KAZUAKI TANAHASHI

DEMILITARIZATION POTENTIALS OF NATIONS

A WORLD WITHOUT ARMIES

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To Rodrigo Carazo

Honorary founder of
A World Without Armies
Former President of Costa Rica

Preface

Each one of you is enthusiastically invited to the sacred endeavor of helping nations to abolish their military forces. In our current period of global conflict and social unrest, there is increasing interest in the topic of demilitarization.

You might think this is a mere fantasy. But look! Costa Rica abandoned its army by constitution in 1949 and still maintains its independence, leading the world in its commitment to domestic and international peace, environmental protection, and happiness of citizens. What José Figueres did then is, in my mind, the most inspiring act in human history. Panama followed in 1994, which has been enjoying the fastest growing economy in Central America.

It was extremely encouraging for me to meet Rector Francisco Rojas Aravena of the United Nations-mandated University for Peace in Costa Rica. He told me that there is a high potential for nations in Central and South America to abandon their military forces as these countries don't invade each other. If the military forces don't need to defend their

countries from their bordering nations, they may only be good for starting coup d'états. We have seen enough of them in the Americas. If so, who would want their armies?

We have a simple and straightforward plan to help demilitarize nations. First, we offer a grant to an expert in political science to research and write an academic paper on demilitarization potentials of four Spanish-speaking Central American nations—El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, and Nicaragua. They may have high demilitarization potentials as two other nations in the region are showing their successful examples as mentioned above. Then, we will offer grants to peace organizations of these countries to do demilitarization work—lobbying and public outreach. We believe this is the most pragmatic and effective way for helping to demilitarize these nations.

We will then do the same in all South American nations, then Europe and Africa. Your support is crucial. Together we will work toward a more peaceful world! Thank you for your consideration.

—Kazuaki Tanahashi
Founding director
A World Without Armies

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Significance of Disarmament and Demilitarization

All nations are encouraged to take a direction toward arms reduction, disarmament, and demilitarization for peace in the world and to support others who are on that course.

Don't you think it's a bad habit and an addiction that many nations keep increasing their military budget? It might be an invisible international race, continuing to improve weapons and paying more and more. It's an "Others do, so we will do" mentality. For politicians and congress members, supporting the increase of the military budget is regarded as patriotic, making them popular and re-electable. Can you be brave enough to say, "Enough is enough"?

Converting 10% of the military budget of all nations, we can reverse the climate change crisis and population explosion very easily. Another 10% conversion can eliminate hunger and poverty throughout the entire world. Think about it.

World peace expands with an increasing number of nations without military forces.

Nations fight; therefore they need armies. Nations have armies; therefore they fight. Nations don't fight; therefore they don't need armies. Nations don't have armies; therefore they don't fight. Isn't this a simple equation?

Demilitarization means the abolition of military forces that have combat capability with cannons, tanks, fighter planes, and navy ships, while maintaining police forces, border control, disaster rescue units, and international peacekeeping forces.

If a nation is free of the fear of being invaded, it does not need to have military forces. Other security measures can be covered by civilian forces. Can't they?

Nations without the threat of being invaded are urged to take measures to abolish their military forces.

So, let's go ahead and think about the ways to go toward demilitarization.

Demilitarization means the nation will not engage in war and no coup d'état or large-scale violence will take place in the domain.

If a nation has no army, it cannot and will not wage war. It cannot and will not create massive violence in its territory. Hallelujah!

Mutual demilitarization ensures an everlasting peace between the nations.

Costa Rica and Panama are the first pair of nations without military forces bordering each other. They have both created a national park that joins at their respective borders, forming the first international park: Parque La Amistad, or Friendship Park in English. How inspiring!

By abolishing its military forces, a nation obtains an enormous amount of savings which can be redirected to universal free health care, universal free education up to the university level, strengthening international trade competition, improving the economy, and protecting the environment.

Costa Rica shows us a concrete example.

We encourage the support of soldiers who are released due to demilitarization by guaranteeing them the same income, compensating them for the difference between their military work and earnings in the civil sector.

There is an unfortunate precedent that Haiti was demilitarized in 1991, but former soldiers were not treated well and they took up arms and revolted. This should not be repeated.

Citizens throughout the world should become aware of those nations currently without armies and the many advantages of societies free from the burden of maintaining military forces.

Isn't it the most straightforward way to secure funds to do all the good things for the citizens and the environment? First, rate your nations from 1 to 5, with 5 having the highest potential of demilitarization. If less than 5, endeavor to make your nation's number higher (see page 37).

Individuals who feel disenchanted and disenfranchised by national and international politics will be empowered by participating in conversations and movements that can change the future of the international security system.

The goal of demilitarization is a brilliant light of hope in the darkness of violence and misery.

The United Nations should establish a Council for Nations Without Armies.

An establishment of a U.N. Council for Nations Without Armies can be the first step in changing the world's perception of the practicality and feasibility of demilitarization among nations.

We request that the governments of nations with no armies, including Costa Rica, Iceland, and Panama, propose to the United Nations General Assembly an establishment of a Council for Nations Without Armies. The Council will discuss the security of their member states and undertake action on their behalf.

Your nation may want world peace but may be exporting weapons. It's a contradiction. It's a collaboration with scientists of death and merchants of death. The weapons you export or give away may be used against you. Weapons trade or aid is a cause of more conflicts and more killings.

Weapons exporting countries want to encourage other countries to want more weapons and use weapons. They may want themselves to have more weapons. It's a never-ending vicious circle.

Citizens of the weapons exporting countries should first stop their countries making profit by such trade. Talk to your congress members. Help peace organizations to stop it.

Weapons don't feed or heal anybody. Weapons just destroy, injure, and kill. Weapons are often used by criminals. If you use weapons to harm others, you may become a criminal. Weapons may be used for defense. But defense can easily become offence.

The less weapons citizens have, the safer the society is. Endeavor to stop producing assault weapons in your country, then stop producing small weapons. Where weapons are banned for citizens to possess, the society is safe and no weapons are needed to keep or carry.

We can keep our beautiful Earth safe from exploitation of materials and destruction of nature by reducing weapons production, testing, training, and using them. Demilitarization is eco-friendly.

Think about how much metals, chemicals, and petroleum we save, and how much of the environment we can keep pristine by not holding, training, and using military forces.

A World Without Armies gives grants for academic studies of the demilitarization potentials of candidate nations.

Presently our grant offering is limited to works for helping to demilitarize four Central American nations—El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, and Nicaragua. As two other nations of the region—Costa Rica and Panama—have been successfully demilitarized by constitution, these nations seem to have high demilitarization potentials. After that we will offer grants to political scientists on research for helping to demilitarize South American countries.

We give grants to peace organizations in the nations in which academic studies of demilitarization potentials have been completed.

Presently our grant offering is limited to projects for helping to demilitarize nations whose demilitarization potential study has been completed.

A Formula for Prosperous Conversion

A World Without Armies recommends:

A nation calls for volunteers of 30–50% of its soldiers per year, then reinserts them into civilian life, guaranteeing equivalent salaries and benefits as in military service. The former soldiers will acquire new skills to participate in national projects that improve the well-being of citizens and the economy of the nation. These projects can increase employment for other citizens. Some military forces may transform into civil service units.

This conversion process may be coordinated with that of neighboring nations.

Words by Presidents of Costa Rica

Costa Rica, as an independent nation, has never known slavery. We are a country where compulsory basic education was established in 1869. A country in which capital punishment was abolished in 1882. Costa Rica abolished its army as an institution in 1949. And, in 1983 the government declared our country a neutral, and unarmed state, a move that contributed to the peace process in Central America.

Conflict will always arise among people. What we must learn is how to deal with that conflict without resorting to violence.

At this beginning of the twenty-first century, we are being called upon to face the needs of humanity, in all its tragic urgency. And we must, at the same time, face up to the requirements of the species: this century shall be peaceful or shall not be at all.

—Rodrigo Carazo
President of Costa Rica, 1978-1982

I receive this prize as one of the 2.7 million Costa Ricans. My people breathe their sacred freedom from the two oceans which are our frontiers to the East and West. To the South and North, Costa Rica has nearly always been bordered by dictators and hunger.

We are a people without arms and we are fighting to continue to be a people without hunger. We are a symbol of peace for America; we want also to be a symbol of development. We intend to demonstrate that peace is both a requirement and a product of development.

—Oscar Arias, upon receiving Nobel Peace Prize
President of Costa Rica, 1986-1990, 2006-2010

Proposed Studies

A study of the demilitarization potential of a nation must be done by an expert in the political science of the subject nation (a Ph.D. holder). The paper must be written in English as well as in the local language and be published in an academic journal. However, excerpts from the study should be available to peace organizations that work for demilitarization of the country, as well as the media.

Required Topics

Preface: Methodology

An outline of the subject nation
Region, size, population, capital city, bordering nations, a brief history of armed conflicts

Political system
Governance, parties, press

Security

Military (number of officers and soldiers, planes and heavy weapons, and their ages)
Border control (number of soldiers)
Police (number of officers, heavy weapons)

Military budget

Entire annual budget (local currency), last five years
Total personnel expenses (salary, benefits, pension), last five years

Threat of invasion and potential solution (fight back or intervention by OAS)

Threat of coup d'état (history and future potential)

Major obstacles for demilitarization of the nation

Savings by demilitarization for 30 years

Annual military budget minus personnel expenses for former soldiers, plus their projected civil income (70% of the personnel expenses), multiplied by 30.

What is needed to legalize demilitarization by constitution?

Approval by congress (simple majority or two thirds of the vote?)

Referendum (simple majority or two thirds of the vote?)

Public opinion survey (questionnaire for 1000 random people in cities and villages)

Name, location, gender, age
Do you fear a foreign invasion?
Do you fear a coup d'état?
Is it crucial to have military forces?

Do you fear a lack of security without military forces?
Do you favor demilitarization?
If demilitarization took place, how would you prioritize spending the saved funds, on a scale of 1 to 5? Spending options are education, healthcare, economy, security, and environment.
Any other comments?

List of peace organizations to work on demilitarization

Name, address, director's name, phone, email, website.

List of media

Name, address, editor-in-chief, phone, email, website.

Conclusion

Public Opinion Survey

A World Without Armies

Conducted by Dr. Xxx

Country_____

Name_____ Location _____

Gender_____ Age_____

Do you fear a foreign invasion?

☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ I don't know

If yes, by which country? _____

Do you fear a coup d'état?

☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ I don't know

Is it crucial to have military forces?

☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ I don't know

Do you fear a security lack without an army?

☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ I don't know

Do you favor demilitarization?

☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ I don't know

If demilitarization took place, how would you prioritize spending the saved funds? (1, 2, 3, 4, 5)

☐ Education
☐ Healthcare
☐ Economy
☐ Security
☐ Environment

Any other comments? If yes, please write them down.

Rate Your Country on Its Demilitarization Potential

5 High potential

4 3 2 1 Needs improvement. Its citizens and peace organizations are encouraged to remove obstacles and increase the potential.

1 Being engaged in war. Producing and exporting weapons. Increasing military budget.

2 Producing and exporting weapons. Increasing military budget.

3 Producing weapons. Increasing military budget.

4 Increasing military budget.

5 None of the above.

Nations and a Continent Without Military Forces

23 countries:

Andorra
Costa Rica
Dominica
Grenada
Iceland
Kiribati
Lichtenstein
Marshall Islands
Mauritius
Micronesia
Monaco
Nauru
Palau
Panama
Saint Kitts and Nevis
Saint Lucia
Saint Vincent and the Grenadines
Samoa
San Marino
Solomon Islands
Tuvalu
Vanuatu
Vatican City

A continent without military forces:

Antarctica

For more information: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_sovereign_states_without_armed_forces

Story and Vision

COSTA RICA

The Revolution Begins

José Figueres was the leader of the Costa Rican revolution. Born in 1906, Figueres, a coffee farmer, had studied at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology in Boston, but mainly was self-educated. He owned a farm called La Lucha Sin Fin (meaning "the endless struggle"), in a small village in the south of San José Province, bordering Cartago Province in its east. He loved living there. He was also an engineer, an economist without a degree, and a visionary, but his way of talking and behaving was no different from that of ordinary farmers around him. He worked on the land all day and studied at night. Some of his friends used to tease him about "playing with agricultural equipment." Costa Ricans called him "Don Pepe."

According to my interview with Robert Müller, former Assistant Secretary-General of the United Nations, who met

Figueres in the later part of his life on the University for Peace campus, Figueres read and was influenced by the English author H.G. Wells, a farsighted thinker whose rather unrealistic ideals were sometimes belittled. Wells believed in the unification of all world governments and the eradication of all world religions, which he believed were preventing the unity of all humanity. Müller suggests that Figueres wanted to bring Wells' idealism to Costa Rica.

In 1942, a German submarine sank the San Pablo, a boat belonging to the United Fruit Company. Calderón´s administration deported more than 200 Germans and put others in an internment camp. It also decided to expropriate land and farms belonging to people with German and Italian surnames. On July 4, 1942, the government promoted attacks on shops, houses, and farms of Costa Rican citizens who had such ancestries.

Figueres spoke on the radio and insisted that this would never be accepted by the Costa Ricans. He would not permit this assault against citizens whose only connection to Germany and Italy was that they were descendants of people from those countries. He also said that he was not going to accept the attempt by communists to rule the Costa Rican people.

Before he finished his speech, the police burst into the broadcasting booth and got hold of Figueres's lapels. He managed to get out these words: "The police order me to stop. I shall not be able to say what I think ought to be done, but I can summarize it in a few words: what the government ought to do is get out!" He was hustled out of the radio station and kept in a jail cell; then he was persuaded to leave the

country. After he departed, he spent most of his time in Mexico City, meeting with other intellectuals and revolutionaries from Latin America, forming alliances, and refining his theory. He also became a close friend of Juan José Arévalo, who would be democratically elected as president of Guatemala in December 1944, and take office in 1945. Figueres returned to his country on May 21, 1944, where he was given a hero's welcome and greeted by thousands of people.

The Costa Rican constitution prohibits consecutive terms of presidency. So, sometimes an incumbent president installs a puppet figure in between his terms. For this purpose, Calderón replaced himself with Teodoro Picado in 1944, in an election widely regarded as fraudulent. Meanwhile, as Soviet-American relations deteriorated, U.S. policy shifted from its wartime alliance with Soviet Russia to now actively opposing the spread of communism. Calderón and Picado failed adequately to discern the shift in U.S. policy until it was too late. At this time, the youth of the opposition were vigorously anti-communist, asserting that the government should not be allowed to continue ruling the country in collaboration with them.

The Center for the Study of Costa Rican Problems had been in existence since 1941; on April 11, 1945, Figueres joined many intellectuals, businesspeople, and labor activists to turn this Center into the Social Democratic Party. Rodrigo was part of it. While sharing some of Calderón's ideals, the newly formed party rejected land reform (as Figueres thought it was inefficient) and favored nationalization of many industries. Figueres gave an address in which he talked

of establishing a "Second Republic." His vision was revolutionary, although his economic program was not so radical, but rather reformist. By this time people in the opposition had become the majority of the country. They opposed the reigning regime's authoritarianism; Figueres forged alliances with other Latin American groups who opposed this as well—in their countries as well as in Costa Rica.

The situation intensified in 1947 when the National Union Party put forth Otilio Ulate to oppose Picado. Rebel youths set off bombs to show their support of the opposition. Figueres called for a general strike which lasted 12 days and brought the country to a standstill. It was only resolved when some women's groups marched to the Presidential House and negotiated a solution.

In December 1947 Figueres traveled to Guatemala City, under the progressive rule of Juan José Arévalo, to sign a Caribbean Pact, along with Dominican and Nicaraguan exiles, pledging mutual support among themselves for overthrowing dictators in the region. Figueres thus gained the promise of military aid should a war begin.

Military dictatorships were common in Central America and the Caribbean in this period. It was a very unstable time that resulted in several coups d'états in the region. For example, Jorge Ubico had been dictator of Guatemala from 1931 to 1944 when he was overthrown. Maximiliano Hernández ruled El Salvador also from 1931 to 1944 and was overthrown. Anastasio Somoza in Nicaragua and Rafael Trujillo in the Dominican Republic were in power. Trujillo alone massacred thousands of his own citizens as well as Haitians.

The Caribbean Pact that Figueres signed was meant to overthrow these and other dictators in the area.

Except for instability in the period 1868 to 1876, and the dictatorship of Federico Tinoco from 1917 to 1919, Costa Rica had maintained a democratic regime since its establishment as a republic in 1821, following the declaration of independence of the Captaincy General of Guatemala (which then included the other Central American countries) from Spain. But many Costa Ricans feared that Calderón, whose puppet was on the ballot, was steering Costa Rica on the course to dictatorship. In February 1948, he was decisively defeated by Otilio Ulate, a leading journalist, writer, and orator who represented the anti-Calderónist coalition. The ruling party refused to accept the result, claiming fraud, and brought the issue to the Congress. The administration-dominated Congress sided with the government. Figueres believed that the opposition needed to use weapons in order to restore electoral rights. This threw Costa Rica into a severe crisis.

Figueres retreated to the hills of La Lucha to gather a citizen's army, or what may be regarded as guerrillas. On March 10, 1948, Figueres, with his newly formed National Liberation Armed Forces, plunged Costa Rica into a civil conflict known as the "War of National Liberation" against Picado and Calderón. Intellectuals, students, and ordinary people on the street also decided to fight.

Rodrigo says, "For the first time, we learned to take up a rifle and to learn about weapons."

The Rebels Prevail

In the very first week of the revolution, Rodrigo Alberto Carazo was born as Estrella and Rodrigo's first child. The young couple lived in Puntarenas, but Estrella gave birth at the hospital in San José. As soon as their son was born, Rodrigo went to the opposition headquarters in the capital city to offer his service. No one knew who Rodrigo was because almost all the people in charge of the national organization were from areas other than Puntarenas.

When Rodrigo heard what was going on, he said, "Give me a chance and I will set up a Morse code station so we can communicate with our troops and let people know about our movement." The opposition organizers gave their approval. Rodrigo and other volunteers set up a place on a roof of a building near the Presidential House. From there they reported military actions for almost 15 days, sending messages to Figueres in the field. This was Rodrigo's participation in the revolution, and how he started to develop a close friendship with Figueres.

The official Costa Rican army was small and poor, composed of about 300 soldiers. Some of these soldiers had been sent to the Panama Canal Zone to be trained by the U.S. Army in the School of the Americas to defend the region from Germany, Italy, and Japan. President Picado underestimated the size of the opposition forces, their determination, and their international connections.

Figueres's army captured an airfield. They then flew the planes to Guatemala. President Juan José Arévalo sent arms and troops to the rebels along with military advisers, complying with the Caribbean Pact. The government army invaded Figueres's La Lucha ranch and burnt it. Figueres retreated to the hills. In classic guerilla fashion, he had few resources but knew the land and made use of it.

Meanwhile, Anastasio Somoza in Nicaragua, the first dictator of the Somoza regime, who had an alliance with Picado and Calderón, was concerned about the revolution. He sent troops to the border to stop the rebels. He met with President Picado and offered support if Picado would break with the communists. Picado declined. The United States watched but did not intervene as they knew Figueres was strongly anti-communist. Knowing the role of the Communist Party in the government, the United States established a military boycott of the Picado regime in favor of the rebels under Figueres.

Figueres's Army of National Liberation started to grow. Manuel Mora, the Communist Party leader, provided substantial support to the government's army, leading unionized banana workers turned into fighters. Figueres broadcast inspirational messages on the radio, eventually swelling his forces to 700. But even when he was commander of the National Liberation Army, he would not accept being referred to as General or Colonel, saying, "I am just a modest citizen."

On April 11, 1948, a month after the uprising, Figueres's troops captured the city of Cartago, about 12 miles southeast of San José. Then, the following day, they took control of Puerto Limón on the Caribbean coast. The bloody Battle of Tejar in the province of Cartago was fought on April 13. Estimates of how many people were killed vary. Then Figueres

was ready to attack the government's military headquarters in San José within a few days.

Picado's government began negotiations for surrender. To end the conflict, a truce agreement called "The Pact of Ochomogo" was signed between the government and the National Liberation Armed Forces on April 19. Picado and Calderón departed the country with guarantees of amnesty.

Steven Palmer and Ivan Molina, the authors of *The Costa Rica Reader,* estimate that 4,000 people died in the 44-day civil war, but no one knows exactly how many people were killed. For Rodrigo, there were just too many casualties. It was devastating because friends of his had been killed. One of them was Estrella's personal physician, Dr. Carlos Luis Valverde, a well-known oppositionist. He was hiding Ulate in his house in San José and was shot while he was trying to move him to another house.

Figueres led a victory parade in San José on April 28. But there was still one thing missing. Ulate, the winner of the presidential election, came to claim his place; after all, the battle had been fought to contest the results of his election, not to install Figueres.

On May 1, Ulate and Figueres signed an agreement that a governing coalition, or "junta" in Spanish, would govern for 18 months without the Congress, with Figueres provisional president as head of the Junta. After this period, he would hand over the power to Ulate. The Governing Coalition assumed power on May 8, 1948. Rodrigo later noted: "This is how the opposition defeated the unelected government, accomplished the revolution, and took office."

There Goes the Army

In 2000, *La Nación*, a leading newspaper of Costa Rica which had been a bitter opponent of Figueres for many years, surprised everyone by declaring him the "Person of the Twentieth Century." When asked why he thought that Figueres had been selected, Rodrigo replied: "Because of the abolition of the army! He was brave enough to tell all of those wearing military uniforms that they were useless. He did not even carry a revolver to accomplish his goal."

In May of 1948, Rodrigo was re-elected a county-council member of Puntarenas. However, he resigned because he and his family moved to San José earlier in February 1949, when he registered at the University of Costa Rica to study economics. He worked for the Social Democratic Party while he wrote his thesis under the title, "The Housing Issues of Costa Rica."

The first time Rodrigo heard about demilitarization was at the Presidential House, where he went to visit Francisco Orlich, a junta member and his close friend, who had been appointed Minister of Public Works. Orlich was a traditional farm owner, a very able organizer, and a gentle and kind individual who later became President himself. Rodrigo happened to enter a room where there was a meeting, and he overheard Edgar Cardona, Minister of Security, saying, "I think we should make the army disappear." Rodrigo was astounded and immediately loved the idea.

Part of what contributed to this historic idea was that members of the victorious forces began to act like the military people they had replaced. They would go into bars,

drink for free, and do other offensive, thoughtless things. According to Rodrigo, this is what the military tends to do in many countries, whenever they are deployed. As a result, the idea of abolishing both armies—the victorious and the defeated—developed. It was not easy, of course, since after the revolution many people gained importance because they had learned to use a gun.

The Junta realized that if they funded an army, they would not have money to pay for education. This was unacceptable in Costa Rica, where education had been compulsory and free since 1869. There simply was no money for a military.

Why, however, did Figueres take such a daring measure, one of the greatest social experiments in human history? It is known that Figueres had a strong dislike of the military. Otherwise, the motives remain a mystery. Perhaps it was strategic. Throwing oneself at the mercy of an international body such as the Organization of American States was likely to work better and attract more sympathy than assembling a ragtag, tiny army. It also was quite in keeping with the Costa Rican national character of trust in public institutions and bodies of law.

According to Daniel Oduber (President before Rodrigo Carazo):

> *We were aware at that moment (the end of the civil war, April 1948) that in Costa Rica there was an armed unit in the traditional barracks, like Bella Vista and the Artillería, that had served over the years only as a force that took up arms against the civilian population. It was never able to protect Costa Rica from the aggression of another country; we therefore considered this and started to propose the idea that the international treaties and friendship with the democracies of Latin America and North America were more than enough to guarantee Costa Rica's peace, and that in fact, having paid soldiers in barracks and spending money on weapons were not important for peace, for civil stability, and for social change, as has been unfortunately demonstrated in many Latin American countries.*

It took some months before Figueres made a decision. The media never thought that "the guerilla man" Figueres would abolish the army. Although there were a few notable members of the opposition, a majority of people liked the idea. He saw a great opportunity and put it into reality—Costa Rica no longer needed an army.

Figueres himself reflected in 1984:

> *Suddenly I found myself as the head of two armies, one victorious and the other defeated, but both made up of Costa Ricans that only wanted to get back home. Then I realized that it was time to disband both of them forever.*

On December 1, 1948, eight months after the revolution, Figueres took a big mace and banged on the wall of the military headquarters, Fortress Bella Vista, located at Calle 17, between Central and Second Avenue, Cuesta de Moras,

across the street from the National Assembly in San José. He meant to signify that he was transforming the place into a National Museum. He then made a historic speech:

> *The founding Junta of the Second Republic officially declares the dissolution of the national army, because we believe that the existence of a good police force is sufficient for ensuring the security of our country.*
>
> *As men who recently bloodied a country of peace, we understand the gravity of these wounds for Latin America and the urgency of stopping the bleeding. We do not wield the assassin's knife, but instead the surgeon's scalpel. As surgeons, we are interested less in the operation and more in the future health of the nation… The regular Army of Costa Rica, a worthy successor to the National Liberation Army, today hands over the keys of these Barracks to the schools, so that it can be turned into a cultural center.*
>
> *We are the definite supporters of the ideal of a new world in America.*
>
> *To the land of Washington, Lincoln, Bolívar, and Martí, today we want to say: Oh America! Other nations also offer you their magnificence.*
>
> *Small Costa Rica wishes always to offer, along with its heart, its love for civility, for democracy, for communal life.*

Soldiers, most of them peasants, were sent home and went back to their usual activities. The United Nations sent a cable of congratulations to Costa Rica, calling it "the first civilian nation in the world."

When the army was abolished, provisions were put in place for a national police force. From discussions it was made clear that a militia could and would be mobilized if the country was invaded. But the nation would not keep a standing army.

Figueres and the Junta had promised to draft a new constitution for the country when they came to power, and they soon moved to do so. Figueres called for an election to form a Constitutional Assembly that would draft a new constitution for the "Second Republic." In the meantime, he oversaw a transitional period during which order was restored in the country. He proposed Article 12, abolishing the military, to the Constitutional Assembly. The new peace-based constitution was adopted on November 7, 1949. The Article states in part:

> *The Army as a permanent institution is abolished. There shall be the necessary police forces for surveillance and the preservation of the public order.*
>
> *Military forces may only be organized under a continental agreement or for the national defense; in either case, they shall always be subordinate to the civil power: they may not deliberate or make statements or representations individually or collectively.*

John A. Booth writes in his book *Costa Rica: Quest for Democracy*:

> *The constitutional elimination of a standing army has indisputably helped ensure Costa Rica's many decades of unblemished political stability, civilian regimes, and excellent human rights performance—a record unequaled in Latin America.*

The organization International Cities of Peace states:

> *This strong peace-based constitution provided a stable and just foundation for Costa Rican society, which helped the country avoid the violence that has plagued other Central American countries. These factors resulted in Costa Rica becoming one of the most democratic, prosperous countries in Latin America.*

PANAMA

During and after his two (nonconsecutive) terms as President of Costa Rica, Oscar Arias made a great deal of effort to encourage other Latin American nations to abolish their military forces. Consequently, Panama and Haiti were demilitarized. There is no one else in history who has made such a remarkable achievement. He may well be called Mr. Demilitarization.

Panama was part of Colombia until 1903. The United States had a plan to build a canal, and encouraged the province of Panama to become its own nation as part of its ambitions to carry out that plan. The United States then began the military tradition in the new republic of Panama by training 700 Panamanians for a police force.

Although nominally a democracy, Panama's civilian government was very shaky for most of the twentieth century. Numerous military coups overturned elected leaders, and many elections were fixed to start with. There was much resentment against the United States due to its control of the canal and constant interventions. In 1977 Omar Torrijos, the country's military dictator, began negotiations with U.S. President Jimmy Carter for control of the canal. This resulted in two treaties: one, to turn the canal and the Canal Zone over to Panama on December 31, 1999, and two, a Neutrality Treaty which allowed transit for ships of all countries. On his part Torrijos agreed to a process of democratization, and stepped down as leader in 1978. But the National Guard, from whose ranks Torrijos had risen, remained strong.

In 1983, a civilian coalition opposing the military regime won the national election, but General Manuel Noriega, who had also risen through the ranks of the National Guard, assumed the title of Head of Government, in a regime of corruption and violence that quickly spiraled out of control. The newly elected U.S. President George H.W. Bush ordered an invasion of Panama late in 1989. It was at this point, and as a result of the invasion, that the National Guard was eliminated. President Guillermo Endara and his vice president were sworn into office by U.S. army officers. Noriega was exiled and eventually put in jail. This left Panamanians in a bittersweet or ironic position. They welcomed the downfall of Noriega and the supported return to democracy, but they were resentful that this once again happened as the result of meddling by the United States.

Shortly after this, Oscar Arias set up an office of the Arias Foundation for Peace and Human Progress in Panama City and conducted an intense political and media campaign for demilitarization of Panama. In February 1990, Panama formalized demilitarization by eliminating the Defense Forces of Panama and establishing new civilian police institutions referred to as "Public Force"—consisting of the National Police, the National Air Service, the National Sea Service, and the International Protection Service. They retrained former members of the Defense Forces and developed a new political culture that emphasized a more professional approach to public security.

The Costa Rican newspaper *La Nación* reported on February 5, 1991:

> *The ex-president Dr. Oscar Arias asked Panamanians to constitutionally abolish the army, but recommended leaving a door open for the creation of a "technical-military corps in charge of protecting the Canal." According to Arias, the armies of Latin America are "useless predators, and only good for carrying out coups, corrupting our societies, and halting social change." At a conference given last night in Panama, attended by President Guillermo Endara, Dr. Arias said that this "proviso" would allow the country to meet its obligations in defense of the Canal, including the 1977 treaties with the United States. He also said he hoped that "very soon all foreign bases and soldiers will have disappeared (from Panama)."*

Costa Rica was used as an example during the debates about abolishing the military: opponents argued that a modern state could not exist without a military, and the response was "look at Costa Rica." Demilitarization was made part of the constitution following approval in the Congress and a national referendum in 1994. Arias remarked: "Today, Costa Rica and Panama have the safest border in the world, as neither country has an army."

Ricardo Arias-Calderón, vice president of Panama from 1989 to 1992, reflected later: "The experience of Costa Rica proves it is possible to demilitarize in the midst of an agitated world, defending national sovereignty and identity without an army. The experience of Panama, on the other hand, proves that this is not a privilege unique to Costa Ricans." Now Panama has one of the fastest growing economies in

Latin America and ranks high on recent lists rating the happiness of citizens.

—*Breakthrough Costa Rica: Lessons for the World,*
inspired by Rodrigo Carazo, written by Kazuaki Tanahashi

GREAT PEACE

"Great peace" is a vision of the world with no more war or systematic violence. Will it ever be possible? To explore if it is, first I would like to examine with you a huge array of challenges we face to see how we are forced to be pessimistic. Then I will examine ways to meet the challenges and see if there is even a slim chance for anyone to be optimistic about the potential of a world without war.

There is a common belief that basic human nature is violent. The fact that in early human history a majority of male members of tribes and kingdoms participated in hunting, fishing, and fighting appears to support this notion. When military institutions developed, the glorification of self-sacrificial actions of war, conquest, and victory became so prevalent that it was attractive to boys to become members of combat forces. Boys or men also were often forced to join military institutions, and were put to death if they refused. Offensive campaigns were waged for expanding territory; defense of tribes or nations, which was often the most pressing aspect of security; preserving the social order; and economic expansion. Throughout human history it has been rare to have centuries or even decades without war in most geographic regions.

Societal problems we see in today's world include dictatorship, totalitarian regimes, corruption, injustice, lack of freedom, rotten electoral systems, discrimination, inequality, poverty, human rights abuse, scarcity of resources, destruction of the environment, religious persecution, foreign occupation, excessive influence of powerful nations, and border disputes.

One measure for discerning the degree of democracy of a nation is to evaluate its freedom of the press. According to a global rating from the Freedom House report "Freedom of Press 2024," 60 countries experienced deterioration in their level of freedom, and only 34 experienced improvement.

Naturally, many of those who are oppressed and those who are concerned about widespread oppression and censorship are determined to eliminate or reduce such problems. In contrast, some political leaders are determined to make their nations, ethnicities, or religious communities more powerful, expansive, and dominant. On either side, people may first try to achieve their goals by negotiation and diplomacy. When their peaceful endeavor fails, however, they tend to resort to violence—coup d'etat, ethnic cleansing, or war, accompanied by kidnapping, torture, rape, confiscation of property, relocation, burning, and massacre. Thus, where there are serious social problems with no possibility seen for peaceful resolution, there is the potential for systematic violence or armed uprisings in response to the problems.

Nowadays, it doesn't take a nation to start a war. A small number of terrorists can recruit fighters on the Internet and cause tremendous damage by suicide bombing and mass shooting. In the near future, terrorists may get hold of chemical weapons or radioactive substances. Cyber hackers may acquire the capacity to penetrate the otherwise tight security systems of nations and industries in order to detonate targeted factories, sabotage power or water supplies, or even set off bombs.

Those who find their self-identity in opposition to others promote their ethnic, cultural, religious, gender, or ideological supremacy. If in power, they build up their control over the general public through education, propaganda, and brainwashing, while often hiding disturbing scenes of bloodshed, imprisonment, and the reality of the sufferings of many people. They try to shape a common mentality in the society to the point where a great many members are fanatically ready to arm, fight, and die, with the utmost sense of honor. The public often thinks of resolving a conflict by simplistically asking, "Shall we, or shall we not strike?"

The sole purpose of weapons is to injure or kill others. Weapons don't produce food, medicine, or any life-affirming or environmentally sustaining materials. The military forces of nations consume a disproportionate amount of energy. Firing weapons and setting off bombs in testing weapons, and in actual combat, create explosions, fire, and smoke, pollute lands, seas, and air, as well as cities and villages, not to speak of destroying human lives. Maintaining combat forces and the infrastructure to support them requires an astronomical amount of energy. For example, the U.S. Department of Defense, as the largest single consumer of energy in the world, is responsible for 80% of the federal government's total energy consumption, an amount that could power more than 24 million households for a year. (An average *U.S. household* uses about 10,000 kilowatt-hours of electricity each *year*.) And aircraft, vessels, and vehicles for fighting are not designed to conserve energy. Armored vehicles, for instance, get between 0.6 to two miles per gallon. The B-52 bomber consumes about 3300 gallons of fuel per hour.

The weapons industries and defense-related industries, such as those involved in the construction of military bases and related works in countries of advanced technology, are supported by policy makers. In contrast, those who are against the war machine or want to place restrictions on the defense industry are often branded as unpatriotic. As the military-industrial complex has an extremely close and intricate relationship with government officials, the nation's defense budget keeps expanding with no one being able to stop it. This mutually-reinforcing system can be seen as a "gross self-interest complex." Members of the defense industries and governments, including congresses or parliaments, are tightly protecting their mutual interests. Therefore it is extremely difficult to cut off their ties and shared benefits.

By the end of the Cold War, the superpowers had acquired the capacity to flatten the surface of the earth and eliminate the human race multiple times. Since the end of the Cold War, there is no justification for making hydrogen bombs more powerful, as such devices that destroy the environment affect all people, including those who would deploy them. Yet, all states that possess nuclear weapons spend a huge amount of money just to continue the business of feeding their industry and related profiteers.

Nations that export weapons make an enormous amount of money. Similarly, politicians of weapons-importing countries profit legally or—in most cases—illegally. War-torn regions are saturated with small, medium, and heavy weapons.

Global annual military spending was $2.7 trillion in 2024, according to Stockholm International Peace Research

Institute, with the United States being responsible for one third. In the meantime, global funds urgently needed to address climate change will be $100 billion per year for the next 20 years, a target set by Green Climate Fund of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change. Funds needed to save the earth are less than one fifth of global annual military spending. This clearly illustrates how disproportionate the military spending of the world is.

Violence is most commonly responded to by violence. Victors humiliate losers and the losers vow to take revenge; thus, the vicious cycle tends to continue. Children who suffer at an early age from the abuse and deprivation caused by war, social injustice, poverty, and gang-related and domestic violence have a hard time recovering from the trauma. Later, they themselves can turn out to be perpetrators of violence. Thus, the misery of the effects of violence seems to be hard to end, and the seeds of war keep growing, while the news media is full of reports on war, terrorism, and violence, and the entertainment industry mirrors and stimulates the world of fighting. This is the reality of the current world; thus, reasons for pessimism are overwhelming. It poses an invitation to cynicism: "The problems are so complex and huge. No one can change the situation, so I won't do anything."

Instead, how can we be positive? Scientific research shows that humans respond to a very brief exposure to happy and angry faces with smile and frown muscle activity respectively (U. Dimberg, M. Thunberg, and K. Elmehed, 2000). This shows that we all have a basic capacity for sympathy, which is the basis for angry or compassionate actions.

Canadian psychiatrist Jaswant Guzder and her international team have been conducting research in Jamaica, a country known for having the highest murder rate in the world. They picked 30 students ages 8 to 9 in an inner-city school who had poor academic performance and behavioral problems. For two and a half years, they assisted teachers to offer academic tutoring and cultural activities, such as storytelling, poetry, music, dance, and theater along with mental health programs. The result was remarkable in improvement of academic skills, capacity for trust and social reciprocity with peers and teachers, as well as increase of resilience and reduction of internalizing and externalizing behaviors (J. Guzder, V. Paisley, H. Robertson Kickling, 2013). Now they are conducting this practice in scores of schools all over Jamaica.

From these findings we may be able to say that basic human nature is sympathetic, kind, and creative, and children become either kind or cruel according to how adults treat them and what education they receive. Parents or family members raising children and educators teaching them to be peace-loving are most fundamental for creating a peaceful society.

How do we build a society that is committed to the peaceful solution of domestic and international conflicts? In order to do so, we citizens need to have full knowledge of a potential military conflict: who the "enemies" are, what the chance of war is, and what the consequences may be—in human lives, in money spent, in environmental destruction, and in long-term social impact. We should also know the option of a peaceful solution and its consequences as an alternative.

Peace studies should include a comparison of expenses for war with the potential distribution of such funds for the welfare of citizens domestically and worldwide.

Much of the world's war effort today is focused on counterterrorism tactics: regional wars, targeted killing, drone attacks, airport checks, and other reactive military and security efforts. With no doubt, this is necessary, as some terrorists are waging war on Western countries, and we need to defend ourselves. Islamic extremist organizations are like a developed cancer, where aggressive and invasive treatments are the only effective means to cure or reduce the symptoms. At the same time, however, we need to have deep understanding of the historical, social, and cultural causes, as well as the psychology and theology of terrorism. Members and supporters of these organizations are in general dissatisfied, unhappy and violent. Why? And how do we help to change situations that directly affect them, and guide them to peaceful thinking and behavior?

Likely, no one knows at this moment how to deal with such issues. But this does not mean that there is no solution to end terrorism other than military and police actions. We need experts in many fields from all sides, as well as policy makers, to form something like "nonviolence think tanks." The solutions may include offering food, clean water, medicine, clinicians, social workers, and schools for the overall reduction of poverty, and extending friendship instead of providing weapons or dropping bombs. Helping people who are poor and oppressed to raise their living standard, as well as commencing dialogues among all parties, can enhance the potential of

reducing destructive behavior. I believe that if we spend 1% of the projected cost for war against the extremists, we will come up with a concrete set of solutions. And, perhaps, if we direct 10% of the projected war expenses toward peaceful aid, it is possible to contain terrorism.

Japanese troops inflicted massive atrocities all over China, South and Southeast Asia, and the Pacific between 1937 and 1945. I personally witnessed its final period as a young boy: the hysteria of Japanese imperialism, militarism, and colonialism, as well as a collective suicidal mentality. There were plenty of young men who would proudly conduct *kamikaze* (divine wind) suicide air attacks against U.S. forces in 1945 when Japan was losing battles in the Pacific. After its unconditional surrender, Japan decided to be a peaceful nation and put a great deal of effort into peace education. No Japanese today, except for a few right-wing radicals, even think of resolving international conflicts with military force. The Defense Forces of Japan has shot not even one bullet against an enemy since its founding in 1950. This historical transformation in Japan gives me hope that many fanatic Islamist youngsters who are volunteering to conduct suicide bombings and massive attacks can become peaceful citizens. How? The answers ought to be obtained by deep and extensive studies of terrorism and its "holy war" theology, and a search for solutions.

Throughout history until the end of World War II, Europe had been contaminated with wars. Nazi Germany's invasion of almost all of Europe and much of North Africa, and its massacre of millions of innocent people, was the most horrific of all. But a little over a decade after World War II, a large no-war region came into existence in Europe. Beginning with five founding member states in 1957, and originally known as the European Economic Community, it developed into the European Union in 1992. Now it consists of 27 nations. The original idea was that citizens of one member state can live and work in any of the other member states, with the result that citizens of a nation need not be concerned with having to defend themselves from any other member state. And, the European Union is so huge that no non-member state would dare to invade one of the member states. For the first time in history, many nations are free of armed conflicts among themselves.

Unfortunately, in recent years because of the financial crisis of Greece and elsewhere, as well as a large-scale flow of refugees from war-torn neighboring countries, including Syria and Ukraine, some nations are building fences, and the practice of having no borders is facing a great challenge. The Brexit referendum represents new challenges for the European Union. The original objectives, however, and the initial success and expansion of the European Union for over two decades demonstrates that a large number of nations with diverse cultures, languages, and history can live peacefully together as one international body. If blocs of nations in other regions follow this example and try to form a Central American Union or East Asian Union, the world will be a much safer and happier place. Citizens of nations in other regions should study how Western European peoples, including such former sworn enemies as the French and Germans, developed trust with each other. Something as simple as a

winemakers' exchange is a good example of common people's effort for building a larger community. A great majority of the world should follow the remarkable example that the European Union provides.

Ethnic cleansing intends the establishment of ethnically homogeneous lands by the forcible displacement or genocide of people in that region belonging to certain other ethnic groups. The United Nations International Tribunals prosecuted leaders of the former Yugoslavia and Rwanda for violations of international humanitarian law in the 1990s. Since then, those who want to commit such a crime would have to think twice if they dare to risk being tried and punished as war criminals. Unfortunately it is still happening in Gaza.

A notable role of the military in history is to engage in a coup d'état—a sudden and violent takeover of a government by one or more members of the military. These people already possess and are highly trained in weapons. So when a leader or leaders of such an institution sees corruption, incompetence, or weakness in an administration, there is a temptation for them to give orders to take over the government. But military people are trained to fight, not to govern. That's why military regimes tend to be incompetent, oppressive, and corrupt. There is no lack of such instances in history.

Coups were a regular occurrence in various Latin American nations in the 19th and 20th centuries, and in Africa after the countries there gained independence in the 1960s. Even recently, between 1952 and 2000, 33 countries experienced 85 such depositions, with West Africa having the most (42), largely against civil regimes. Twenty-seven of these

coups were against military regimes, and in five, the deposed incumbents were killed. There are some cases where the military institutions overthrew tyrannical monarchs or dictators and established democratic regimes. But there are more cases where the military disrupted democratic regimes and established dictatorships. Also, taking away from people the right for participation in the political decision-making process is a human rights abuse. Thus, I humbly suggest that those who plan and execute a coup d'état in a democratic country should be viewed as war criminals according to the international statute as laid out in the United Nations Charter, Article 2 (4), and be tried at the World Court.

The antidote to a coup d'état is civilian control that places ultimate responsibility for a country's strategic decision-making in the hands of the civilian political leadership, rather than with professional military officers. Since the time of its founding, the United States has provided exemplary practices of civilian control. All democratic nations should do their best to establish this system and train soldiers, to avoid any military takeover and keep a stable and liberal democracy.

News about war and violence is more captivating to the public than news about nonviolent social changes. So, people tend to get the impression that violent resistance is more prevalent than nonviolent ones. But we need to learn about the effectiveness and wide-ranging achievement of nonviolent social change. The success of the nonviolent movements led by Gandhi, Martin Luther King, Jr., and Nelson Mandela, prevailing against gross and seemingly impossible-to-change regimes of tight control, discrimination, oppression, exploita-

tion, and violence, have inspired many of those engaged in civil resistance.

Nonviolent action is a practical and effective method that replaces reliance on violence. Nonviolent resistance requires a great deal of thinking, study, and strategy building. One of the most influential theorists in this field is the U.S. political scientist Gene Sharp. In 1973, he published *The Politics of Nonviolent Action*. It represented both a quantitative and qualitative leap forward worldwide in the spread of knowledge on nonviolent struggle. This is where his famous 198 nonviolent methods first appeared. Another book of his, *From Dictatorship to Democracy*, first published in Thailand in 1993, has been studied and utilized by a great number of activists worldwide. *Why Civil Resistance Works: The Strategic Logic of Nonviolent Conflict*, a paper by Maria J. Stephan and Erica Chenoweth, summarizes well the heart of the issue on the effectiveness of nonviolent campaigns: According to their data set of all known major nonviolent and violent resistance campaigns from 1900 to 2006, their findings show that major nonviolent campaigns have achieved success 53% of the time, compared with 26% for violent resistance campaigns.

The reasons for the former's success are that a campaign's commitment to nonviolent methods enhances its domestic and international legitimacy and encourages more broad-based participation in the resistance, which translates into increased pressure being brought to bear on the target. Recognition of the challenge group's grievances can translate into greater internal and external support for that group and alienation of the target regime, which undermines

the regime's main sources of political, economic, and even military power. Also, regime violence against nonviolent movements is more likely to backfire against the regime. A sympathetic public perceives nonviolent resistance groups as less extreme, thereby enhancing their appeal and facilitating the extraction of concessions through bargaining.

However, some nonviolent campaigns fail, and even if they do succeed, there can be huge setbacks that can result in them being overtaken by a military or non-democratic regime. Each situation is different. Therefore, again, we urgently need "nonviolent think tanks" that provide strategic advice and resources for the success of social changes.

International peacekeeping forces need to be well set up to respond to aggression by states or nonstate entities. Nations need military forces when they receive threats of foreign invasion or civil war. On the other hand, nations without such threats such as member states of the European Union, New Zealand, Australia, and Switzerland don't need their own military forces, except for police and border control. Disaster rescue can be conducted by civilian organizations. Even so, most nations want to keep military forces, possibly due to a long-held habit or addiction. They want the military for jobs and related business.

Global demilitarization would and will be a slow process. A condition for a country to demilitarize is, above all, a regional security where no nation invades any other. A domestic security system is also needed to eliminate the potential of armed uprising. The government must be functional and without a history of systematic corruption. To make demil-

itarization possible, there should be solid civilian control while every effort is made to keep soldiers well paid, trained, and disciplined. (It's ironic that we need good military forces so that they can be abolished.) To determine if a country is ready for a discussion on demilitarization, there needs to be solid academic research on its demilitarization potential.

A World Without Armies, the international citizens' organization I created in 2000 with Rodrigo Carazo, former president of Costa Rica, has come up with a plan called Prosperous Conversion Formula: Some soldiers may love to give up arms and enjoy the same amount of salary and benefits. They may be retrained to perform civilian work that they can continue to do until they have reached an older age than would have been possible in the military. If this plan is carried out and 30–50% of military personnel are converted per year, there may be no radical reduction of security or of the perception of lack of security within a nation. This is especially true if the reduction of military forces is done simultaneously with neighboring nations. Then, demilitarization may not create anxiety among either the citizens or leadership. Commanders who initiate and oversee disarmament and abolition should receive the highest honors—much more so than winning battles. Political leaders and activists should also be remembered as pioneers of an enlightened society.

Already, one continent is demilitarized: Antarctica, under international agreement. More than 11% of the member states of the United Nations are without military forces. They are: Andorra, Costa Rica, Dominica, Grenada, Iceland, Kiribati, Liechtenstein, Marshall Islands, Mauritius, Micronesia, Monaco, Nauru, Palau, Panama, Saint Kitts and Nevis, Saint Lucia, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Samoa, San Marino, Solomon Islands, Tuvalu, Vanuatu, and Vatican City. The next step would be having a few more midsized nations join the club until the United Nations establishes a Council of Demilitarized Nations.

Nations that export weapons want other nations to maintain or expand their fighting capacities. Most of these nations want to contribute to world peace, and yet they and their corporations make a profit on selling weapons that are causes of fighting and destruction. I often hear friends say, "Our country exports weapons." But I almost never hear them say, "We are trying to stop our country from manufacturing or exporting weapons." We need to understand, however, that where there are no weapons, there is no temptation to use them.

A disproportionately large military budget was the main cause of the collapse of the Soviet Union. The record-high war expenses of the Afghanistan and Iraq wars, along with other financial failures, laid the ground for the United States and the rest of the world for the Great Recession of 2008.

By reducing spending on the military-industrial complex, nations can do a great amount of work for the well-being of citizens and the protection of the environment. This is a simple fact. Costa Rica has been demilitarized since 1949, which made possible the maintenance of universal free health care and education, and its worldwide leadership in environmental protection and the happiness of its citizens. Panama, which was demilitarized in 1994, has enjoyed rapid economic growth and high indicators of happiness since then.

Many peoples in the world have learned that democracy is a better governmental system than dictatorship, totalitarianism, or other military-ruled systems. Some reasons for this are: Democracy helps to prevent rule by cruel and vicious autocrats; democracies go to war with each other less often; and democracy tends to foster human development, as measured by health, education, personal income, and other indicators.

The only way to reduce the destructive influence of the military-industrial complex is to reform nations' electoral systems step by step and establish genuine democracies. The full meaning of democracy is that, without restrictions, all citizens can participate in the process of electing officials and lawmakers, and public opinion is adequately reflected in political decision-making without the influence of money. In order to have this implemented, all branches of the government need to be clean and fair, and the electoral process should be free of fraud and corruption. When the citizens' will is fairly reflected, I believe nuclear weapons will be abolished and weapons production and military spending will be radically reduced.

A mature human being is kind, thoughtful, fair, and nonviolent. A mature human being regards other people's interests as important as one's own. A mature human being regards the future as important as the past and present. A mature human being regards the environment as important as human interests.

A mature society is also kind, thoughtful, fair, and nonviolent. By participating in and developing a mature society, we reduce the potential of systematic violence and war. Do you agree to this?

It's not that the mightiest and richest country with the most advanced technology is the greatest nation on earth. Rather, I myself believe that nations committed to nonviolent solutions to domestic and international conflict, and achieving a high rate of happiness for its citizens, should be regarded as the greatest.

It's all up to you to make a world without war realistic or unrealistic. Great peace is in your hands. None of us humans alive now may see a world in great peace. However, we can envision great peace and participate in the process of actualizing it. Each one of us can be a great peace worker, enjoying an opportunity to be a humble part of the great work of peace.

—*Painting Peace: Art in the Time of Global Crisis*,
Kazuaki Tanahashi

List of Nations in Central America and South America

Central America

Belize	English *(language)*
Costa Rica	Spanish
El Salvador	Spanish
Guatemala	Spanish
Honduras	Spanish
Nicaragua	Spanish
Panama	Spanish

South America

Argentina	Spanish
Bolivia	Spanish
Brazil	Portuguese
Chile	Spanish
Colombia	Spanish
Ecuador	Spanish
Falkland Islands (UK)	English
French Guiana	French
Guyana	English
Paraguay	Spanish
Peru	Spanish
Suriname	Dutch
Uruguay	Spanish
Venezuela	Spanish

Map of Central America

Map of South America

Record of A World Without Armies Activities

- Sponsored the 60th anniversary celebration of the United Nations in collaboration with U.S. and Costa Rican musicians, at the UN University for Peace in Costa Rica in April 2005. The multi-color painting "Circle of All Nations," 21' x 26', which was created for the 50th anniversary of the signing of the UN Charter in San Francisco, was displayed at the event.
- Co-sponsored the first women's workshop for Central America Without Armies with Dirección Nacional de Prevención de la Violencia y el Delito, Ministry of Justice, Costa Rica, in San José, Costa Rica in May 2006.
- Helped organize international exhibitions of children's art "Envisioning Our World Without War," in Costa Rica (San Ramón), U.S.A. (San Francisco, California), Canada (Toronto), Germany (Wuppertal, Berlin), Japan (Gifu), and The Netherlands (Amsterdam).

- Produced a DVD "Free from Fear: Voices of Women in Costa Rica," filmed by Catherine Margerin.
- Initiated and co-sponsored the First Conference of Women for the Abolition of Armies in Central America by 2020, with Latin American Institute of Peace Studies, the University of International Cooperation, and Center of Friends for Peace in Costa Rica, at the Ministry of Culture, San José, Costa Rica in April 2007.
- Co-sponsored an international conference "Remembering Nanjing," on the 70th anniversary of the Nanjing Tragedy. It was held at Nanjing Normal University and Nanjing University, Nanjing, China in November 2007.
- In 2025 completed *Breakthrough Costa Rica: Lessons for the World*, inspired by Rodrigo Carazo, written by Kazuaki Tanahashi, with associate editors Pia Carazo, Sergio Alfaro Carazo, Gerardo Bolaños, and Roberta Werdinger.

Who We Are

Organization

A World Without Armies, an international citizens organization founded in 2001 in Costa Rica, is a project of the U.S. non-profit organization INOCHI. Our Federal identification number is: 94-3175-526.

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Rodrigo Carazo, f*ormer president of Costa Rica and founder of the United Nations-mandated University for Peace*

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Contribution

Your generosity will greatly help curve the direction of the world toward a warless and peaceful society!!! Please send your check to the above address. Or visit our website and click the DONATE button.

THIS IS A BOOK OF HOPE. It presents an optimistic vision of the future when many nations will have abolished their military forces while others will have reduced armament. It discusses the significance of demilitarization and presents history, anecdotes, policy statements, study plans, and action plans. It invites the reader to be a part of the effort to help nations to become fully peaceful.

"This book has given a clear, courageous, and expansive vision of demilitarization which is an extraordinary act of commitment to humanity's future. It shows that security without armies is not only possible, but can strengthen democracy, social well-being, and care for the Earth. A World Without Armies' attention to the dignified transition of soldiers into civilian life reflects a rare moral completeness: this is not a book against people, but against systems that normalize violence.

At a moment when militarization is again presented as inevitable in so many countries, this work reminds us that inevitability is often just habit left unchallenged. Whether or not we see a fully demilitarized world in our lifetime, this book expands the horizon of what future generations may dare to build."

—CHRISTIANA FIGUERES, co-author of *The Future We Choose*

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