

## **Some thoughts today about why the book, and why now.**

Knowing a certain amount of pain and suffering are an inevitable and natural part of life, I seem to go through cycles of great sadness, discouragement, depression and hopelessness about the suffering I feel on the earth, the unnecessary and preventable parts of man-made suffering.

Answers are always present around us, and in our questions. It's the will, the spirit, that is needed, to listen to and encourage. Many keep on believing, and trying. Thank you. Sometimes we get another day. Another precious opportunity. Another gift.

The same call heard in 1983 can be heard today. The first line, the opening line in "World Peace?" just happened to be, "Terrorism is on the rise."

But that's not the call. The call is that of cooperation. The call is that of the work of sincere dialogue. It was and remains a call to identify that we all have vital resource needs, to step up and be mature enough to learn to share these (something like how our mothers and kindergarden teacher taught us). It was a call to face our mutual challenges in the world, together. It was clear we can do it when people and leadership apply themselves. This remains true ever so much today. That was and remains the message: We can do this. We can move in that direction to make things much much better, for all, now.

"World Peace?" is a simplifying attempt, tackling overwhelmingly multiple, complex challenges. It was meant to hone the "ten thousand voices". It was meant to re-build lost trust. The same re-building efforts are needed today.

In December 1982 I didn't know how, but the palpable man made pain had me yearning to try to get some basic, vital questions straight, to try to find out why there were so many wars, why terrorism was on the rise, why there was starvation and abject poverty, etc. "That's the way the world works" seemed a very narrow, complicit and outright lazy response, yet repeatedly all too common. That's an answer? The way the world works? What we do and make happen daily is the way the world works. "Let's roll."

I didn't and couldn't reach the famous. I went to speak with those working daily for their countries in the realm of the whole. The UN had and has it severe limitations and own institutional problems, but here people from all over the world were located, in one place. I spoke to as many as I could, as personally as I could. I asked for reflection, and to step aside from standard rhetoric and national positions. Sometimes that came through.

Perhaps of equal weight but not recognized nor credited at that time were those in the hallways, elevators, meetings and lunch rooms, hundreds of secretaries and assistants that shared their personal experiences.

In January 1983 I began the interviews around my work schedule (The AIDS epidemic had begun. People were dying in numbers that left little time for any involved.) After 50 of these personal sit down conversations, I felt exhausted but blessed with a relatively fair representation. As expected, some nations like North Korea, etc. refused interviews. Perhaps I also stopped because the last interview with the visionary Ambassador Zenon Rossides seemed to resonate and echo my inner summations. When to know a work is complete, finished? This kind of work will always be actively expanding and challenged.

Naturally, like most first author's submissions, the manuscript you have before you was rejected by all publishers at the time. If not a form rejection, the common response was, "People have very little interest in international affairs today. It won't sell." One agent recommended that I rename the manuscript, "Terrorism", thinking that might catch an eye. She may have been right, but although the voices within the work helped guide us in preventing terrorism, the book was about the larger picture, not one symptom. I declined the advice and she didn't return phone calls thereafter.

World Peace? was larger than one fear, and the sharing within it was broader than one single focus. Unheeded, that single fear is again trying to dominate all the connected and vital aspects of what survival and civilization need.

The book was pulled off a dusting shelf in 1985 at the urging of others, and given to each US Representative in Congress, all UN Missions, many world leaders and concerned organizations at the time. It received immediate praise and letters of gratitude. I left the big world alone for a bit, and returned to the work of one to one caring. The aids epidemic was in full swing.

We had then and have today serious multiple global challenges before us, weapons proliferation, wars, terrorism, population growth, pollution, epidemic disease, propaganda over truth in media, ineffective bureaucratic institutions, etc.

The compiled "lessons learned" in this book, and the summed up points remain as true today as then. It lights as clear a path then as it does today. Some changed names and circumstances.

I can still hear the Afgan diplomat pleading with me long ago, to help others understand that the forces we were supporting would some day try to destroy all we valued here as well. Did we know the consequences of what we were doing?, he desperately asked.

Despite what we are often told, there is little new about the challenges we face, nor the best way to face and deal with them. We need to gather, get to know one another, build the required trust by actual deeds, and cooperate. We need to share. We need to break the old habit patterns of military reaction to solve problems. We are to re-tool our military industrial complex toward other human needs than destruction. We need to do something about nuclear proliferation. We need to work towards an independent international force which can rapidly deploy to stop human atrocities and wars. We need genuine education...

World Peace? supported that if we are to have civilization, we need to confer on what kind of human civilization we wish to have on this small precious piece of earth floating in greater space. We know we can educate, inspire and move forward to greatness, to enriching humanity. We will always have insurmountable challenges and loss and death, but .... we can have a life worth living, purposeful, meaningful. We can have community that cares, that explores, that enjoys, that learns, that is honest and respectful.

That was then. For me, this can also be added to the tools for now. In January 2003, when it seemed the current US Administration was heading toward invasion and primarily, almost solely, a military response, the book, with a renewed Preface was re-issued. Without illusions that it would be read by anyone, we do what little we can. We try. Again it was given to the President, all US Congress-people, all UN Missions and concerned organizations, to support even the slimmest hope for a wider spectrum of action and thought. We now know there simply were other agendas and the American people were not being leveled with. The consequences of this will continue to be dealt with, but the right people are to be held accountable.

It would be easy to label "World Peace?" as "idealism", "wishful thinking", perhaps "arm-chair liberalism", "naivete", and again, "not the way the world works". May I say this and the other works weren't drawn from reading books or listening to talk radio. The words came from and were earned the hard way. The works come from being "on the ground", facing horrors around the world, facing innocents death, sitting with the suffering and hopeless, from surviving, and learning directly from these "hard realities". It comes from experiencing compassion in places least likely to find it. It comes from outstretched hands and the genuine inspiration given me by my fellow humans who are and have been "there", around the world. It comes from ashes, and from... joys of human community. It comes from the humility of knowing there is always so much more to learn on this tiny planet in this tiny slice of infinite time. A shared gift given to me. Enjoy.