it is a daily fact of life on a global basis.

Television has great potential for reducing tensions between countries. It can be used to demystify the adversary and improve understanding. A Cold War example was provided by U.S.-Soviet spacebridge programs - live, unedited discussion between the two countries made possible by satellites and simultaneous translation. Starting in 1983, U.S.-Soviet spacebridges linked ordinary American and Soviet citizens in an effort to overcome stereotypes. Beginning before the Gorbachev era, they provided an opening to his policy of glasnost. Later, Internews' "Capital to Capital" program, broadcast simultaneously on ABC and on Soviet and Eastern European television, joined members of Congress and the Supreme Soviet for uncensored debate on arms control, human rights, and the future of Europe. These spacebridge programs were seen by 200 million people at a time. Ted Koppel's "Nightline" program on ABC was dynamic in settings of this sort, especially between the U.S. and South Africa and between the U.S. and the Soviet Union. The dramatic "Nightline" town meeting between Palestinians and Israelis in 1988 showed how television can foster reasonable dialogue on tender issues even among old adversaries.

Independent, pluralistic media are vital for democracy. They are the main vehicles for clarifying issues and for the public to understand candidates. In the first post-Soviet Ukrainian election, President Leonid Kravchuk had total control over television throughout the process, whereas other candidates had hardly any access to it. Such elections cannot be considered free and fair. International election monitors must therefore observe access to the media as well as the voting itself.

Radio is exceedingly important because it reaches virtually everyone everywhere almost all the time. Hate radio has been all too effective in inciting violence - remember its role in Rwanda and Bosnia. What about reconciliation radio?

How can the international community foster education via the mass media with respect to prejudice, ethnocentrism, and conflict resolution? Leaders like the extremists in the former Yugoslavia reap political gain from stirring intense hatred among their people. The world is full of ethnic entrepreneurs and skillful demagogues putting acid on the scars, playing on ethnocentric sentiments for their own political purposes, and utilizing electronic media to get their messages across. By doing so they gain power, wealth, and high status. Is it possible to go over the heads of such leaders to educate their publics directly about paths to conflict resolution? After all, it is the rank-and-file citizenry that absorbs the terrible beating of these wars, not the leadership.

Can television and radio help in preventing or coping with deadly conflict within nations? What would be involved in such education? First and foremost, conveying the consequences of continuing on the path of hatred and violence. Television and radio could illuminate slaughter in various areas, both nearby and far away, where ethnocentric violence has gone unchecked and where the consequences for all participants have been far more dreadful than envisioned in the initial phase when wishful thinking predominated. Let adversaries see the disastrous course they are on now, one that others have followed, and how much worse it can get the further it is pursued. Let them not be shielded from the consequences of atrocities in the way most Germans were in the events of the Holocaust.

Conflict areas need independent television and radio news channels broadcasting throughout the region. Mass media communication, not only about the consequences of ethnocentric violence, but also about the possibilities for conflict resolution, and the willingness of the international community to help, should become a vital component of the problem-solving machinery in ethnic conflicts.

Television and radio can also be useful in conflict resolution by clarifying how others have succeeded in achieving it: documentaries, for example, on the experiences of Western Europe after World War II, or programs on the transformation of Germany and Japan without revenge by the United States. Let those in hot spots learn about the best of what conflict resolution, civilized human relationships, and democratic institutions have done in the twentieth century and could do for them in the twenty-first.

In principle, it should even be possible to establish a nongovernmental International Educational Telecommunications System that would effectively link organizations in many nations to sources of creative audiovisual learning materials. There could be an active pool of material over a wide range of content and format generated for a variety of purposes, mainly on peace and democracy, in rich and poor countries alike.

Financing might be provided to the new system through a mix of governmental and private funds from many nations. The highest standards could be ensured by an international commission of impeccable standing. The system would both provide venture capital for creative programming and carefully select the best available material from the world's broadcasting storehouse.

It might present basic concepts, processes, and institutions on a level perhaps comparable to that of National Public Radio in the United States or the British Broadcasting Corporation in the United Kingdom. This could be done in a variety of languages and adapted to many cultures. In a relatively short time, it might be feasible to enhance the level of understanding throughout the world of what is involved in democracy and its potential benefits for all - especially in providing reliable ways of coping with ubiquitous human conflicts without resorting to mass violence.

Concluding Comment

Let me close with a crucial question for the human future: Can human groups achieve internal cohesion, self-respect, and adaptive effectiveness without promoting hatred and violence? Altogether, we need to strengthen research and education on child development, prejudice, ethnocentrism, and conflict resolution to find out. We must generate new knowledge and explore vigorously the application of such knowledge to urgent problems in contemporary society.

Nowhere should the responsibility for promoting social tolerance be taken more seriously than among leaders of nations - not only in government but in business and media and other powerful institutions. They bear a heavy responsibility, all too often evaded, for utilizing the vehicles of mass education for constructive purposes. They can convey in words and actions an agenda for cooperation, caring, and decent human relations.

There is little in our very long history as a species to prepare us for this world we have suddenly made. Perhaps we cannot cope with it - witness Bosnia and Rwanda. Still, it is not too late for a paradigm shift in our outlook toward human conflict. Perhaps it is something like learning that the earth is not flat. Such a shift in child development and education

throughout the world might at long last make it possible for human groups to learn to live together in peace and mutual benefit.

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President

NOTE: The president's annual essay is a personal statement representing his own views. It does not necessarily reflect the foundation's policies. This essay is based on a presentation made in June 1994 at a Nobel symposium in Sweden. This symposium will be published in a book edited by Professor David Magnusson, Stockholm University, titled Individual Development Over the Lifespan.