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# Global Peace Services USA

*...an idea whose time has come*

Vol. 13, No. 1

September 2011

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**Greetings from John Eriksson, President, GPS USA.** *Welcome to this issue of the Newsletter of Global Peace Services USA. The issue is dedicated to Cecil B. Monroe of Youngstown, OH, a Member of the Board of GPS USA since 2003 until his untimely passing away in April 2011. Cecil had a wonderful vision for GPS: that the objectives of urban gardening, nutrition, employment of youth, and conflict resolution could be combined to address some of the multiple problems facing this country. We look to Cecil's vision inspiring the future work of GPS USA.*

*The first article in this issue is an abstract of a paper on Engineering Responsibilities and Opportunities in Peace and Conflict by Board Member Robert Muscat. Bob's longer paper has been submitted to a professional journal and has generated considerable interest in the engineering community. Our hope is that the concepts and principles in the paper will be incorporated in engineering curricula. The second article, by Board Member Harry Yeide and former Board Member Clara Doyle, reports on the thought-provoking results of their effort to assess the views of alumni of the month long GPS-sponsored seminar, "Peace Power 2000," in June 2000. The next three pieces are devoted to Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., on the occasion of the public opening of the monumental King Memorial on the National Mall in Washington, DC, the week of August 22-26, 2011. Board Member Anna Amato opens the series, followed by a moving personal testimony of Board Member Sovan Tun and glimpses of perceptions of Dr. King overseas by John Eriksson.*

*At the end of this issue, we introduce and welcome our new Board Member, Anna Amato. Please stay tuned for a forthcoming announcement in the mail about a GPS USA Event in early November in the Washington, DC area! Last but not least, we welcome and encourage feedback from readers!*

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## Peace and Conflict: Engineering Responsibilities and Opportunities

Conflicts among communities, peoples, and nations can arise from many causes, and often escalate to violence and warfare. In many cases, engineering programs and projects are among the problems at issue. Engineering professionals may unavoidably be parties to the difficulties. They may also be well placed to prevent or ameliorate the conflict in the first place, or contribute to a peaceful resolution. Exploration of the social responsibilities facing engineers has become a subject of its own, considered in books and engineering ethics journals. Apart from their role in the development and manufacture of armaments, the relationships between engineering and conflict, especially in developing countries, have been less well examined.

Many engineering projects in the U.S. are sources of political conflict, e.g. disputes over the location of wind farms, the technology for extracting natural gas from shale formations, and off-shore oil drilling. Although such disputes can reach fever pitch, they

have seldom ended in violent conflict. In developing countries, by contrast, groups that viewed their vital interests at stake in engineering decisions have sometimes resorted to violence to resolve disputes not settled through negotiation or orderly political process. In some cases, engineering projects have deepened inter-group animosities that may have arisen initially for other reasons – religious, cultural, economic, to name but some. However, positive-sum outcomes have also occurred where projects have been designed and decided through processes deliberately aimed at avoiding exacerbation of underlying animosities. Even more proactive are engineering investments designed to create common economic and/or communal interests among groups in societies marked by socio-economic fault lines.

*The Roles of Engineers.* Engineers are found at advisory, decision-making, or design levels in the processes leading up to project realization in conflict situations. Engineers play important roles in the anagement and operation of projects once they come

online. While senior engineers will bear greater responsibility for decisions and options chosen, professionals at all levels are in position to consider the social and conflict consequences of projects they work on, and to put their views on the table. The feasibility of projects, technical and economic considerations aside, often depends on how stakeholders view the potential consequences. The individual engineer may be a political office-holder, a civil servant, an executive or employee in a private contracting firm, a private consultant, an academic in an engineering faculty, or on the staff of an international development organization. Many engineering fields – civil, hydraulic, electrical, transport, mining, petroleum, agricultural, etc. – may be involved in conflict-laden contexts. Those responsible for the technical core need to develop skills of coordination, negotiation, and communication with stakeholders, and the ability to take account of environmental and other impact studies.

The World Bank's experience with hydroelectric and irrigation projects in developing countries shows how projects have had to be developed beyond their technically-defined boundaries to take account of connections with other disciplines, and of possible conflict creation. For years, the Bank avoided hydroelectric projects which had been severely criticized for ignoring bad outcomes for displaced and indigenous people. The Bank resumed hydro projects in the 1990s after adopting safeguard requirements on compensation and attention to potential conflicts.

*Engineering and Conflict Prevention.* International frictions over natural resource claims can grow into outright conflict. Examples of areas with worrisome overlapping claims include islands in the South China Sea (with oil-potential), claimed by Vietnam, Taiwan, and China; northern and southern Sudan (oil production and pipelines); division of water resources among Lebanon, Israel, and West Bank Palestine; and hydro and irrigation schemes along the Mekong affecting downstream countries. Internal conflicts in developing countries – over mineral, land, water and other development projects – have arisen in (among others) Peru, Colombia, India, Papua New Guinea, Mexico, Ecuador, Ghana and Bangladesh.

Proper engineering solutions can prevent violent outcomes. Soon after partition separated Pakistan from India, it became clear that failure to create a system for

control and distribution of the Indus River basin waters acceptable to both countries could result in warfare. The World Bank took the lead in designing, negotiating, and financing a multi-dam irrigation solution. Unfortunately, although the program resolved the Indus dispute, India and Pakistan had other disputes that led to recurrent armed conflict and that remain unresolved. An unequivocally successful example is the Gal Oya irrigation project in Sri Lanka, built in 1948-1952. The upper arms of the canal's watered areas were occupied by ethnic Sinhalese, the country's dominant ethnicity; the lower arms fed minority Tamil areas. Farmer groups were set up to oversee cooperative water distribution, ensuring that the downstream Tamils received enough flow for cultivation. Despite efforts of the Tamil Tigers, the insurgent side in the Sri Lankan civil war (1983-2009), to persuade Tamil farmers to cease cooperating with their Sinhalese neighbors, the groups held fast. Relations between the Gal Oya ethnic communities remained, and still are, peaceful.

By contrast, another Sri Lankan irrigation scheme became a major missed opportunity. The massive Mahaweli project, begun in 1970, the biggest engineering works in the island's history, was originally designed with a channel reaching into the largely Tamil region of northern Sri Lanka. In 1977, the Sri Lankan authorities redesigned the project to exclude the northern channel. The decision was defended on technical engineering grounds, but was seen by the Tamils as demonstrating Sinhalese discrimination and hegemony. The government also discriminated against Tamils in the settlement plan for land that would be newly opened by the project. Retaining the original designs might have helped avert the subsequent political deterioration that spiraled into warfare. A rural development project in Rwanda that started in 1974 is another example of a missed opportunity that turned out to exacerbate tensions. In this case, the benefits (including structures, roads, land access) were largely captured by local Hutus, excluding Tutsis. The final result was judged by one Africa scholar to be "a great increase in inequality between regions, social classes, groups and individuals."

Good projects can also have downsides, e.g. new roads can draw in developers who expropriate land of previously isolated inhabitants.

*Taking Conflict into Account.* To be alert to the relevance of projects to potential conflict, engineers

(and others involved in planning and implementation) should take account of factors such as: 1) Is the project located near borders between rival groups? 2) Will the location and design of irrigation channels impinge on divisions between different ethnic (or religious, etc.) groups? 3) Is a project affecting areas inhabited by indigenous people? How will this affect design, cost, negotiation, and implementation? 4) Will mining degradation be justifiable, minimized? 5) Will there be fair compensation payments/projects for people negatively affected? 6) Will road location raise issues of equity and benefits between favored and omitted communities? In the case of international waterways, the World Bank cautions should be considered and

should similarly be applied to projects in internationally contested areas and in border-spanning resource development (e.g. natural gas, petroleum, water). Addressing external “diseconomies” (e.g. pollution causing health or economic damage) should be integral to project design.

In general, engineers should seek opportunities for project designs that create motivation for peaceful coexistence or cooperation. Engineering education could further this objective by enriching curricula with peace education components.

Robert Muscat

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## Peace Power 2000: An Assessment of Alumni Views Eleven Years Later

The purpose of “Peace Power 2000” was to pilot what was hoped would become the nucleus of a fuller undergraduate college/university curriculum to prepare women and men to serve in organized nonviolent ways in violence prevention, conflict transformation and peace building. We were very excited to be asked to assess Peace Power 2000 through the perceptions of its participants, who comprised one of the most stimulating groups of human beings we had ever met. Global Peace Services USA (GPS) designed and implemented the four week program in Washington, DC in June 2000. Twenty-two participants came from thirteen states and ranged in age from their early 20’s to late 70’s. Now, a decade later, we were going to contact the participants once again to find out what they recall from the experience and what effect, if any, it has had on their lives.

We were able to locate 17 of a total of 22 participants – exclusive of the GPS faculty teaching and facilitating the seminar and guest speakers. Two of the 22 participants are deceased and of the 17 individuals we successfully located, we interviewed six participants and received limited questionnaire responses from six more. We certainly learned some things even from this limited sample. When asked if the Peace Power 2000 experience was an important event, one person called it a “life-changing” event that “opened her eyes” to peace service. Another said that the experience introduced him to peace-making issues and acquainted him with the places of conflict around the world. Others who already had experience in nonviolence work said that

the program strengthened and deepened their understanding of both violence and peace service, or simply that it was a worthwhile experience.

No one reported any continuing relationships with contacts made at the time of Peace Power 2000. Nor did anyone point out any omission in the curriculum that they realized at a later time. The visit to Congressman Dennis Kucinich’s office to discuss his bill for a Department of Peace, Gene Knudsen Hoffman’s presentation on Compassionate Listening, and the films on the Rwanda genocide, among other things, were singled out for mention.

The good news is that those with whom we spoke are all in their many various ways still searching for peace!

Peace be with you,  
Clara Doyle and Harry Yeide

*Methodological note.* We began our assessment in November 2010 with an effort to find the addresses (postal and e-mail) of participants. However, we underestimated the difficulty of locating Peace Power 2000 alumni. Ultimately, we were able to determine the locations of 17 of a total of 22 participants. To these individuals, we sent an early communication explaining our project and asking for current telephone numbers in order to interview them. Our intent was to elicit their views in an open-ended rather than very structured way

for fear of missing important contributions. This effort yielded a few insightful and delightful interviews. In an attempt to expand our sample, we decided in late December to send out a short questionnaire with key

questions that could be responded to online. Taken together, these efforts resulted in six interviews and six more limited responses to our questionnaire.

## Honoring Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.

As we go to print, the Martin Luther King, Jr. Memorial on the Mall in Washington, D.C. has been opened to the public, with its official dedication to take place later in the fall – a postponement caused by Hurricane Irene. The memorial’s address will be 1964 Independence Ave, SW, a reference to the Civil Rights Act of 1964 – a milestone in which Dr. King’s role was foundational. We might also note that 1964 was the year that Dr. King was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize. The site creates a visual "line of leadership" from the Lincoln Memorial, which honors the president who protected the United States from internal strife, and where Martin Luther King, Jr. gave his famous "I Have a Dream" speech, to the Jefferson Memorial, which honors the president who helped create the United States as the author of the Declaration of Independence. The vision statement for the memorial includes the statement reminding us of "Dr. King's lifelong dedication to the idea of achieving human dignity through global relationships of well being." In

addition to his universal messages of Democracy, Justice, Hope and Love, the issue of Global Peace was an important theme in his work. In recognition of this, the opening event of five days of festivities was a dinner, "Honoring Global Leaders for Peace," which commemorated men and women who continue to pursue the dream of global peace and social equality, a goal championed by Dr. King.

In light of this occasion, it seems appropriate to stop and reflect on Dr. King’s peace legacy and the global reach of his message. We continue our exploration of the impact of Dr. King’s life and work with a first person account by Sovan Tun, a GPS Board Member from Cambodia, and some findings on Dr. King’s influence on the world outside of the United States by John Eriksson.

Anna Amato

## Tribute to Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.

I came to America to attend the University of Tennessee at Knoxville in 1962. As a young person of "color," I encountered some discrimination, but I did not care. I witnessed demonstrations, acts of disobedience, acts of violence, and other actions taken by Black people in their struggle for equal rights. I followed the news each night, and I admired one specific civil rights leader, namely, Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. for his courage, his wisdom, and his powerful speeches to rally people behind a peaceful movement for the advancement of civil rights in the United States.

The following short testimony provides examples of some events that I have encountered or that I read about or saw on television. I remember that I was not served in some restaurants and cafeterias. I remember that I was yelled at on the street from passing cars

because I was an alien. I ran into only a few Asians, or in fact only a few foreigners, in Knoxville, Tennessee. I was shocked to see two water fountains at some department stores: one labeled white and another labeled colored. The white fountain had a cooling system to dispense cool water, whereas the colored fountain had only a faucet from a water pipe. Even though life in Knoxville was relatively quiet, I saw demonstrations at some restaurants that did not serve "colored people." I remember driving my car to Chattanooga, Tennessee, one day and stopping for gas at a service station. The attendant refused to pump gas into my car and told me to go away. (At that time, all gas stations provided full service.)

I followed the news every night on black and white television. I saw news with pictures about Dr. King leading demonstrations against school segregation in

Mississippi and Alabama. The president of the United States ordered federal agents to accompany Black students to class. I saw police and the National Guard in full gear chasing demonstrators with police dogs and water cannons. I saw mass arrests for acts of disobedience. I saw on TV almost every day in the summer news about riots in some cities where cars were set on fire and stores broken into. As a young guy from another country, I did not think much about discrimination because I thought that was the American way of life. I graduated from the University of Tennessee and left the U.S. in 1966.

While I was in Tennessee, I listened to the famous speech "I Have a Dream" delivered by Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., on August 28, 1963 in Washington, DC. The speech was so powerful and so inspiring that I listened to it over and over. I believe that thanks to the non-violent movement led by Dr. King, the Civil Rights Act was signed on July 2, 1964. Furthermore, the work of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. was recognized by the Nobel Prize Committee by awarding him the Nobel Peace Prize in 1964.

When I came back to America in 1972, things were very different. I noted that civil rights were improved immensely due to the non-violent movement of Dr. King, who gave up his life for the cause. I believe that there should be more education and other efforts to reach out to new immigrants, especially those from the Third World. Some believe that Dr. King fought for equal rights for Black people only. The truth is that he fought for equal rights for everybody. He is the one who paved the way for everyone to enjoy social justice and social equality without fear of oppression, segregation, and discrimination. At present, I have the privilege to work at the U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC), a U.S. Government agency in charge of enforcing the employment provisions of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, as amended in 1991.

Sovan Tun

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## Martin Luther King, Jr. as Viewed from India

In a posthumous autobiography edited by Clayborne Carson, *The Autobiography of Martin Luther King, Jr.* (New York: Grand Central

Publishing, 1998), King conveys his perceptions of the views of persons from other countries of

King and his work. The most dramatic is in a chapter devoted to King's one-month visit to India in February-March 1959. This visit had its origins in the great influence that Mahatma Gandhi's approach to active nonviolence had on King. Its immediate impetus came from a short visit of Indian Prime Minister Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru to the U.S. in 1956. Although King and Nehru did not meet at the time, Nehru indicated that he wished that they could have met. This ultimately led to a letter from the U.S. Ambassador, Chester Bowles, encouraging King to visit India. King's reflections on his 1959 visit to India paint a revealing picture of the high esteem in which he was already held by Indians in various walks of life.

"We had a grand reception in India. The people showered upon us the most generous hospitality imaginable. Almost every door was open so that our party was able to see some of India's most important social experiments and talk with leaders in and out of government .... Since our pictures were in the newspapers very often it was not unusual for us to be recognized by crowds in public places... Occasionally I would take a morning walk in the large cities, and out of the most unexpected places someone would emerge and ask: 'Are you Martin Luther King?' (p.123)

We discovered that autograph seekers are not confined to America. After appearances in public meetings and while visiting villages, we were often besieged for autographs.... Thanks to the Indian papers, the Montgomery bus boycott was already known in that country. Indian publications perhaps gave a better continuity of our 381-day bus strike than did most of our papers in the United States. (p.123)

I was delighted that the Gandhians accepted us with open arms. They praised our experiment with the nonviolent resistance technique at Montgomery. They seemed to look upon it as an outstanding example of the possibilities of its use in Western civilization. To them, as to me, it also suggested that nonviolent resistance *when planned and positive in action* (italics in original) could work effectively even under totalitarian regimes." (pp.129-130)

John Eriksson

## Introduction of New Board Member

ANNA AMATO. Our newest board member has been working in the Evaluation Department (IEG) of the World Bank for the past 12 years, specializing in evaluation of the Bank's environment and infrastructure sectors. She has a Master's Degree in Public Policy from the University of Maryland, where she focused on international environmental issues. Prior to receiving her degree, Anna worked for non-governmental organizations focused on the poor in

Latin America and on the environment. She lives in a co-housing community in Washington, DC and has a great personal interest in community-building. She has worked in virtually every sector – in corporate America for HSBC (Hong Kong Shanghai Banking Corp. in their Buffalo, NY office) – and for the government, working her way through college while employed at the U.S. Department of Agriculture, in addition to the non-profit and international arenas.

### *Global Peace Services USA*

GPS USA, founded in 1997, is incorporated in the District of Columbia and is tax-exempt. Current board members are: Anna Amato, Daniel Ayana, John Eriksson, Robert Muscat, Mindy Reiser, Sovan Tun, and Harry Yeide. We welcome contributions and comments. To contact us:

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