

accurate in the short-term. As long as the long term view of increasing pollution, decreasing resources, and dwindling food supply is neglected as an externality, these short-term pragmatic solutions will continue to result in a ravaged environment and the impoverishment of those most at risk.

If the present path persists, famines among the indigenous peoples will become more frequent, while the rest of the world experiences increasing food prices, protein deficiencies, tropical foods unavailable on the global market, refugee influx, unabated fossil fuel pollution, de-forestation. Without remedial action, major population die-offs from hunger, disease, or war seem certain.

That we in the West would be shielded from the misery of the impoverished billions by our economic and military might was one of the major illusions shattered on September 11th. And yet, we are mostly so well-off relative to the rest of the world, so used to constant, if fitful, economic growth, that we find it a paranoid fantasy that we could be inhabiting a world headed downhill. Many of us cling to the conviction that our technical ingenuity will answer all needs as they arise. These hopes neglect history's lesson that all technologies carry with their use the certainty of unintended consequences that require more quick fixes in a never-ending succession.

Two wild-cards threaten otherwise relatively insulated (for now) Western populations. These are nuclear warfare, and the continuing concentration of wealth. The U.S. is still a long way from the missile vulnerability it used to fear from the Soviets, but our coasts are vulnerable to a bomb brought in on a ship, and our nuclear plants are vulnerable to attack or sabotage. The other wild card—concentration of wealth—is non-threatening as long as there is economic stability. A prolonged recession, to say nothing of a depression, would finally result in social unrest.

The actual occurrence of all of these disasters will not necessarily lead to the end of the world so ardently hoped for by the Rapture crowd. At some point, the human population and its toxic load will come into balance again with nature. At this point the civilized world will probably be reduced to isolated pockets amid subsistence-farming indigenous survivors. What will remain of the global techno-structure is uncertain.

If this general prognosis is correct, those of us who are convinced have two tasks to accomplish. First, we must seek a viable local community as a site for sustainable survival. Second, we must determine what is necessary, possible, and desirable to retain from the existing techno-structure. Then we must find a democratic way to grow a stable social structure that ensures that the first two goals aren't de-railed by internal conflict.

What are we waiting for?

the mirror?" My answer to this quite reasonable first-take objection is: for an enduring global peace/sustainability political force to prosper, it must not allow views and agendas stemming from population groups (the members of which are drawn together by accident of birth and cultural bias) to become the litmus test of party solidarity, because these then become wedge issues which the opposition ruthlessly exploits to tear the coalition apart. Granted that the American political system has the weakness of being unkind to minorities except for the tiny minority of the super-rich. The resulting injustices practiced by our economic, political, military, and law enforcement organizations must be confronted, debated, and ultimately redressed. But the primal instincts at the root of these injustices are not going away anytime soon, whereas organizations created to pursue rational goals by rational methods should (at least in theory) be more easily changeable in order to cope with new challenges.

Manifesting such a paradigm would not produce "the end of history", but would, instead, place intractable conflicts out of bounds to technologically-enhanced mass violence while these conflicts work themselves out as cultures evolve to cope with the sustainability imperative. Why can't the urgent need to renew the earth give birth to a full-employment economy? Reasonable courses of action have been proposed that jiggle a little with the political and economic operating system's structural organization in order to direct human energy into environmental remediation, building community, and guaranteeing equal rights to all people.

We may be entering a unique period in history where individual humans may *only* prosper by peaceful and non-exploitative cooperation with each other and the earth.

This is my rough sketch of the inter-related changes in direction we in America need to pursue as we collectively inch the marshmallow ever nearer the coals.

The situation in Islam is far less clear. Fundamentalists who embrace the Sharia (which inveighs against many of the most distinguishing features of Western civilization) are at odds with the modernizers who seek to emulate the West economically and politically at the risk of marginalizing their religion. Others in the Muslim world want to have it both ways. The only safe predictions in such a matrix are the certainty of continuing recruitment of terrorist martyrs, and the continuing existence of unstable, undemocratic, corrupt governments.

The billion or so people in the Islamic world aren't going away. They embrace a harsh code of honor from a former time that demands that they fight to the death even when it makes no sense to. No cost-benefit analysis for them. Although it would be impossible to predict the exact course of events coming out of such a chaotic and volatile mix, a state of actual or incipient warfare in the region (as long as the present dynamic persists) seems likely.

Meanwhile, in the West, the oligarchic economic and political organizations continue to amass wealth and tighten control, which, if achieved, they see as beneficial to their welfare. However, pragmatic cost-benefit analysis-based decisions are most useful and

Party have become a millionaires club more worried about social acceptance by their mostly right-wing peers than the real long-term interests of their constituents. They would be a centrist party if there were an effective party or coalition on their left. Since the entrenched two-party system combined with the left's vulnerability to wedge issues trumped up by the right, has defeated third parties so far, the concerned voter must either make a compromised choice for the Democrats or an idealistic but quixotic choice for a tiny third party.

At this point in time, those who see the downward spiral of First World over-consumption's dysfunctional interaction with Third World demographics as the pre-eminent threat have no handle on bringing their dire warnings to the political process other than talking to each other and demonstrating in the streets. For now, education and civil disobedience (rather than electoral participation) seem the sole productive avenues—and, since September 11—the effectiveness of civil disobedience has come into question.

The situation must (and will) become much worse before the American public is forced to look our dead-end agenda of global financial, military, and cultural domination in the eye. The ordinary people in the heartland of America must somehow be made to see that we are already in the spiral, and have been for decades. Global warming, smog, oil-dependency, deindustrialization, boom and bust, depleted fisheries, deforestation, falling water tables, terrorism, and war are all currently visible evidence of the spiral. This information is crowded out of the landscape of the ordinary American by the hubris of American triumphalism, omnipresent advertising, televised info-tainment, and government propaganda. Greater creativity must be brought to bear on finding ways to get the ordinary person who just wants to do the right thing and lead a normal life, to confront the realities that our leaders refuse to acknowledge. Then they must be shown a convincing alternative that doesn't just stress the negativity of reform (although, God knows, a 180° turn is needed everywhere) but shows pathways for the exertion of productive energy.

The focus for constructive change needs to be on altering our economic and political institutions to be less driven by greed and more responsive to need. The focus needs to be on taming competition, which—at its extreme—provokes violent conflict. The focus needs to be on consensual cooperation toward a generally understood goal of sustainability.

Those already on board with such an agenda would be likely to cry out in alarm, "But what about promoting feminism, deconstructing patriarchy, mandating equal pay, protecting legal abortions, mainstreaming homo, bi, trans, and other sexuality, procuring rights for undocumented immigrants, paying reparations to African-Americans, respecting Native American sovereignty, punishing hate-crimes, protecting religious freedom, keeping church and state separate, uniting with organized labor, affirming Israel's right to exist, protesting the dispossession of the Palestinians, and a multitude of other causes dear to the hearts of those with compassion for the victims of injustice everywhere, and especially for that victim closest to our hearts which we see everyday in

loaded with volatile feelings that they become justifications for dehumanizing an alien culture. Further, societies that are severely sexually repressive tend to channel Dionysian energy into violence.

Race, ethnicity, and country of origin form a spectrum of attributes fixed at birth that serve as a basis for acceptance of the dehumanization of the "other" needed to justify genocidal wars. Ethnocentric feelings are likely to continue to create an undercurrent of territoriality that must be curbed if the interest of sustainable peace is to be served.

Religion, education, privilege, intelligence, and capacity to excel—although less hard-wired and more diverse—are areas of near universal human concern over which struggles from petty to cataclysmic will forever erupt. In these areas, as well as those of gender, race, and ethnicity, maximum tolerance of other's differences (coupled with defense against aggressions limited to those involving violence, theft, and fraudulence) will always have to be employed to secure sustainable peace with social stability.

Realistically, since cultures are based in ineradicable identifying characteristics typical of their members, culture-clash (both inter and intra) is a permanent element of the human condition. Any new paradigm hopeful of achieving broad consensus must be solidly principled and rigorously even-handed in its address to cultural issues. That means that it must not be about *who we are*, but about *how we organize* and *what we organize to do*. It must be based on allowing everyone the freedom to be who they are in equality with all others.

Obviously, such a new paradigm must reject all nation's (and by logical extension, all organizations with international reach) right to wage aggressive warfare. Within nations, *freedom* must be balanced with *security* in such an even-handed way that no gender, race, ethnicity, nationality, religious faith (or other consensual belief or practice), be subject to intimidation by the police. The new paradigm should envision a way of organizing the *economy* so that all are guaranteed at least the bare necessities regardless of condition of birth and choice of lifestyle. A truly free market should be organized to encourage universal productive input, a wide choice of goods and services, and sustainability. The aforementioned essential new paradigm constituents can only be put in place and refined by freely-elected *democratic governments* charged with the tasks of commanding a military committed exclusively to national defense, a police respectful of individual civil rights, and the regulation of economic organization's impact on the people and their environment.

The pursuit of these particular goals by political actions and organizations is nothing new. In fact, progress toward their achievement is a primary measure of the advance of civilization. Why are they, then, opposed? Because they threaten existing concentrations of economic and coercive power whose domination is thought necessary in order to maintain order in a world thought to be inherently unjust.

The citizen in general agreement with progressive goals currently has little opportunity for effective political expression. Elected representatives belonging to the Democratic

of greedy pathological control-freaks determines our destiny through our willingness to be dominated and kept in scarcity by their hierarchies. In the face of this overpowering organization of human and material resources with the power to nurture or impoverish, liberate or coerce, the situation of the dissenting individual is dire. At present, the people (to the extent that they remain well fed and feel secure in their homes) see the present system as functional. They, like their corporate masters and political operatives, prefer not to compromise short-term familiar patterns with unproven reforms aimed at peace and sustainability in the long run.

Since the military/economic-driven concentration of power by the contending global oligarchies increases with conditions of open hostility, the power-elite are actually motivated to exacerbate those conditions unless their economic interests or the compliance of their populace are endangered. Only if the people can fully and finally be persuaded that exploitation and war serve no-one's interest, and in any case, are unsupportable in the long run, can progress toward a just peace begin.

Conditions of peace with justice are a precondition to achieving human and ecological sustainability. If those at the pinnacle of our organizational hierarchies won't allow these conditions to occur, is the situation therefore hopeless? The only hope is that the people may be persuaded to embrace a consensus around a new paradigm that would change those rules of the game that guarantee scarcity and contention.

Is a broad consensus around a paradigm shift possible?

Any effort to craft such a consensus must contend with a constellation of inescapable divisions among people established at birth. These are: *gender, race, ethnicity, national origin*; and to a lesser degree: *religion, education, privilege (i.e., class), intelligence, and capacity to excel*. These are characteristics over which the individual has little or no control. They define every person's deepest sense of self.

Division by gender is where inequality is most entrenched. Patriarchy, or male domination, is a nearly universal power-allocation system of human societies. Our inheritance of the pre-historic role division of female nurturers and food-gatherers from male hunters and warriors, guarantees the continuing threat of male violence in social relations. This is not to ignore the facts that gender occurs along a continuum, that males will choose non-violent means if the desired ends are thereby attainable, that females are quite capable of being a part of the violence equation. The substitution of matriarchy for male dominance, even if possible through non-violent means by the unlikely acquiescence of men, would merely substitute one mode of inflicting injustice for another.

The universal biological imperatives of birth, death and adult sexuality give rise to gender-related mores as divisive as patriarchy, and coeval with it. For the devout Muslim, the public near-nudity allowed women in the West is as much a sign of moral depravity as the obligatory burkha in Islam is to the equalitarian Western liberal. In addition, differing ways of structuring the Dionysian energies centered in sex are so

For the foreseeable future, the US seems to be locked into an insoluble conflict with the several-hundred-million-strong Islamic Diaspora that spreads across the opposite side of the globe from Morocco to Mindanao. The threat of terrorism at home, accompanied by wars abroad, will continue to shape our lives. On neither side of this divide do the ordinary citizens who are to bear the burden of this calamitous development seem to realize that wars are not usually fought to benefit the populations of the combatant nations; they are fought (even by democracies) for the right of a tiny minority to either retain or gain control over power and wealth. The US seems irrevocably committed to ever-growing consumption of the world's dwindling resources, while Islam's ever-growing population of uneducated young men, languishing in poverty, seems destined to succumb to the lure of instant paradise achieved through terrorist martyrdom. Both sides are caught up in a dance of death fueled by the macho-motivated cycle of violence and vengeance.

In the short term, there is no viable alternative to the present grim scenario. Since the ordinary people—the ones who will suffer—on both sides of this divide didn't plan this outcome, why don't they (or at least those of us who are supposedly governed democratically) do something about it? Since the bulk of the people are persuaded by their leaders of the inevitability of a future characterized by ongoing war, the only ones motivated to seek remediation are the peace and justice activists in the Western world and the secular modernizers in Islam.

As Albert Einstein famously observed, "We cannot trust those who have caused the problems to fix them". The Islamic terrorist trajectory seems the more intractable problem. The Muslim faith, with its history of theocratic autarchies and theologically-sanctioned jihad, is unlikely to endorse liberal democratic capitalism any time soon, while the cancer of uncontrolled exponential US capitalist growth can, in theory, be contained by an informed electorate through democratic means. However, in the present war-on-terrorism climate, building a US anti-corporate pro-community/environment consensus seems unlikely.

The modernizers within Islam and the peace and justice activists in the West share a common trait: a better than average education. This education exalts truth as the evolving body of secular knowledge based on repeatable experiment and un-biased investigation, whereas religious fundamentalism and corporate capitalism both base themselves on contending mythological ideologies. The educational impulse supports efforts to reveal truth regardless of consequences, whereas religious fundamentalists and corporate-capitalist ideologues seek to persuade through unchallengeable doctrine and disingenuous propaganda. If there is any hope for reconciliation between the Islamic East and the secular democratic West, it lies with these educated young people. But that hope dies if they are apathetic, too easily intimidated, or too narrow to seriously consider other's viewpoints.

If, at this point, there are any millennialists left, they must be either appalled or in denial about the poor prospects for the improvement of the human condition given the giant strides backward during its first year. If the foregoing analysis is correct, a tiny minority

something innate to man—but with important differences. The Hindu cosmology views the reality of the senses as the illusory play of "maya", wherein violence and suffering are necessary to the coherence of the illusion. The addition of the concept of karma, coupled with belief in reincarnation of the soul, would seem to prompt an attitude toward violence, that, since this is a play that we're making up as we go along, let's make it a comedy if we can—especially since we're going to have to repeat it if we can't—and if we can't, let us be cold-bloodedly forthright in slaughtering and being slaughtered. One of the prophet/kings of the Jews received instructions from God to commit genocide against his enemies. Flight from (and retaliation in kind to) genocide characterizes Jewish history. For Christians, Christ's death by torture is central to the creed. The myth surrounding this event is complex, and has given rise to diametrically opposed interpretations. However, ever since it became the state religion of Rome, it has been brought to the rest of the world with the aid of the sword. In the case of Islam, the prophet Muhammad was himself an Arab warlord. It is fairly safe to assume that, were it not for military conquest, Islam would still be confined to the Arabian peninsula today. The specifically religious character of the Islamic fundamentalist terrorist phenomenon needs to be faced squarely. Clearly all religions are culpable in condoning violence, but where Hindus discount its importance, and Jews are in constant fear of and retaliation for it, and Christianity makes excuses for it, certain Muslims require it of themselves as a sacred act. Although a credible tenet in a time of hand-to-hand combat, a creed of this kind is incompatible with the scale of mass destruction possible in the modern world. A common-sense reaction to this picture would seem to be, "Have these ancient religions outlived their usefulness as guides to decisions in a globally interconnected, over-populated, unsustainable world?"

To return for the final time to the end of World War II: after vanquishing the Axis, the US—propelled to the newfound status of global super-power—was immediately confronted with a replacement for the role of Enemy No. 1—the Soviet Union—which had been auditioning for that honor in the pre-war years. This led to a four-decade arms race that lasted until the Soviet Union imploded, after which a talented but largely ignored understudy, the Islamic world, took over the role. All three opponents have been branded (not without good reason, it is only fair to say) as the incarnation of evil. And yet, should there not be a growing reason to suspect that anything that opposes the juggernaut of US military and economic global domination seems to thereby define itself—if it takes concrete steps to oppose that domination—as the evil du jour? Anything short of world domination appears to leave the US feeling insecure. If peace is indeed achievable only through threat of coercion by the strongest, the US will (as long as it remains the pre-eminent super-power) be obliged to maintain its credibility through intimidating military capability, and the will to use it. However, peace achieved through coercion is only temporary, especially when that coercion is in the economic interest of the imposer. Once again, in Iraq, we have been shown the futility of modern technological warfare. Military victory may be easy, but the resultant occupation will fail in the face of a hostile indigenous population. When will we finally be able to apply this lesson to international relations? Apparently we remain committed to the inevitability of war as our basis for facing the future.

prudent posture for a nation cast in the role of super-power. With the development of nuclear missiles, this game escalated to one of victory through global annihilation—an oxymoronic exercise sufficient to wake the peoples of the world to a renewed call for an end to war. This led to bi-lateral treaties between the super-powers, but with the demise of the Soviet empire (and despite nuclear proliferation), the urgency of nuclear disarmament abated. The world, in the popular mind, was once again made safe for "conventional" warfare. The world's only remaining super-power clung to the conviction that a peace enforced by its overwhelming military might was the only viable alternative. The creation of a world government empowered to end warfare between nations remains an unachievable dream.

But modern attack-oriented technological warfare is potentially genocidal—even ecocidal. Fortunately, the heirs to the peace movement of the last century have been successful in defining the killing of civilians in time of war as a crime against humanity. If retroactively applied (to return to the end of WW II), the US would be guilty of committing the first and only nuclear slaughter of defenseless civilians in Hiroshima and Nagasaki. Retaliation in kind could be adduced as an excuse for the air-raids on the Axis homelands, but the introduction of nuclear warfare was an escalation of the horror of war of several magnitudes. The opportunity existed at that time for the US to nip that addition to the arsenal of modern warfare in the bud while the amount of nuclear material extant was still small and limited to the US. A bi-lateral treaty with the Soviet Union, if adhered to, would have removed the threat of nuclear terror from the Cold War scenario. But this would have been feasible only if there had been the prescient realization at the time that peaceful nuclear power was going to finally prove impractical, and if there had been a credible guarantee of meaningful inspection.

The military superiority achieved through the combination of nuclear weaponry with the invention and deployment of other unprecedented modalities of death-dealing technologies established the US as an indomitable global military presence, while undermining any pretense of its claim to moral authority. Then, as a consequence of its burgeoning Cold War military alliances, the US armed nations on a global scale. In the case of Iran/Iraq the US sold weapons to both sides. It armed Muslim fundamentalists at odds with the Soviets. For these, and other similar cases in Latin America, the US failed to employ any kind of moral calculus to the question of its responsibility for non-combatant casualties or coziness with repressive regimes. The deployment of American military force in Vietnam proved to be not only a moral failure, but, ultimately, a military failure.

To introduce questions of morality into the discussion of international warfare prompts a look at the role of the world's major religions. From Hinduism—the most ancient—through Judaism and Christianity to Islam—the most modern (unless the post-flat-earth atheistic Marxist-Leninism is included)—all the major religions have justified warfare. In fact, they are major religions today because they were introduced in historical times by military conquest that used their introduction as their *raison-de-etre*. The sacred texts of all these creeds are large and riddled with contradictions, but for someone who is not a scholar of comparative religion, certain things stand out. They all view violence as

This victory was compromised by the problems stemming from the survival of repressive regimes installed by the US to counter Soviet influence, and by continuing poverty and social injustice. Meanwhile, the major concentrations of capital, mainly centered in the US, proceeded to gain a viselike grip on the world economy with the assistance of the World Bank and the WTO. At the turn of the new century, the elites of the new world order basked in the conviction that the world was now, finally and forever, their oyster, and that wars, should they occur, would be minor brushfire inconveniences quickly put down by overwhelming military technology. That illusion was shattered on September 11 when a small band of terrorists turned high technology against the US to such devastating effect that violent conflict with an entire civilization with over a billion people is assured for the foreseeable future.

There are two opposing worldviews regarding war and peace. The operative one held by the governments of powerful nations insists that peace may only be achieved by ensuring with certainty that overpowering military retaliation will greet any potential aggressor. The other view holds that resort to war will always be seen by the aggressor as a means of addressing racial, ethnic, economic, and social injustices, and that true peace can only be achieved by eliminating the reasons for going to war. These two views are not necessarily incompatible. The threat of military force can ensure stability at a time when opposing national interests are moving toward conciliation through diplomatic negotiations, particularly (and most fairly, if not always most effectively) if the military force comes from a disinterested third party.

To return to the end of WW II, initiatives were taken then that were intended to replace the militarized global geopolitical power struggle with institutions designed to heal the war's destruction and promote peaceful conflict resolution in the future. The founding of the UN was the most enduring of these, but the far-reaching consequences of the Marshall Plan for European reconstruction should not be discounted. The establishment in Japan of democratic government by the US occupation, as well as various relief efforts throughout the post-war period, are further examples of the US actively promoting the conditions for lasting peace. Although none of these actions have come back to haunt the US, the perceived dangers of the Cold War were accorded first priority, and those actions have all, eventually, backfired disastrously.

Very soon after the UN's formation, it came to be seen by the US as an undependable ally in the Cold War (the war in Korea, aside). By a curious, but near universal, defect in the logic of those who espouse the ideology of democratic capitalism, anarchy (more reviled than communism, itself more reviled than socialism) is held to be the worst of all ideologies of intra-national government, but perfectly permissible, even desirable, in international relations. In this view, the sovereignty of nations can only be maintained by allowing each the right to make war unilaterally on any other. The UN, brought into being to mitigate the consequences of anarchy between nations, has been caught between the fulfillment of that task and the necessity of honoring national sovereignty. Those in control of national governments concluded, therefore, that as long as widespread injustice and opposing ideologies remain, the potential for resort to international warfare would continue to loom. Deployment of overwhelming military might remained the only

## **PROSPECTS FOR THE FUTURE IN THE 3RD MILLENNIUM--2001**

Global humanity is racing toward total disaster. Humanity's two most pressing (and negatively synergetic) problems at the start of the 21st century are: the overuse of the earth's resources by the industrialized peoples, and exponential population growth by the indigenous peoples. If this is indeed the case, it would seem imperative that we institute cultural and technological adaptations to address these threats. On the contrary, US policy holds the putative existence of these dangers to be irrelevant to pragmatic decisions of state shaped by insular political alignments. In fact, US population policy exacerbates third world population growth, and economic policy is utterly committed to the grow-or-die global corporate economy. Those concerned about the unsustainability of the coming over-populated, over-polluted world are effectively silenced by the shared assumption that—since it's clear next to nothing can be done to curb population growth or redirect the capitalist economy—pushing those agendas would be a quixotic waste of time. However, if we do nothing until natural or human disasters become severe enough to engage our attention, it may easily be too late.

My guess is that history (if any survive to write it) will see the events of September 11, as the threshold marking the descent into an abyss of brutal genocidal and ecocidal warfare. The exploding, hopelessly impoverished populations of the Muslim world, relentlessly ground down by the depredations of a global corporate capitalism dedicated to the marginalization and ultimate defeat of their core cultural convictions, will continue to incubate youth vulnerable to the lure of the suicidal jihad. Concurrently, the Western plutocracies (and most particularly the US) will feel justified in taking any and all actions needed to keep oil flowing from the region. Both sides have non-negotiable demands anathematic to the other. Both are undeterred by the possibility that protracted warfare could escalate to eco- and genocidal proportions with the use of weapons of mass destruction.

As similar tensions are brewing in Africa, Indonesia, and Latin America, the objective observer must be moved to ask, "What price the death of entire populations and species so that a few may have power and luxury; what price destitute masses so that the injunctions of ancient pre-global religions may be preserved?"

To capsulize the history that has led to the present impasse, the several hundred-year period of European colonization that ended with WW II completed the unprecedented global interconnection of our species. That was followed by the half-century standoff between the Soviet and American empires, both with global reach. The division of the spoils of war at the end of WW II, when combined with efforts to rebuild economies and insure future peace, produced an ambivalent mix of promise and peril. The drawing of national boundaries based on the perceived interests of the major geopolitical powers, without regard for ethnic makeup or capacity for democratic self-government, guaranteed conflict in Korea, Vietnam, Israel/Palestine, and Germany (where it was mercifully non-violent). The imperatives of the Cold War power struggle cast the Third World into the role of pawn in the super-power's contest. The collapse of the Soviet empire left the US the sole global super-power and the corporate capitalist economic system unchallenged.