



SLEEPWALKING: DREAMS OR NIGHTMARES? WAKE UP OR DRIFT INTO DISASTER

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Speaking to you at this hour is always a bit of a challenge for me. You eat while I look on. Early in the life of UNICEF, I read a report from Japan . School children fed by UNICEF were suffering from BORBORYGMUS. I had to look it up. It means growling of the bowels. It comes from the Greek god of thunder. That's where I am.

Here in Ottawa the last thing you need is one more speech. So how should I begin? A good way to start, I am told -- a good way to catch your attention is to say:

And finally --

Sleepwalking. I picked this up from something that Kofi Annan said about the nuclear threat. Officially at the UN, at the political summit, the world has blanked out, not a whisper. Thousands of nukes are poised for launch on 20 minutes alert, one single bomb would wipe out the UN and the entire New York area. So what do we do? We add India and Pakistan to the nuked nations; and the American Pentagon talks about a new generation of tactical nukes. As though this abominable weapon can actually be used. So our great leaders blank out, say nothing, sleepwalking to disaster.

And that includes Canada. Canadians hate nukes. Why doesn't our government speak up? Is this a democracy? Why do we pussyfoot at NATO? For NATO to cling to nukes is crazy, psychotic. Renouncing nukes at NATO would give a mighty boost to the global drive to abolish nukes. What do we have to lose? Only our lives.

The nuclear threat, the doomsday threat, is that what makes us go walking in the night? Or is sleepwalking a symptom of a generalized blackout, a mass paralysis? Is the UN idea just a rosy dream, or is the real world one big nightmare? And is our little Group of 78 just pursuing that *ignis fatuus* , a will-o-the-wisp?

A rosy dream or a nightmare? The answer to both questions is: Yes, both are real. The real world is in flux, at war with itself. The underlying question is: which is winning, where are we going? Are we fixed toward inevitable disaster, or can we nudge our way into sunshine? Is the UN Charter a mere travesty, or is it a wakeup, a window out of

nightmare? Which is winning: life or death? We don't know, do we? If we knew, we would not need to be here. This is an unfinished drama, and we have our little part in it.

So what should we do, what can we do, and what do we see? Which lens is best: is it history, anthropology, mythology, theology, psychiatry -- not to mention elusive political science and economics? And what about the radical new insights of true science: the cosmic and earth sciences, neurobiology, the genetic structure and dynamics of life itself? There it all is, laid out before us. We know too much in these separate ways, but does it all add up? E.O. Wilson tried to put it together in his eclectic book *Consilience*; but that didn't tell us what to do. We look at what is actually happening and we fall back on conventional pragmatism; we see poverty, violence, sexuality, disease, fear, greed, and a kind of crazy indomitable hope. That is where we are.

The Group of 78 sprang from conviction and a shared vision for the UN and for Canada in the world. We had a voice of authority, not to be ignored. Now, thirty years later, Canada and the world have changed. But have we? A new strong voice is needed. It is needed now.

One thing we have come to realize is that foreign and domestic policies are altogether one policy, with overlapping values and agenda.

A crossover between foreign and domestic is inherent in Canada itself, the multicultural and bilingual nation that we have become. Besides our French-English polarity, we have been enriched by newcomers from east and west. I am told that the Toronto school system works in ninety languages. How well is Canada taking *Islam* into our culture and politics? And on human rights, since the last Federal election, we are in retreat on women and children. At the UN, Canada has been scolded for our treatment of the first nations, the indigenous. (We have memory loss over our genocidal origins, migration as invasion.) We have managed to keep our heads about what people do with sex, a subject that seems to be driving people nuts elsewhere. On terrorism paranoia, our record is not so good, we did lose our cool, but we are now beginning to clean up our act. We have pulled back from the brink. In general, we are politically tolerant, we don't lock people up for being disagreeable. As a federation, with all the jockeying among provinces and with Ottawa, what kind of a model are we on the international scene?

There are two more major issues to be addressed. One is Canada's participation in what we call *globalization*: industry, trade, investment, into which I toss Canada's aid to development. The other major issue is *climate change*.

On *globalization*, the exploitation of developing nations, the shocking gap between rich and poor, are we better than anyone else? We talk disarmament while we have a thriving export of arms components to the U.S. arms industry. And on aid to development, we are still nowhere near the 0.7% of GDP, the UN norm, although it was our own Lester Pearson who first advocated this norm at the 1969 World Bank Commission. And on *climate change*, again we talk a good line but we have done practically nothing. This is

surely a lethal nightmare. That's my once-over lightly on how domestic Canada carries over into the world, our foreign policy.

The world comes together and comes apart at the UN. The UN of the headlines is the UN of tragedy, the bleeding wounds of Africa and the Middle East, hot spots still in Central America and Asia. But when do we hear of the 18 UN peace operations, peacekeeping and nation building, with 100,000 men and women in the field. Peace operations now go far beyond cooling off conflict; their aim is to create the conditions for peace. The military is now integrated into nation building under civilian leadership. This was the UN's gift to Sierra Leone and Liberia; and now being attempted in the Democratic Congo. Considering the fact that every single peace operation has to be cobbled together from national theaters -- currently altogether 114 countries are involved -- it is a wonder that these operations work at all. Since 2006, the whole worldwide peace operation is being backed up by a new Peace-building Commission, under the direction of our Canadian colleague, Carolyn McCasky. Although Canada has not done much to back up Carolyn, we can take credit for having advanced the concept of *human security* at the Security Council. It is this concept that underlies today's peace operations. And Canada has gone all the way in advancing the idea that every government must protect its people. If it does not, the UN must step in. This radical new principle was adopted by the General Assembly in 2005. There lies the future.

Meanwhile, what about Afghanistan? Here we have a complicated mix of the U.S.A. , NATO and the UN. Afghanistan certainly needs help if it is ever to grow into one functioning nation. Massive aid to nation building was promised but not delivered. We are left with a predominantly military approach, and that won't work. Canada is there by default. The answer is more aid, not less.

The experience of Afghanistan is a microcosm of fundamental problems confronting the UN world today. The label "failed state" does not fit, because there never was a proper state to begin with. The foundling is laid at the UN doorstep. This is the ultimate test of the concept of human security. Afghanistan surely needs the pooling of tribal powers into its own national building, its own form of democracy, the political institutions and rituals of a good society. Poor, exploited, hungry, illiterate, and burdened by macho tradition, this battered nation needs a big hand and a sensitive one, best of all from the UN.

If the UN means anything, it means one big family, one big house where we can eat and squabble together. It means the distant shining city, where all will enjoy their human birthrights. Can we ever reach that shining city? The way is laid out for us in UN human rights treaties, telling us all, nations and individuals, how to behave. Can we walk that walk?

A nation that signs up to these treaties commits to report on what it is doing at home, to put treaty principles into practice. These reports are open to the eyes of the world. More exposure comes from the High Commissioner for Human Rights, our Canadian Louise Arbour, and her network of inspectors. So far, enforcement of these treaties -- which constitute international law -- has been almost entirely by public exposure, parading

culprits at the UN. Governments are extremely sensitive to public exposure. Human rights are taken seriously, especially when denied. Public exposure is the first step towards judicial enforcement. Louise Arbour knows something about that, having served as prosecutor for the UN War Crimes Tribunal for Yugoslavia. The UN Tribunals for Yugoslavia and Rwanda have tried, convicted and locked up a good many exemplary monsters. The big parade ground for delinquent governments is the UN, the grandstand first at the Human Rights Council and then at the General Assembly.

As you know, this new Rights Council was set up to escape the clutches of the original Human Rights Commission. That Commission had been strangled by a claue of the worst offending governments who were members of the Commission. You can't completely maneuver your way out of that political snake-pit, but two things should help. One is that the new Council will have more time, meeting at least three times a year instead of only once. The other, a rare stroke of political genius, is to make the Council inspect all governments, all of the UN family; and not, as in the past, only the selected few. China and Canada will be together under the spotlight. The Council has got off to a wobbly start, with the perennial obsession with Palestine and Israel ; but its new mandate gives it plenty of breathing room.

To move beyond exposing, how can you give teeth to an international judiciary? There are early signs of baby teeth in the UN family. One of them is the permanent International Criminal Court, presided over by Philippe Kirsch, another distinguished Canadian. Despite the US effort to sabotage the Court, the number of adhering nations has reached 104. The ICC is testing its teeth in Africa -- taking on the Lords Resistance Army in Uganda , the massacres in Democratic Congo, and genocidal violence in Darfur . Arrest warrants have been issued for cutthroats in Uganda and the Congo; and over 50 suspects have been identified for Darfur . A great boost to the ICC was the decision of the Security Council to ask the ICC to investigate Darfur.

The USA could not veto the Council this time. Some in Washington are realizing that the US needs the ICC. Warlords will not be immune forever.

Baby teeth are also sprouting where the UN is nation-building. Human rights had teeth in the UN remake of Sierra Leone with its hybrid UN/National Truth and Reconciliation Commission and its Human Rights court. In Cambodia, despite prolonged tactical delay, a long-overdue Truth Commission may yet get at some few surviving monsters.

Baby teeth and baby walk. At last the UN family has a live one, the ICC. So in the foreground we see signs of life. What about the big spread for the future? About poverty and globalization, the UN is hardly in the game, but it does have a unique role as monitor and conscience. Where else can the outcast, the billion poor, be heard? And when nature's disaster strikes, it is the United Nations that summons the world to help. The generous impulse after the Asian tsunami could be coordinated only through the UN.

Besides floods, droughts, and tornadoes, nature's worst calamities are epidemic diseases, old and new. When we think of the UN, we should not be fixated on that marble slab, the

UN building, in New York. My UN took in the network of Specialized Agencies, all of them engaged with UNICEF in helping children. It is to this UN that the world looks to marshal our resources against physical and social disease, against AIDs, against sex slavery, against the criminal trade in drugs and weapons.

Besides the H-bomb, there are two things that could wipe humanity off the map. One is climate change, the other is human behavior. The two overlap. You have all been reading about climate change, global warming, and the disaster that lies ahead if we don't act now to cut back greenhouse gas. This is not some crazy nonsense cooked up to scare us. It is real, it is science at its best. Maybe we don't want scientists to poke their noses into our churches, synagogues and mosques; but we do want them to eradicate AIDs. Why don't we believe them when they tell us the sky is falling and that we can actually do something about it? Instead of cutting back, nations great and small, Canada and our neighbor to the south, are pumping more pollutants into the atmosphere, to accelerate disaster. What is that, if not a sleepwalking nightmare.

Inherent in this threat is my other doomsday threat, and that is human behavior: sexual promiscuity that accelerates AIDs, pervasive violence and war, mass suicide. Exactly what can we do about that, you ask. If we didn't think we can do something, we wouldn't be here. Despite our bloody history -- or maybe because of it -- we do believe change is possible, that nations and individuals can do better. That is the why of the UN and of our Group of 78.

In the immediate, we think of this as a political problem, we think of the instruments at hand to shape political decisions, how to wake up the CEO's that make their puppets dance. We engage folk heroes, celebrities; we try to infiltrate mass media. We have had some successes: so far, we have held Canada back from embracing so-called missile defense, knowing that it is the first phase for weaponizing space. And we have kept Canada out of the disaster that is Iraq. That is today. What about tomorrow?

Are we humans, genetically and through evolved experience, are we predetermined, programmed in irrational ways? Is that why we so often worship crazy leaders, mad men like Hitler, Stalin and Mao Tse-Tung? Why was Greek democracy destroyed in the irrational Peloponnesian Wars? Do we huddle together in some sort of mass paranoia where we have to find or create enemies? Is something like that the glue that sustains nation states? Even in the most open democracies, politicians use fear as much as fact to gain power. Years ago, in my work with UNICEF, I met the first head of mental health in WHO, the World Health Organization. My unsolicited advice to him was this: Don't simply export western clinical psychiatry. What the world desperately needs is some form of social psychiatry. War is bad for your health.

Despairing of the present, we put our faith in the future. Children are the revolving door into the future. Can bad parents make good children? What is this cliché about investing in children? It is not just a cliché if we follow the trails blazed by that remarkable generation of thinkers, Sigmund and Anna Freud, Carl Jung, Bowlby in London, Piaget in Geneva, Brazleton at Harvard, to name a few. And now, of yesterday's vintage, we

have the brand new, genetically based science of child development. We now know as never before the specific phases of neurological growth in childhood along with the phased optimal environment for young children. Intuitive love can be better informed. Parenting can get better.

Can it be mere coincidence that, at the UN, the door has been opened to a deeper understanding of childhood. Understanding childhood is understanding who we are. The 1989 Convention on the Rights of the Child sets standards for all children everywhere; and in 2002 a Special General Assembly declared what must be done to make *a world fit for children*.

Brutal treatment of children was exposed in the 1996 Machel study of child soldiers, extended and deepened last year (2006) in the UN report on violence against children. So we know what is wrong; and, both politically and scientifically, we know what is right.

While I have been thinking about dreams and nightmares, preparing this daydream with you, the Commission on the Status of Women has been meeting at the UN. Just now, I had a chat over lunch with young women from Europe, the Middle East and Africa. Coming to the UN, they have the courage to speak up. In many old societies, girls are routinely abused in every way, mere chattels, prisoners of harsh traditions. Girl babies are often resented, neglected, even killed. Where are the men and boys, themselves trapped in a history of hate? How can this yield a good society?

I leave you there, where I find myself, in this, our great extended dysfunctional human family. We could end it all tomorrow by unleashing the nuclear arsenal; and some psycho-fanatics think that's just what we sinners deserve. We could build dikes against the melting poles, or we could drown in our sleep. We could begin to break the parental and social heritage of child abuse, or we could sleepwalk. At UNICEF I see young Canadians carrying relief into front lines of despair. These young people confirm and sustain my hope. Making babies is easy, making good citizens is work, the work of brains, patience and love. The United Nations is our big baby.

This is not a lullaby. We have a job to do. Our government seems to be suffering fits of amnesia and sleepwalking. Wake up! Stop the doomsday clock!

Life is a gift. Let us invest our lives in the gold mines of hope and compassion.