

A Declaration of Peace

A declaration of war is a very serious matter. Ideally, when a nation or a culture is under attack, personal sacrifice to the cause of winning the war and ensuring survival of one's own culture is not only expected but given up voluntarily without question. Solidarity arises where previously there was strife and disagreement. And in extreme cases, most everyone agrees to live in otherwise disagreeable conditions and endure hardships that would normally be viewed as unacceptable.

The problem with waging peace is that it is not so obvious that sacrifice and total dedication are required. Peace and justice generally appear to be abstract goals that no-one can agree on and therefore do not generate sufficient motivation for the appropriate level of personal commitment. There is also the cynical attitude that peace and justice are ideals that can never really be achieved anyway.

There are, of course, many organizations and groups that are dedicated in their own way to changing the way we relate to each other and to the more-than-human world, i.e. working for peace and justice both human and environmental. And most certainly these efforts are essential and welcome. However, it is beginning to become apparent that the fragmented approach toward peace, justice and environmental defense is not enough to counteract the forces working against these efforts. The reactionary, imperialistic corporate world is highly organized and focused. They also are in control of the means (capital, media and military) to make sure that we continue along the path of war, confrontation, bigotry, exploitation and environmental rape. I think it is time (and really has been for a while) to understand that waging peace is as serious as waging war, maybe even more so. It has often been suggested that things must get a whole lot worse before enough people will wake up and understand the gravity of the situation. Of late, however, it would seem that things could hardly get much worse. How much more political and environmental abuse must and/or can we endure, waiting for people of reason to understand that our very survival is at stake? It may no longer be an abstract, utopian or revolutionary ideal. Maybe peace and justice have themselves become necessities – necessary elements of our survival.

In this context, I would like to challenge everyone to re-consider their own commitment. In the last half century there has been much talk about waging peace. There has been little, if any, sacrifice to that cause, however.

In the following treatise, I would like to explore what it might mean to wage peace on a scale necessary to actually achieve that goal. To do this I will follow a list of the components and requirements of the conventional war machine and its general strategic architecture. By examining what is required to support the war effort, we can gain an appreciation for the magnitude of the undertaking and build a better model for a serious effort to promote peace and justice. This is, in that respect, a declaration of peace (analogous to a declaration of war) and a corresponding peace plan for how to win it. Without a plan, how can we coordinate our efforts and begin the march toward real peace and prosperity?

There are some rather obvious aspects of the war machine that are required for it to function: tax base, arms, soldiers, intelligence, strategy, *raison d'être*, propaganda, etc. What would the corresponding components of a peace movement be that would present a substantial counterweight to these basic elements of war? Each of these has a function. What would the corresponding function be for peace? How would it be implemented and on what basis? What activities would be supported by those functions? These are not easy questions to answer. And it is not certain that we need to have exactly mirrored functions. However, starting with this analogy might give us an idea of the extent and seriousness of the task at hand.

Peace

Before discussing the particular functions of a peace movement, however, it would be wise to attempt to reach a general consensus about what we mean by the term *peace*. What, exactly, we are striving to achieve and that

we want to call “peace” is surely something that will remain contentious. What would a peaceful world look like? That is, of course, a question to which almost everyone will have a different answer.

We can, however, safely say that war is a state, in which fundamental agreement over the manner in which we relate to other people has been shattered. We resort to the use of force to either assert our will forcefully onto others or defend ourselves against having their will imposed on us. Supposedly, “peace agreements” put an end to that state.

However, it has often been said – and rightly so – that peace is not merely the absence of war. If war is the use of force to assert will, then peace would be the use of consensus to arrive at a common will. Peace, in this **active** sense, would be a concerted and organized effort to achieve a state in which people can live in harmony with each other.

The analogy between war and peace breaks down in many obvious ways, of course. There is a necessary asymmetry, in that the purpose of war appears to be the restoration of “peace”, whereas, the purpose of peace is obviously **not** the restoration of some other state! On the other hand, war can also be seen as a perpetual underlying condition with which we have contended throughout all of history. In this sense, peace is not merely a temporary lull between battles, but the vision of a condition under which the perpetual state of war could actually be superceded. Whether this is, in fact, achievable, is, of course, the subject of debate. But it is not my intent to address that issue here directly and at length. It must admittedly be my **assumption** within the context of this declaration that peace not only is achievable, but that it **must** be achievable.

As mentioned, it cannot be determined here what the particulars of peace will be. However, peace, as an activity to be waged and engaged in, must have as its goal achieving a state in which war no longer has a function – a state in which people really can live together in harmony both with each other and with the environment. This is now what I will refer to as a *sustainable future*. The debate over what that will look like is itself an essential part of the march toward peace. It is a debate that we must engage in. We must have the courage to dream about peace and make proposals for what that will mean in a very concrete sense. It is a debate that I intend to make my own contributions to – but in another context.

Peaciors

Every army requires warriors. It seems a bit odd, though, to talk about “warriors of peace” – as I have sometimes heard. I would, therefore, like to propose the term *peacior*, to refer to those individuals who deliberately devote their lives to peace. By this, however, I do not just mean marching at peace rallies on the weekends, going to occasional meetings, making contributions, etc. I mean a person who devotes her/himself entirely to the cause of peace and justice. There are definitely a lot of people who surely would fall into this category, though they obviously make up a very small fraction of the population. What we need is an entire “army”. (Note: We really should have a better term for that, as well! However, we could revise the meaning of this word simply by thinking of the arms not as weapons, but as arms that reach out and lend a hand, that embrace and hug people.) We need masses of people coordinated and dedicated to the same purpose: that of achieving peace. The number required is proportional to the task at hand. And I think we would all agree that the task of achieving world peace is quite formidable. We need more people willing to forfeit the present in order to ensure the future – instead of the opposite trend which seems to be the dominant mode of our current culture.

One of the intents of this “declaration” is to challenge everyone who claims to be in favor of peace to consider a total commitment to it and become a peacior in some way. We need all hands on deck and we need to be working toward the same goal. Think of the resources spent and intensity with which we prepare for and stay prepared for war. We need to at least match that intensity in a coordinated and effective effort.

Peaciors are a very diverse group of people. As with the different branches of the military and its civilian support systems, there are various ways in which a peacior can serve the cause.

Tax Base

Probably the most obvious and essential requirement for waging war is the tax base. Without the money to pay for the manufacture of arms, to pay for the support of the army, etc., there could be no war effort. It is sufficiently obvious that the politicians of war are not going to part with their cherished “defense” revenues any time soon. As long as that is the case, the only alternative is to create a new “tax” base. I.e. we need to make the conscious decision to tax ourselves, as peaciors, for the support of the cause. We need to attach the kind of value to peace that it deserves. The continued effort to “demand” that the government divert funds is obviously falling on deaf ears. For my part, I am not going to hold my breath for politicians to come around! In the meantime, we may lose whatever chance we might have left.

I am not talking about money to purchase “arms”, obviously. I am talking about the deliberate collection of moneys to build a new economy of peace. Of course, I am making an assumption here that may not be shared by all, so I will need to be explicit: **We live in an economy of war.** By that I mean that our economy promotes war in multiple ways.

First of all, it promotes an economy of inequality – not only nationally, but internationally as well, in that it promotes the differential between 1st, 2nd and 3rd world “economies” that tend to perpetuate the advantage of the “leading economies”. The rationale for “diplomacy” is to establish advantages for “traders” that are positioned to benefit from these arrangements. It is not geared in any way, shape or form to promoting economic justice – au contraire. Recent WTO and NAFTA agreements drive this point home with abundant clarity. In the name of “globalization” we have created an international network of sweat shops, tax dodges and environmental irresponsibility. We (the 1st world “economies”) have shipped exploitation and pollution abroad while choking our own domestic base.

Secondly, this inequality is being taken to a new level by the emergence of international corporate entities that appear to be the real centers of power in our “new world order”. These new sovereign bodies have superceded the nation state as the real centers of political and economic power. Establishing offshore corporate “identities”, they answer to no-one. When they get in trouble, however, they have to drum up some “national interest” to generate the military protection they require in order to “protect” their subjects (i.e. their consumer base and work force).

Meanwhile, at home in the U.S. we observe the widening gap between the rich and the poor (with 1% of the population having the same wealth as 95% of the rest of the population) and the increasing lowering of the standard of living for the middle and lower classes in terms of real value earned on a per hourly basis. This is matched in atrocity only by the ratio of globally available resources used by the U.S. economy to its population (4% of the world’s population using 25% of the energy resources). These gross inequalities both domestic and international point to an economy of war that truly needs to be transformed.

This economy also relies on the unscrupulous abuse and plundering of natural resources and the ensuing destruction of wilderness and other life forms. Its irresponsible tendency to mindlessly create “energy” in the cheapest manner possible only to waste it in vast quantities results in a level of pollution that has lead us to the specter of climate change which threatens the entire human race and is already killing people at a rate of 150,000 per year.

And all of these aspects of our war economy are intensified by the specter of the inevitable and rapidly approaching depletion of oil and natural gas supplies that have artificially perpetuated this “economy” at an obviously unsustainable level, otherwise known as the “industrial age”.

A declaration of peace must therefore contain a strategy for **peacefully** replacing this economy. How can we do that?

This may seem like an insurmountable task. Even addressing the question appears daunting. It would be near preposterous to suggest that any one person could deliver an answer to this question that would gain an even

modest amount of consensus. But I am going to try to at least point in a direction I believe could lead to a solution to the problem.

The answer is based on the observation that our economy of war depends on the over-consumption of goods – for the most part, superfluous goods. It depends on “growth”. A lack of consumer spending has the impact of depressing the economy. The economy of war depends on this superfluous level of consumption and its continuous growth. This fact could, in my humble opinion, be exploited to wage peace. By walking away from the type of consumption that drives this economy, it will eventually falter on its own accord. It is, however, not so much the defeat of the economy of war, but rather the **development** of a wide-spread economy of peace that will, in fact, lead to justice and peace. We need to create a viable alternative, one that is strong enough to be encompassing and grow only in the sense of more and more inclusion.

There are, of course, already organizations that have lead the call to anti-consumerism. The materialistic character of western society is clearly the cancer that feeds the greater disease of war and poverty in the world. But the anti-consumption movement is not part of an overall plan that I know of.

Briefly, I would like to suggest the following ideas:

1) Anti-consumption should be more than simply not buying superfluous goods. This would indeed only harm the existing economy and place even more unnecessary burden on the struggling lower class. We need peaciors who will dedicate themselves to the systematic draining of the economy of war, rerouting resources (e.g. money) to an economy of peace – a viable alternative, a sustainable future. This alternative will offer people suffering from our consumption based economy with a place to go. By this I do not mean a philanthropic welfare system operating within the existing economy. We are talking about building a new economic basis. Of course, the main contributors, the “army” of peaciors dedicated to achieving this, will have to have an extremely philanthropic attitude coupled with an intense personal commitment analogous to soldiers in the pitch of battle. This kind of dedication only makes sense in terms of a very serious or even life-or-death struggle. But that is, in fact, what we are facing.

The idea is extremely simple. Those who have the opportunity and the ability to work within the existing economy of war and earn larger sums of money need to agree to continue do so (even enhance their income), but minimize their own expenses and divert the rest of their income to the new economy. This goes far beyond merely consuming less (and, presumably, therefore working less).

Of course, this level of dedication can hardly be expected on a whim. Only when serious people see the seriousness of the problem (our survival) and understand the concerted and responsible nature of the peace plan itself will they be able to make such a commitment. No soldier would place himself in battle without trust in the commander and a complete faith in the necessity of the fight. This is the more immediate task at hand: to establish the plan and the appropriate plausible infrastructure for achieving it.

2) Therefore another (2nd) branch of this dedicated army would need to provide for the strategic infrastructure required to give this movement a realistic and reliable basis. We would need a group of dedicated lawyers, economists and accountants to develop a system that is viable, plausible and (above all!) transparent. This effort will need to go well beyond the level of quickly establishing another non-profit organization for the sake of collecting money to be used to address isolated issues. It might be seen rather as a super-structure to which such organizations could make a contribution and eventually (the sooner the better) merge into.

3) A 3rd group of peaciors will be required to provide the necessary support for these “troops”, i.e. the army of “tax” or fund contributors out there battling in the corporate world. Working in the corporate environment is an unpleasant experience for most people and unhealthy for all. It is emotionally and psychologically draining, if not physically damaging. It is basically inhumane. Those who willingly submit themselves to it for the cause will need and rightly deserve any relief we can provide for them. This could have many forms. I envision a culture of volunteers who will provide a safe and comforting environment for these peaciors in the form of both emotional and psychological release as well as physical comfort in the form of warm meals, massages, other services or simply companionship. This culture of cooperation and mutual support will be an essential

part of the movement. It will be explicitly designed to create an attractive social environment that will appeal to all who have long suffered from the alienation of our current TV-centered, materialistic and impersonal (un-)social environment.

Together these 3 groups of people will create the beginning of an economy of peace designed to build a peaceful world. Of course, these 3 groups need not be strictly divided and separate. Especially at the outset, there will need to be considerable overlap. In fact, it will probably prove necessary to start with a group of people who fulfill all of these functions. We must expect it to be a slow start and also have the courage to proceed in spite of it.

The tax base would be used to develop and implement the peace plan which would have the ultimate goal of establishing the alternative economy of peace that would eventually overwhelm and replace the economy of war. The particulars of exactly how this would develop go beyond the scope of the current declaration of peace. However, a preliminary sketch is necessary to provide at least a glimpse of what might happen.

Presumably the first use of the funds collected would be to purchase real estate that would be used to enhance the fund raising effort itself and also return it to the commons. I.e. it would provide less fund-draining housing and office and recreation space for the functions discussed above. The community of peaciors should take on a real physical presence as quickly as possible. This will help make the reality of this movement clear to everyone.

As this trend proceeds, the larger amounts of funds collected can be used to start new “industries” and enhance others within the economy of peace. These industries would have the function of providing the essential goods to sustain the economy of peace with the least environmental impact possible as well as a safe and just environment for people to work in. The “jobs” provided could also be used to give people less able to operate in the conventional corporate environment (or perhaps not ready to make the commitment required to be a corporate peacior) a way of participating in the peace plan. An alternative form of money should be used in these industries in order to clearly delineate them from the economy of war and eliminate the chance of those funds being drained back out of the new peace economy. People who “work” in these industries would live totally within the scope of the new economy. Part of the “job training” would be to educate them in the reasoning for such an economy.

In addition, the larger sums of money (as well as the emerging alternative industries) could be used to sponsor the development of alternative living environments – especially car-free zones.

Another essential aspect of this economy will be the sharing of information and skills. I envision peaciors spending their weekends together to help educate each other, build skills that could be used to find jobs in the corporate environment (to sustain and increase the “tax base” until it is no longer needed) or to provide some essential services directly to the economy of peace. The economy of war thrives on competition which fosters the notion of trade secrets. Workers jealously protect their personal skills to maintain their competitive advantage. Within the economy of peace there would be no competitive advantage. Because people would all have a vested interest in cooperation. This would be the basis for developing a whole new culture to go with the new economy.

This mutual training and education should not be merely a process of hard work and tedium, however. It must be coupled with the sharing of passions and talents – an environment of warmth and inclusion that would offer a clear alternative to the alienated and defeatist culture of consumptive entertainment and exploitation. Instead of spending the day or weekend at an amusement park, football stadium or ski resort, peaciors would commune and celebrate each other and the natural beauty of their local environment.

And finally, it should be emphasized that nobody would be expected to work in the corporate world and give their income to the peace movement forever. There should be a limit, after which those peaciors would get their “honorable discharge” and be able to “retire” into a more humane life-style within the new economy. In proportion to the advancement of the new economy, this time limit could drop considerably.

Arms

Wars require weapons or armory. Essentially, the history of civilization is not much more than the history of the development of more and more sophisticated and devastating weapons. Most technology was originally developed primarily with its application to warfare in mind. Most often only after the technology has been developed for warfare is it “applied” to the commercial world. In our times, both airplanes and computers are excellent examples. Research in atomic physics was given a big boost by the historic circumstances of war that lead to the atomic bomb. It is also questionable that modern governments (e.g. the U.S. and Russia) would have funded the exploration of space without the promise of its strategic role in defense. And the list of examples goes on. Even the history of architecture reflects strong influences from the requirement of defense. One only has to think of the castles and walled cities of Europe or the Great Wall of China.

This raises the interesting question of what the technology of peace would look like. What principles would be the basis of a “philosophy” or “science” of peace? And what would the product of such “research” be? Clearly, the answers to these questions are only marginally on the horizon of consciousness today. But there is good reason to believe that a beginning of this new age is already here. What else is the purpose of environmental research other than to examine the question of how we can live in harmony with our environment? The question of the meaning of our relationships to each other or even to ourselves is beginning to emerge in many different ways. The questions raised here do not need to be answered in full at the moment. However, it is clear that the peace movement will need to address these questions in a conscious and deliberate manner. I do not shy away from stating that I believe science needs to be explicitly subordinated to and perhaps even limited by the quest for peace and justice. The acquisition of pure “knowledge” for its own sake is the abstract, perverse goal of an idealized notion and glorification of the “individual” (passed down to us by the “Ancients”) who only incidentally lives in a society. This goal, even if it were attainable, would be worthless without peace and justice in a culture of cooperation.

It is clear that the technology of peace must be focused on sustainability. This concept is already widely discussed. All of the technology that is currently being developed to create a sustainable economy (renewable energy, organic agriculture or permaculture, etc.) will undoubtedly have a role in the peace movement. Beyond that, other notions, such as ecologically oriented architecture (also known as “ecotecture” or “archology”) will play a predominant role. Ironically and luckily, the technology of peace is not nearly as daunting as the technology of war. What’s more, it is not only not necessary to keep this technology secret, it is advisable and desirable to share it!

At the very least, the declaration of peace must include a commitment to eventually eliminating the research and development of new weapons as soon as it is politically feasible. When this time can be reached will depend largely on how strong, wide-spread and committed our development of the economy of peace will be.

Intelligence

It is a universal cliché to talk about the significance and power of information. And supposedly we live in the age of information – blessed with the “information super-highway”. And yet, I doubt too many people would find it controversial to suggest that good information is still very hard to come by. Just think about how difficult it is to obtain good information about political candidates, or about the actual content of all the laws passed by our government, etc. Or, on the other hand, how easy is it to find out how dangerous the contents of any given product out there on the market are – much less how it was manufactured and the environmental repercussions of that process? How easy is it to find out how clean the air you breathe is or the water you drink? How easy is it to find out where the food you eat comes from? If you are anything other than a CIA or FBI agent, a research scientist or a full-time journalist with access to the appropriate databases and analysis tools, the answer is probably: pretty close to impossible.

In face of this situation, how can we make intelligent decisions about how to lead our lives and what political decisions to make, what products to buy or where we want to throw our support? The fact is, that we don’t live

by information, we live by opinions, mostly those of the so-called experts who have a tendency to act as if they are giving us information, when they are actually only giving their own views and biases. Our newspapers and magazines contain so much editorial comment and so little actual information, it is pathetic – television even less. Even the internet is mostly cluttered with opinions. You might find some information out there, but it's like looking for a needle in a haystack. In any event, it takes an enormous amount of time, energy and savvy to find any of it. And most people will simply not do that.

I, personally, rely heavily on the alternative “news” you can get on the internet to keep myself informed at all. The mainstream media in the U.S. is essentially worthless. However, almost all of the “news” on the alternative web sites is really just someone voicing their opinions spiced with a few (undocumented) “facts” to give it some plausibility. By reading between the lines and looking at everything from several different angles (i.e. viewpoints), one can make an intelligent guess as to what is most likely the reality behind the blur of opinions, but it is at best only a guess.

A tremendous service that someone could provide us with (and potentially a full-time job for another group of peaciers) would be to make information that is relevant and vital to our quest for peace readily and easily accessible. However, I'm not talking about journalism. In my view, every journalistic article (or book, etc.) can be reduced to a small fraction of its size, when you extract only the bare-bones information out of it. The reason for this is simple. The delivery of information has traditionally been confused with and wedded to the literary art. Now there's nothing wrong with literature. But how often do you read, for example, a “news” article that devotes the first ten paragraphs to some tangent that the author thought would add creativity and spice to his writing, even though it has virtually nothing to do with the news being reported. And then, finally, after ten paragraphs, you find out what the article is even about. This is fine, if you view news as entertainment (the growing trend today), but it is a bit of a distraction, if you're only interested in the information. Politicians (and military officers) understand this, in that they rely on “briefings”. We in the peace movement will have to become much more efficient in gathering, analyzing and using information, if we ever expect to be effective at all.

Of course, even if we could readily obtain good information, it would only be useful if it served our purpose. So what information would enhance our all out effort to promote peace and justice? Again, a complete analysis and answer to this question is not possible at this point, but some examples are easy to imagine.

Perhaps the most obvious information necessary is that of consumer product information. Granted, there is product information available. However, as already mentioned, how easy is it to come by? Usually, you have to pay for it – i.e. the information has itself become a product (and who monitors its quality?). Also there is the question of how complete this information actually is. This information should obviously be easily accessible and, of course, free, if it is ever to have any real impact. Eventually (and as soon as possible) this information should be used to make decisions about what can be included in the economy of peace. Obviously, no products that are dangerous to people and harmful to the environment, should be allowed. Envision a “market” where consumers don't even have to think about which products they can safely buy and are not contributing to the economy of war and pollution. Instead of labeling products, we should be labeling stores and only go in the right ones. Relying on consumer choice and intelligence is a flawed strategy. Nobody has the time to research and make careful decisions about every single purchase they make!

Another kind of information could shed light on the peace movement itself. Today there are thousands of organizations that purport to have some function in promoting social and environmental justice. How easy is it to obtain information about how they are actually using their funds? We essentially need one organization that a) makes its own validity and trustworthiness abundantly clear and b) provides valuable and reliable information about all the other organizations. There is already quite a bit of evidence that many organizations are using large sums of donated money for dubious purposes. This is lost money that could be better spent in a unified and transparently reliable movement! In effect, we need to start auditing our own fund-raising. Of course, this information will only be required until all of the other organizations have finally merged into one unified movement (to the extent that ever happens). How many different environmental organizations do we

need? How many political activist web sites do we need? How many redundant executive directors and fund-raisers can we afford?

Eventually our information will need to expand to all of the other functions normally subsumed under the rubric of “intelligence”. Again, however, in a culture of peace, there would be no need for this information to be secret. This would include information about “other” cultures (to promote inter-cultural relationships), tracking of environmental conditions and the systematic analysis of regional geographic and ecological data (for building sustainable means of living harmoniously in the environment). This type of information needs to be completely transparent and easily accessible and understandable to everyone. The availability and ubiquity of this information would be an enormous boost to demonstrating the plausibility, desirability, and necessity of the peace movement itself.

And finally, it should be mentioned that we will need excellent information about the political and social adversaries who will inevitably attempt to provide great resistance to any real emergence of peace and justice.

Strategy

Not being a military expert, it is hard to talk about military strategy. However, on a naïve level we tend to think about ways to “out-flank” the enemy, strategic questions of supply lines and troop movement, surprise attacks, etc.

Obviously, the peace movement being proposed here will also need a considerable amount of strategy. Yes, we will need to keep ahead of our “enemies”, know how to avoid the onslaught of opposition, supply the “troops” and get the right people in the right place at the right time.

Currently, almost all effort is being spent

- understanding the political process and devising strategies for working within that context;
- creating new and better fund-raising techniques;
- orchestrating events to raise “consciousness” and awareness of problems;
- organizing protests and civil disobedience;
- collecting signatures for petitions, etc.;
- conducting investigative research and writing journalistic accounts of that information;
- writing poetry, novels, songs, etc. to spread the word;
- writing letters to the editor and “representatives”;
- writing academic treatises about the problems we face;
- conducting meetings;
- etc.

The point of this list is not to belittle any of these important activities, but rather to emphasize that a lot of activity is already going on! People do have the drive, the fire and the willingness to spend a good deal of their time working on these projects – and not all of it for compensation. Unfortunately, none of this activity is contributing to actually building the future. It is not contributing to establishing a real culture and economy of peace. It is not providing people with a tangible alternative. At best, it is giving voice to their frustrations. And more often than not, it emphasizes the futility of their own efforts. Instead of (or, at least, in addition to) petitioning, protesting and fund-raising, we should be offering people an alternative. This is the strategy that we need to be working on. Let the momentum build (even if slowly at first) until it starts to snowball.

So let's start strategizing about how we can start, build and sustain a real culture and economy of peace. Let's start putting the framework in place that will make all other organizations superfluous, and that will unite everyone into a single and effective cause. Let's start actually building the future. There is certainly enough intelligence and imagination out there to do this. Let's put it to work.

Raison d'être

Do we have a justification for this declaration of peace? What do we need in order to convince people that this effort is necessary, that they should sacrifice their comfort, luxury and perhaps even their lives for it? Clearly, our justification cannot be based on lies and misleading information.

For anyone to assert that they have privileged access to the truth would clearly, itself, be a lie. To this extent no-one can ever claim that their justification is based on a "truth". I would like to believe, however, that there is a difference between honest persuasion and rhetoric and that there is a difference between reasoning and rationalization. If reason and justice are themselves merely a chimera, then surely nothing can ever be truly justified and we are indeed lost in a dark Darwinian world of individuals pitted against each other and all justification is nothing but manipulation and deception, in which case this (and any other) declaration of peace would also be meaningless. I would like to believe also, that, while we cannot ever definitively obtain the truth, our search, our actions and our speech can be truthful. If I did not believe that, I would not be wasting my time writing this.

I am, therefore, appealing to everyone to have faith in the concepts of reason and justice, even if the true meaning of these words remains forever elusive. If we do not base our actions on what we believe reason to be, we will have given up all hope of ever attaining peace. I am also appealing to everyone to strive for reason over rhetoric and deception – to let their actions and speech be truthful. The best that we could hope for is that our justification will be self-evident. You can lead the horse to the trough, but you cannot force it to drink. Ultimately everyone needs to persuade themselves, if **their** insight into the truth of **our** appeal is ever to be reasonable (i.e. autonomous). To this extent, it is more powerful to **demonstrate** the truth of your claims rather than use words and arguments. But certainly, to the extent that some verbal persuasion is necessary, the truth of our speech needs to be abundantly clear.

Our justification should also not be based on fear. The projection of a 30 ft. rise in the level of the oceans (as a result of climate change) might be interesting and even necessary to understand a potential threat. However, such information is not especially motivating and even less uplifting. Our justifications for the necessity of change should be based more on how things will be better (and that they are now not acceptable), rather than basing everything on the avoidance of some looming catastrophe. For example, I like to think that, even if we could believe that the perpetuation of the automobile (in whatever evolved form) would not lead ultimately to our own demise, I would still plead for a car-free world based on the idea that such a world would vastly improve the quality of our lives (because the car is an essential part of our alienated life-style). I would apply the same argument to television and many other forms of modern "entertainment". What we need to do, however, is to **show** people how much better things can be without cars and television. We can do this only by creating the beginnings of a reasonable alternative.

Propaganda

How will we make our cause clear and known to everyone?

The answer to this question is partially obvious from what has already been stated. The "propaganda" will take the form of providing a model for an alternative. At first, it will be a model organization. Then it will become a model economy, culture and life-style.

Of course, first we need people to sign up. The only problem is: at the moment there is nothing to sign up for. And this declaration is not the appropriate place to provide that possibility. The purpose of this declaration is to initiate a dialogue. Hopefully, this dialogue will lead to something concrete.

I hope that people will read and take this declaration of peace seriously. You can help by passing it along to others. To my knowledge there is nothing in this document that even remotely suggests anything illegal or “unconstitutional”. It may not have all the answers and some of my opinions may be misguided or disagreeable to others. And, of course, if anyone feels the need to improve on this declaration by writing their own or adding to this one, I welcome that.

*If this treatise is interesting **or** objectionable to you, or if it is redundant with something already written, I would like to know about it. You can email me at rsvp@thesighting.com. This document is also available online at <http://www.thesighting.com>.*

Thank you for taking the time to look at this.