

[Home](#) > [List of Issues](#) > [Table of Contents](#) > [World peace and global sustainability](#)

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International Journal of Sustainable Development & World Ecology

Volume 7, Issue 1, 2000

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DOI: 10.1080/13504500009470024

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pages 1-11

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Version of record first published: 02 Jun 2009

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SUMMARY

War and the preparation for war divert increasingly scarce resources from civilian use, especially long-term efforts such as the quest for sustainable use of the planet. War also damages natural systems both directly and indirectly. As a consequence, ecosystem services essential to sustainability are diminished. Achieving world peace does not assure that sustainable use of the planet will also be achieved, but it is a necessary precursor. Other factors diminishing the prospects for sustainability include major and rapid demographic changes, addiction to exponential economic growth, excessive individualism, and production of artifacts and wastes not readily reincorporated into natural systems. On the other hand, if intelligence is not an evolutionary mistake, then it, combined with reason and creativity, can be used to overcome the obstacles just mentioned. If intelligence is an evolutionary mistake, the creatures that ran the world before humans appeared will doubtless take over again.

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Key words

- sustainable development,
- world peace,
- sustainability conditions,
- global sustainability,
- environmental ethics,
- eco-terrorism

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World peace and global sustainability*

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Key words: sustainable development, world peace, sustainability conditions, global sustainability, environmental ethics, eco-terrorism

SUMMARY

War and the preparation for war divert increasingly scarce resources from civilian use, especially long-term efforts such as the quest for sustainable use of the planet. War also damages natural systems both directly and indirectly. As a consequence, ecosystem services essential to sustainability are diminished. Achieving world peace does not assure that sustainable use of the planet will also be achieved, but it is a necessary precursor. Other factors diminishing the prospects for sustainability include major and rapid demographic changes, addiction to exponential economic growth, excessive individualism, and production of artifacts and wastes not readily reincorporated into natural systems. On the other hand, if intelligence is not an evolutionary mistake, then it, combined with reason and creativity, can be used to overcome the obstacles just mentioned. If intelligence is an evolutionary mistake, the creatures that ran the world before humans appeared will doubtless take over again.

INTRODUCTION

Peace cannot be kept by force. It can only be achieved by understanding.

Albert Einstein

Only in our virtues are we original, because virtue is difficult. . . . Vices are general, virtues are particular.

Iris Murdoch

Humans expect their species to endure until the Sun dies and, perhaps, beyond if colonization of other planets becomes possible and they are not already occupied by a technologically advanced species that is able to exclude the human species. However, only about 1% of all species that have ever lived are now alive. Why should the human species not be among the majority that has become extinct? Intelligence, guided by reason and

compassion, is arguably the best answer. If reason and compassion fail, society can always establish taboos with severe penalties (this option is discussed later).

War is not beneficial for either the biosphere or human society. In addition to killing and maiming, war diminishes Earth's carrying capacity for humans. However, sustainable use of the planet requires that carrying capacity not diminish. Peace and sustainability are inextricably linked!

Suppose the global society actually achieves world peace – then what? Peace does not assure sustainable use of the planet, but it is an important precondition! Peace is primarily a particular relationship among societal components, whereas sustainability is a particular relationship of the human species with the entire biosphere. Sustainability requires acknowledgement of the dependence of humans upon Earth's ecological

*Keynote Address, The 12th Annual Conference of Concerned Philosophers for Peace, Peace and Global Issues, Radford University, Radford, Virginia, October 21–24, 1999

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Details

- **Citation information:** Web of Science ®
- **Version of record first published:** 02 Jun 2009



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