



The Rez Of The Story

Can There Be Peace On Earth?

BY VINCE TWO EAGLES

Hau Mitakuepi (Greetings My Relatives),
In this time of Holiday celebration we are reminded more than at any other time of the year to wish each other “Peace on Earth” — but is peace on earth even achievable?

A good question, right? I think the real answer is unknowable but falls into the category of faith and belief. If, on the one hand, one has faith and believes that world peace is achievable, then world peace can be achieved. If, on the other hand, one has no faith in other human beings and believes world peace is a farce, then it will be a farce and therefore unachievable.

The 42nd president of the United States, William J. Clinton, once stated, “The real differences around the world today are not between Jews and Arabs; Protestants and Catholics; Muslims, Croats and Serbs. The real differences are between those who embrace peace and those who would destroy it; between those who look to the future and those who cling to the past; between those who open their arms and those who are determined to clench their fists.”

You would think peace would be a no-brainer choice, and without baggage from history, it would.

But therein lies the rub — history. Someone said that history is but an illusion; it only exists in our heads. M. Scott Peck the American author who lived between 1936 and 2005 once wrote, “The whole course of human history may depend on a change of heart in one solitary and even humble individual — for it is in the solitary mind and soul of the individual that the battle between good and evil is waged and ultimately won or lost.”

At the end of the day, it is true that “Peace on Earth” begins with each one of us making a personal commitment to live in peace with ourselves, our families, our communities and ultimately with our neighbors around the globe. This is not always an easy task to embrace because it is equally true that some folks are not ready to live in peace. For whatever reason — whether it be personal, cultural or religious — some folks think that aggression in the name of ideology or simple revenge is always justified, even sanctified.

I think in order for “Peace on Earth” to expand be-



Vince
TWO EAGLES

yond ourselves, the process begins with conversation locally and then the conversation needs to reach out and engage all the citizens of our Mother Earth. Partnerships and cultural diversity perceived as an asset would set the stage for further dialog aimed at reconciliation.

We have to examine and adopt what I call the Doctrine of Equality, for lack of a better term. Taken from the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Preamble paragraph 3 which states, “Affirming further that all doctrines based upon or advocating superiority of peoples or individuals on the basis of national origin, racial, religious, ethnic or cultural differences are racist, scientifically false, legally invalid, morally condemnable and socially unjust.”

This establishes a philosophical field that is level. This leveling effect allows for open dialog about tolerance and acceptance of cultural and national diversity and steers the conversation away from the lose-lose dialog about who is superior to whom. Arguing about religious superiority, for example, is a difference of opinion no one can win. All cultures and responsible points of view contribute to the forward progress of human kind and in this way we can begin to approach the reality of “Peace on Earth.” Excluding others only exacerbates isolation and conflict between our peoples and nations.

All we need to do is take a close look at how excluding family members, community members or neighbors in our conversations about social change and sustainable security prevents its achievement. Inclusion of opinions different than our own in our global community rule-making will guide the future structure of our emerging global society toward positive and constructive (rather than negative and destructive) policies. We need to make sure that Mother Earth’s resources are thought of as belonging to no one group of people but to everyone. Nothing creates conflict more readily than the unfair distribution of our food supply and the hoarding of so-called wealth by a few selfish and greedy individuals.

Is “Peace on Earth” achievable? If we want it to be, it will be. It will take time and effort, but peace has no time limit — and getting along is a lot less tedious than perpetuating conflict.

And now you know the rez of the story.
Doksha (later) ...

Liberals Are Quiet On Drone War

BY DICK POLMAN

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Remember when President Obama said four years ago that he would helm “the most transparent administration in history”? So much for that.

I’m amazed that so few Americans — most notably, so few liberals — have protested his secretive remote-control assassination program. Drones have killed 3,000 people in Yemen and Pakistan, including collateral-damage civilians, but the actual numbers are secret. So is the process. We don’t know anything about the rules of engagement, how people wind up on Obama’s hit list, who reviews the evidence, and what criteria are applied to that evidence.

The Fifth Amendment to the Constitution states that “No person shall be ... deprived of life ... without due process of law.” Drones are inimical to due process. It would be nice to know how the administration’s lawyers have addressed that conundrum in legal memos. Those memos exist, but they remain classified. The Obama team is reportedly writing rules for itself, a set of standards and procedures, but we may never know whether these rules are scrupulously followed, or even what they are.

Back in May 2009, Obama vowed that his national security actions would be transparent, so that Americans could “make informed judgments and hold us accountable.” But nearly four years and hundreds of drone strikes later, his actions bring to mind the remark Michael Corleone utters near the end of “The Godfather Part II”: “If anything in this life is certain, if history has taught us anything, it’s that you can kill anybody.”

Granted, we’re waging a global shadow war against bad actors who don’t wear uniforms. Drones often kill known terrorists who might otherwise murder innocent Americans. No weapon is flawless. And in war, even the good guys inadvertently kill civilians; during the D-Day invasion, the Allies killed an estimated 12,000 French and Belgian civilians who lived close to Nazi-controlled railroads.

But if George W. Bush were whacking thousands of for- eigners (plus a few American citizens) using a hit list shrouded in secrecy, in apparent violation of the Fifth Amendment and in blatant violation of transparency promises, rest assured that liberal Democrats would be holding hearings and denouncing him on MSNBC.

They don’t seem disturbed, however, that Obama has tripled down on Bush’s nascent drone program, and that this president is doing so on the fly and in secret. Their partisan instincts appear to be trumping adherence to principle. But all presidents, regardless of party, need to be held accountable.

Speaking of drones on The Daily Show in October, Obama said that “one of the things we’ve got to do is put a legal architecture in place ... to make sure that not only am I reined in, but any president is reined in.” It was a scary remark: It suggested that Obama has been waging unchecked war without that legal basis — with nothing to rein him in.

We don’t know what we don’t know. Obama said in September that the drones target known terrorists who pose “an imminent threat to the United States” (allowing us to invoke the doctrine of self-defense), but “imminent” appears to be a slippery term. Obama has reportedly authorized the use of drones in what the CIA calls “signature strikes” — those conducted against unidentified people who brandish guns in regions where militants are strong. In other words, drones are sometimes used preemptively, to kill those who might be a threat in the future. Obama is judge, jury, and executioner.

But who cares, right? This is all happening far away, to Muslims we will never know. Many liberals are fine with it because Obama is one of them, and many conservatives are mute because they know there’s no percentage in attacking a president for being too tough on terrorism. That also explains why Congress hasn’t lifted a finger to conduct any oversight. And most Americans would probably rather watch football than weigh the implications of drone warfare.

At least a few million Americans have also been watching the hot cable show Homeland, which is all about the unintended domestic consequences of a drone attack. The Showtime series features a hawkish vice president, in cahoots with the CIA, who authorizes a drone strike that destroys a Muslim school and kills the son of a known terrorist. The terrorist retaliates by plotting acts of revenge on American soil. Yeah, it’s just a TV show, but Homeland prompts the viewer to consider whether drones might inspire blowback and perpetuate the cycle of violence.

So, at a minimum, let’s ask: Is Obama authorized to kill anybody? Under what criteria? What’s in the legal memos? How is the evidence weighed? What checks and balances have been established to ensure that drones are not abused by this president and those to follow?

We don’t really know whether drones are the answer in the war against terrorism. But more of us should at least ask the questions.

Dick Polman is a columnist for the Philadelphia Inquirer. Readers may write to him at: Philadelphia Inquirer, P.O. Box 8263, Philadelphia, Pa. 19101, or by email at dpolman@phillynews.com; blog: <http://www.dickpolman.blogspot.com>.

Mr. Anderson saw things in me as a young high school freshman that I didn’t see. He helped shape me professionally and personally. Obviously, he did the same for many, many students who he taught and advised at Yankton High School and SDSU’s journalism camps.

Dick Anderson is an example of a life well lived. Thank you, Mr. Anderson, for all you have done for my wife Donna and me. We miss you.

And Mr. Dockendorf, thank you for your fine article. Dick would be proud of you.

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OPINION | OUR VIEW

Connecticut: The ‘Unimaginable’?

We call it unimaginable. We call it unthinkable. But how can we say that about Friday’s shooting rampage in Connecticut in which a mentally ill young man gunned down 26 people, including 20 first-graders, at an elementary school? Haven’t we already seen this carnage too many times before? When we do, we break down. We cry. We offer prayers. It’s a well-practiced death ritual by now.

The issues fueling this violence are actually broad and very complex. They are also very deadly, which is why they must be faced.

The debate over gun control is certainly warranted today, but we must also take note of the other issues that, in various ways, contribute to most of these tragedies.

It must be acknowledged that guns do NOT create the monsters that perpetrate these acts. There is something more at play than a finger on a trigger.

We must also examine the identification and treatment of mental illness in this country. This issue carries many flawed stigmas and lacks so much general understanding. Overall, our nation has not faced up to the matter well.

Also, we cannot dismiss a popular culture that’s splattered in glorified violence, from television and movies to video games. It desensitizes some of us to the horror of such brutality and the fragility of human life.

These issues need to be examined by us all. They simply must. That being said, experience tells us that the most resistance will occur over the matter of gun control legislation. You know the talking points for both sides and you know the rancor and hostility they ignite. These divisions have stalemated most of the political progress that can be made on the subject.

There has always been talk of change and the suggestion of renewed purpose after each massacre, but what’s come of it? Despite the mass killings in Aurora, Colo., last summer, for example, gun control was not a major issue in the presidential campaign.

We’re already hearing the familiar call that “now is not the time” to talk about gun legislation, even about proposals like banning so-called assault weapons (and defining exactly what these are) or high-capacity ammo clips.

But when is the time? How cold do the graves have to be before we decide that the subject can be addressed? How many must die while we wait? There were 26 gunned down last Friday. Three days earlier, it was two people at a mall in Oregon. In October, it was three women in Wisconsin. In September, it was five people in Minneapolis. In August, it was six more in Wisconsin and then three in Texas. In July, it was 12 people at a movie theater in Colorado. ... The list goes on. So far in 2012, there have been 88 people killed in 16 mass shootings. And yet, we struggle to do anything about it. That math and our own inaction indict us.

This is not about “taking your guns away,” because that is, at the very least, logistically impossible, not to mention unwarranted. Instead, this is about pursuing reasonable limitations and safeguards in the gun issue. This is about making sure that people with certain mental health issues don’t have easy access to firearms. This is about common sense and freedom coexisting in relative peace.

In the wake of these tragedies, we often say that the victims and their families are in “our thoughts and prayers.” And that’s as it should be — for them. But what do we say of the victims who will die in the “unimaginable” massacres to come? (And they are coming at some point; there is no reason whatsoever to believe they will suddenly and magically stop.) Those victims, whoever and wherever they are, don’t need our thoughts and prayers right now. They need our commitment to action. They need us to at long last do something.

Failing that, we are complicit in those future murders, pure and simple.

kmh

Obviously, this is just one opinion. What are your thoughts on this volatile and timely issue? Write us and share your perspective. Send to: Letters, Yankton Press & Dakotan 319 Walnut, Yankton, SD 57078; or email us at views@yankton.net.

ONLINE OPINION

The results of the most recent Internet poll on the *Press & Dakotan’s* Web site are as follows:

LATEST RESULTS:

If no compromise is found before the “fiscal cliff” deadline, which party deserves the most blame?
Republicans39%
Democrats33%
Both share equal blame26%
Neither can be blamed2%
TOTAL VOTES CAST759
The Press & Dakotan Internet poll is not a scientific survey and reflects the opinions only of those who choose to participate. The results should not be construed as an accurate representation or scientific measurement of public opinion.

CURRENT QUESTION:

Would you support a ban on assault weapons?

To vote in the *Press & Dakotan’s* Internet poll, log on to our website at www.yankton.net.

TODAY IN HISTORY

By The Associated Press

Today is Tuesday, Dec. 18, the 353rd day of 2012. There are 13 days left in the year.

Today’s Highlight in History: On Dec. 18, 1912, the Pittdown Man made his public debut as fossil collector Charles Dawson reported to the Geological Society of London his discovery of supposedly fragmented early human remains at a gravel pit in Pittdown. (More than four decades later, the Pittdown Man was exposed as a hoax.)

On this date: In 1787, New Jersey became the third state to ratify the U.S. Constitution. In 1865, the 13th Amendment to the Constitution, abolishing slavery, was declared in effect by Secretary of State William H. Seward. In 1892, Tchaikovsky’s ballet “The Nutcracker” publicly premiered in St. Petersburg, Russia.

In 1915, President Woodrow Wilson, widowed the year before, married Edith Bolling Galt at her Washington home. In 1940, Adolf Hitler ordered secret preparations for Nazi Germany to invade the Soviet Union. (Operation Barbarossa was launched in June 1941.)

In 1944, in a pair of rulings, the U.S. Supreme Court upheld the wartime relocation of Japanese-Americans, but also said undeniably loyal Americans of Japanese ancestry could not continue to be detained. In 1958, the world’s first communications satellite, SCORE (Signal Communication by Orbiting Relay Equipment), nicknamed “Chatterbox,” was launched by the United States aboard an Atlas rocket.

In 1962, “Mister Magoo’s Christmas Carol,” an animated musical adaptation of the Charles Dickens story, first aired on NBC-TV. In 1971, the Rev. Jesse Jackson announced in Chicago the founding of Operation PUSH (People United to Save Humanity).

In 1972, the United States began heavy bombing of North Vietnamese targets during the Vietnam War. (The bombardment ended 11 days later.) In 1980, former Soviet Premier Alexei N. Kosygin died at age 76. In 1992, Kim Young-sam was elected South Korea’s first civilian president in three decades.

Ten years ago: Embattled Senate Republican leader Trent Lott sustained a double-barreled setback as Rhode Island Senator Lincoln Chafee broke ranks to call for a change in party

leadership and Secretary of State Colin Powell forcefully criticized Lott’s controversial remarks on race. Robert Johnson, the billionaire founder of Black Entertainment Television, was chosen as owner of the NBA’s new Charlotte expansion franchise.

Five years ago: The White House said President George W. Bush had approved “a significant reduction” in the U.S. nuclear weapons stockpile, cutting it to less than one-quarter its size at the end of the Cold War. The U.N. Security Council voted unanimously to extend the U.S.-led multinational force in Iraq for one year. Jacob Zuma was elected leader of the African National Congress, South Africa’s ruling party, defeating incumbent Thabo Mbeki.

One year ago: The last convoy of heavily armored U.S. troops left Iraq, crossing into Kuwait in darkness in the final moments of a nine-year war. Vaclav Havel, 75, the dissident playwright who became Czechoslovakia’s first democratically elected president, died in the northern Czech Republic. Medical student Sophie Clarke was crowned the winner of CBS’ “Survivor: South Pacific.”

Today’s Birthdays: Former U.S. Attorney General Ramsey Clark is 85. Actor-producer Roger Smith is 80. Blues musician Lonnie Brooks is 79. Actor Roger Mosley is 74. Rock singer-musician Keith Richards is 69. Writer-director Alan Rudolph is 69. Movie producer-director Steven Spielberg is 66. Blues artist Ron Piazza is 65. Movie director Gillian Armstrong is 62. Movie reviewer Leonard Maltin is 62. Rock musician Elliot Easton is 59. Actor Ray Liotta is 57. Comedian Ron White is 56. Actor Brad Pitt is 49. Professional wrestler-turned-actor “Stone Cold” Steve Austin is 48. Actor Shawn Christian is 47. Actress Rachel Griffiths is 44. Singer Alejandro Sanz is 44. Country/rap singer Cowboy Troy is 42. Rapper DMX is 42. International Tennis Hall of Famer Arantxa Sanchez Vicario is 41. DJ Lethal (Limp Bizkit) is 40. Actor Josh Dallas is 34. Actress Katie Holmes is 34. Singer Christina Aguilera is 32. Christian rock musician Dave Luetkenhoelter (Kutless) is 30. Actress Ashley Benson is 23. Actress-singer Bridgit Mendler is 20.

Thought for Today: “When you make a world tolerable for yourself, you make a world tolerable for others.” — Anaïs Nin, French-born author (1903-1977).

FROM THE BIBLE

While he was still a long way off, his father saw him and felt compassion, and ran and embraced him and kissed him. Luke 15:20. Portals of Prayer, Concordia Publishing House, St. Louis

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