**What People Say About War**

*(Note: the attribution list is at the bottom of this page)*

1. Peace through strength is a fallacy, for peace is not simply the absence of a nuclear holocaust. Peace is not a nation which has seen its teenage suicide rate more than double in the past two decades. Peace is not a nation in which more people die every 2 years of gunshot wounds than died in the entire Vietnam War. And peace is not here in Washington – where after leading the Nation in murders last year, children are beginning to show the same psychological trauma as children in Belfast, Northern Ireland.

2. As a woman, I can't go to war and I refuse to send anyone else... You can no more win a war than you can win an earthquake.

3. It is sometimes said that war is a natural condition of man. As a military man, I do not believe it... I do believe breathing, eating, loving, caring are natural conditions of man. People don't make war; governments do... And our governments appear willing to accept war, even nuclear war, as a natural event... There is not one nation in the world where the people want war.

4. I have known war as few men now living know it. Its very destructiveness on both friend and foe has rendered it useless as a means of settling international disputes.

5. After all, war isn't that effective. In every case, at least one side loses, which is only 50% effective, if you're lucky. The winner pays a very large price, as well.

6. We are ready to kill to keep our automobiles running. We're ready to kill to keep up our materialistic, wasteful economy... I am sick and tired of 18-year-olds being coerced into bearing the burden of the failure of politicians to face the tough economic choices.

7. ...We will never have peace... so long as people go on manufacturing death and trying to sell it.

8. It is always immoral to start a war... Diplomatic and other nonviolent means should always be used to resolve conflicts and fend off aggression... If nonviolent methods fail, and one nation unjustly attacks another, the victim nation has as a last resort the right and duty to use violent means to defend itself within certain moral limits... The military response to any attack may not exceed the limits of legitimate self-defense.

This means that the damage inflicted and the costs incurred must be proportionate to the good expected by the taking up of arms. The wholesale slaughter of civilians in large population centers is simply immoral, whether the destruction is intentional or unintentional, direct or indirect, no matter what weapons system is used.

9. Nothing in human history is more obscene than the cool discussion of competing nuclear strategies by apocalyptic game-players. All sorts of scenarios are being put forward about the circumstances under which we would drop bombs on the Soviet Union and the Soviet Union would drop bombs on us, as though both countries were involved in nothing more than a super backgammon game. The strategists in both countries need to be reminded that they are not playing with poker chips but with human lives and the whole human future.

10. My suggestion is quite simple. Put the codes that are needed to fire nuclear weapons in a little capsule, and then implant that capsule right next to the heart of a volunteer. The volunteer would carry with him a big, heavy butcher knife as he accompanied the President. If ever the President wanted to fire nuclear weapons, the only way he could do so would be for him to first, with his own hands, kill one human being. The President says, "George, I'm sorry but tens of millions must die." He has to look at someone and realize what death is – what an innocent death is. Blood on the White House carpet. It's really brought home. When I suggested this to friends in the Pentagon, they said, "My God, that's terrible. Having to kill someone would distort the President's judgment. He might never push the button."

11. So far, war has been the only force that can discipline a whole community, and until an equivalent discipline is organized, I believe that war must have its way.

12. The warring state permits itself every such misdeed, every such act of violence, as would disgrace the individual man. It practices not only the accepted strategies, but also deliberate lying and deception against the enemy... [It maintains] an excess of secrecy, and a censorship of news and expressions of opinion... It absolves itself from the guarantees and contracts it had formed with other states, and makes unabashed confession of its rapacity and lust for power, which the private individual is then called upon to sanction in the name of patriotism.

13. There are no warlike peoples – just warlike leaders.

14. It would indeed be a tragedy if the history of the human race proved to be nothing more than the story of an ape playing with a box of matches on a petrol dump.

15. Human war has been the most successful of all our cultural traditions.

16. A man who experiences no genuine satisfaction in life does not want peace... Men court war to escape meaninglessness and boredom, to be relieved of fear and frustration.

17. ...and they shall beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruning hooks; nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more.

18. Force – that is, physical force, for moral force has no existence save as expressed in the state and the law – is thus the means of war; to impose our will on the enemy is its object. To secure that object we must render the enemy powerless; and that, in theory, is the aim of warfare.

19. In general, those who plan do not kill and those who kill do not plan. The men who planned the saturation bombings, free-fire zones, defoliation, crop destruction, and assassination programs in the Vietnam War never personally killed anyone.

20. War is a permanent feature of our life, surviving from one historical period to another regardless of all change in social and political systems, in religions, ethics, intellectual and technical standards. These systems have simply altered the nature of war.

21. Where human societies are organized for the purpose of carrying on war (and there are few which are not), there is always the danger that war will occur.

22. Despite the horrors, futility and destructiveness of war, there are nevertheless certain virtues and truths associated with it which humanity cannot afford to lose.

There is in all hearts a desire to live a significant life, to serve a great idea and sacrifice oneself for the noble cause, to feel the thrill of spiritual unity with one's fellows and to act in accordance therewith. We all wish for strenuous action and the exercise of courage and fortitude, to be carried away by the enthusiasm of daring. We all love to undergo a common discipline and hardship for the sake of a fine ideal; to be in good effective order; to be strong, generous and self-reliant; to be physically fit, with body, mind and soul harmoniously working together for a great purpose, thus becoming a channel of immense energies. Under such conditions, the whole personality is alert, conscious, unified and living profoundly, richly and exaltedly.

23. The Warrior Caste has the ability to reproduce itself from one generation to the next. Only women can produce children, of course; but – more to the point – only wars can produce warriors. One war leads to the next, in part because each war incubates the warriors who will fight the next, or, I should say, create, the next.

24. Must every generation go through war to be reminded why there should be no war? Or can we dare to do something different?

25. It is my melancholy duty to inform you officially that, in persistence by Germany in her invasion of Poland, Great Britain is at war, and that, as a result, Australia is also at war... There was never any doubt as to where Great Britain stood... There can be no doubt that were Great Britain stands, there stands the people of the entire British world.

26. Australian troops had, at Milne Bay, inflicted on the Japanese their first undoubted defeat on land. Some of us may forget that, of all the allies, it was the Australians who first broke the invincibility of the Japanese army.

Our task – we who cherish "daily life" and life itself – is to end the millennia-old reign of the Warrior Caste. There are two parts to this task. One is to uproot the woman-hating, patriarchal consciousness that leads some men to find transcendence and even joy in war. That will take time, though we have made a decent start. The other part is to remember that war itself is the crucible in which new warriors are created. If we cannot stop the warriors' fevered obsessions, and bring these men back into the human fold, we can at least try to stop their wars.

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1. Senator Mark Hatfield
2. Jeanette Rankin
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4. General Douglas MacArthur
5. Gene Sharp
6. Senator Mark Hatfield
7. Edna St. Vincent Millay
8. Statement of the Catholic Bishops on the Just War Theory
9. Norman Cousins
10. Roger Fisher
11. William James
12. Richard Barnett
13. Ralph Bunche
14. David Ormsby Gore
15. Robert Ardrey
16. Nel F.S. Ferre
17. Isaiah 2:4
18. Carl von Clausewitz
19. Richard J. Barnet
20. Urpo Harva
21. John Paul Scott
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24. Australian Prime Minister Kevin Rudd
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