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“The Path To Peace and Freedom”

Ralph Bunche once said, “The well-being and the hopes of the peoples of the world can never be served until peace – as well as freedom – is secure.” This quote, from the Nobel Peace prize laureate, captures the symbiotic relationship between these key principles. He further notes that a world without freedom has no peace and vice versa. The western world has often taken the values of peace and freedom for granted despite many other governments having endless wars and a lack of human rights. Each and every day people lose their lives due to senseless violence as their voices remain unheard. First, understanding the true meaning of these values and their potential implications on the free world is key. Next, identifying the difficulties of achieving peace and freedom must be recognized. Lastly, examining the individual and governmental solutions to fixing these inequities is must. These solutions are multi pronged and require introspection, knowledge, and diplomacy to finally achieve worldwide peace and freedom.

Peace and freedom are nuanced topics that require a deep understanding to make an impact. Freedom is defined as the “the power or right to act, speak, or think as one wants without hindrance or restraint, and the absence of a despotic government”(Gammon 12). True freedom gives people fundamental human rights that keep tensions low and preserves peace. Peace then allows nations to have a better quality of life and economy. When these two ideals are stripped away the consequences can be catastrophic. This can be clearly demonstrated with the current situation in Ukraine. Ukrainian citizens who once lived in peace and harmony lost their way of life simply overnight. Sarah Habershon, a distinguished writer for the BBC reports “more than 10,000 deaths in Ukraine since the conflict began”(Habershon 22). Many of these casualties included young women and children who were fleeing for their lives as the invasion began. Refugees were then displaced from their homes walking tens of miles for shelter and food. The

freedom they once had to go out as they wished, and to speak against an unjust government disappeared. The violent conflict led to the loss of innocent Ukrainian citizens as well as the promise of peace and freedom outlined in their constitution. Set aside from this, the global economy took a toll from this war as well. The western world, including the U.S. and Europe, saw consumer goods like oil, food, and other resources surge in price. Economic giants like the U.S., United Kingdom, and France were all moving towards a recession because of trade restrictions and tariffs put on Russia, as a way to retaliate(Kammer 22). Hence, this should serve as a warning that conflicts happening far away can still affect nations that are not involved. De-escalating tensions should be a collective effort from all nations as the repercussions of war include senseless bloodshed and economic downturn globally.

The causes of why global peace and freedom haven't been achieved can be boiled down to two key reasons: constant wars/disputes and political agendas. When two entities don't see eye to eye on a certain issue, and seek complete control rather than compromise, the goal of peace shatters. The Rwandan Genocide of 1994 is testament to this. The power struggle between the Hutu(ethnic majority) and the Tutsi(held political power) led to the loss of 800,000 Rwandans. Division tore the country apart as former neighbors became foes fighting under ethnic obligations. Rather than sharing political power to meet the needs of both groups, violence was used as the only option to solve their differences. Constant wars prevent nations from achieving peace and stable government. Without these two things, basic freedoms cannot be established for civilians. Looking at totalitarian governments, such as North Korea's, sheds light on how political agendas cause an absence of freedom in a nation. North Korea's "regime uses fear as a control mechanism, which includes arbitrary arrest, torture, and gulags to maintain power. But the regime does not rely solely on fear tactics. Its use of propaganda through movies,

documentaries, and books play a much larger role in attaining absolute control over the population”(Kim 20). Kim Jung Un’s suppression of freedom and information has slowed down social progress and helped him remain in power. Regimes like this exist around the globe and it is in the world’s best interest to take steps to fight against them. By allowing these governments to continue committing these human rights abuses, the free world remains complicit. As these regimes assert military and political dominance they will easily control much smaller nations. This results in totalitarian regimes across the globe that pose a risk to nations that are free.

With this said however, spreading the ideas of peace and freedom to other nations is a key solution. Colonial independence is a great example of this. The tyranny of the British left the colonies taxed with no representation and rights. It wasn’t until John Locke’s writings of life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness, that the colonies began to fight against the British and earn their independence. Everyone is entitled to the inalienable rights mentioned by John Locke as well as peace and freedom. By spreading knowledge of these principles to totalitarian governments such as North Korea the citizens can finally spark change. Word will spread like wildfire and protests will begin. Strength lies in the numbers and if these citizens can rally together the same way the colonies once did, social progress for their prospective countries is inevitable. Knowledge sets people free, improves quality of life, and brings peace and harmony.

As previously mentioned, the solutions to achieving worldwide peace and freedom are multipronged and require efforts from all levels of society. The individual level is by far the most important. Introspection, recognizing other people’s differences, and looking for a middle ground are all necessary steps. People are and think fundamentally different and that is completely normal. Improving one’s interpersonal relations with others and willing to compromise on even the most trivial of things is a necessary step. Once society begins to change its mindset on the

individual level, international efforts become a lot easier. Diplomacy and de-escalating political tensions are the two mechanisms for doing so. For instance, the alliance between Winston Churchill and Joseph Stalin was crucial in ending WWII. The British and the USSR had radically different political ideologies but put that aside to fight against the Nazis. This collaborative effort shortened the length of the war and saved countless lives. If two of the most polarizing governments can cooperate for the greater good, there is no reason why we cannot. Evidently, diplomacy can resolve even the worst of conflicts and bring nations together.

All and all, peace and freedom are two values that must be protected at all costs. These two principles work hand-in-hand to promote social progress and a better quality of life for all. Peace keeps tensions low for a stable government to form. Only then can the government ensure their people certain freedoms. Historical events and regimes such as the Rwandan Genocide, the war in Ukraine, and the dictatorship of North Korea show the implications when these two things are taken away. The path to worldwide peace and freedom may be arduous but with thorough introspection it might be more possible than previously thought. Learning to accept and celebrate differences on an interpersonal level, along with learning to compromise are more valuable tools than any humanitarian organization can provide. Moreover, peace and freedom are much more than an absence of war and an unjust government. They are a lifelong commitment to understanding others and protecting our inalienable rights. As a society we should work together to preserve these two values if we want to get closer to the “perfect world” that we all envision. Let's make this vision a reality one alliance at a time.

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