

POLITICAL SCIENCE:

To Kill or Not to Kill?

Glenn D. Paige

Philosophy begins when someone asks a general question, and so does science.

Bertrand Russell

The questions that a country puts are a measure of that country's political development. Often the failure of that country is due to the fact that it does not put the right question to itself.

Jawaharlal Nehru

Each reader is first asked to reflect upon the question: "Is a nonkilling society possible?" If not, why not? If yes, why?²

For the purpose of the question, a nonkilling society is taken to be a human community from smallest to largest encompassing all humankind that has the following characteristics: There is no killing of humans, at least, and no threats to kill. There are no weapons for killing ("hardware") and no legitimisations, justifications, or permissions to kill ("software"). And there are no conditions of society that depend for maintenance or change upon the threat or use of lethal force. That is, a nonkilling society is taken to be one in which humans neither kill nor threaten to kill each other.

The response of most political scientists is likely to be that a nonkilling society is "completely unthinkable" for at least three reasons: lethal human nature; scarce resources that lead to con-

flict and killing; and the biological or moral imperative to kill to defend self and others against predatory aggression. Some will argue that there has never been a nonkilling society in history, and thus there can never be one.

These primal understandings (with elaborations) variously inform traditions of political thought and action throughout the world. In 20th century professional socialisation of political scientists the indissoluble link between politics and violence - and thus the implied impossibility of a nonkilling society - is asserted in Max Weber's pervasively influential 1918 lecture at the University of Munich, "Politics as a Vocation." He defined the modern state as "a human community that (successfully) claims the monopoly of physical force within a given territory" (Weber 1958: 78). Consequently Weber warned, "He who seeks the salvation of the soul, his own and that of others, should not seek it along the avenue of politics, for the

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quite different tasks of politics can only be solved by violence" (p. 126). For Weber and for those of us socialised in the Weberian tradition, "the decisive means for politics is violence" (p. 121). Consequently the idea of a nonkilling political science in service to a nonkilling society is easily dismissed.

Pathologies of Lethality

Nevertheless, as the Common Era 2000 opens, punctuated by culturally varied calculations of social time, there are reasons to begin to question the plausibility of the previous assumption that we humans are incapable of liberating ourselves from lethality. It is imperative that political scientists, policy makers, and all who are affected by their decisions join in questioning this assumption. Simply stated, the ancient commitment to lethality for individual and societal well-being increasingly produces conditions that Craig Comstock has called the "pathology of defense," (Comstock 1971). Examples are when guns in the home kill more family members than intruders, bodyguards assassinate heads of state, violent revolutionaries become oppressors of the liberated, armies for defence oppress the defended, and the ultimate victorious weapon and its associated technology become the most dangerous threat to the continued existence of life on earth. That is, beliefs that killing is inevitable and that commitment to kill is imperative for well-being paradoxically are becoming principal threats to the physical, economic, and ecological survival of humankind.

For clarity of understanding, listen to the voices, not of advocates of nonviolence whom Weber decried as irrelevant for politics, but of three American generals, widely respected professionals in the art and science of killing:

General Douglas MacArthur (1955)

"You will say at once that although the abolition of war has been the dream of man for centuries, every proposition to that end has been promptly discarded as impossible and fantastic. Every cynic, every pessimist, every adventurer, every swashbuckler in the world has always disclaimed its feasibility. But that was before the science of the past decade made mass destruction a

reality. The argument then was along spiritual and moral grounds and lost....But now the tremendous and present evolution of nuclear and other potentials of destruction has suddenly taken the problem away from its primary consideration as a moral and spiritual question and brought it abreast of **scientific realism** (emphasis added). It is no longer an ethical problem to be pondered solely by learned philosophers and ecclesiastics but a hard core one for the masses whose survival is at stake....The leaders are the laggards....Never do they state the bald truth, that the next great advance in civilization cannot take place until war is abolished....When will some great figure in power have sufficient imagination to translate this universal wish, which is rapidly becoming a universal necessity, into actuality. We are in a new era. The old methods and solutions no longer suffice. We must have new thoughts, new ideas, new concepts....We must break out of the strait-jacket of the past" (Quoted in Cousins 1987: 67-9).

General Dwight D. Eisenhower (1953)

"Every gun that is made, every warship launched, every rocket fired signifies in a final sense a theft from those who hunger and are not fed, those who are cold and are not clothed. This world in arms is not spending money alone. It is spending the sweat of its laborers, the genius of its scientists, the hopes of its children....This is not a way of life in any true sense. Under the cloud of war it is humanity hanging from a cross of iron" (Speech to the American Society of Newspaper Editors, April 16, 1953).

General George Lee Butler (1996)

"Nuclear weapons are inherently dangerous, hugely expensive, militarily inefficient, and morally indefensible" (Remarks at the National Press Club, Washington, DC, December 4, 1996).

The 5.821 trillion dollars spent on the United States nuclear weapons programme alone between 1940 and 1996 (Schwartz 1998), combined with countless millions of lives lost in war and economic deprivation in the violent 20th century, can serve as admittedly inadequate indicators

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of the self destructive costs of continued human acceptance of the politics of killing throughout the world.

If these generals can question the unacceptable consequences of continued commitment to killing, why not also 21st century political scientists, policy makers, plus those from whom their capacity to make decisions derives and who suffer most massively from their consequences - the people of the world.

Roots of Nonkilling Societies

What are some grounds for seriously considering the possibility of realising nonkilling societies throughout the world? First, nonkilling human nature. Most humans who have ever lived, including women, half of humanity, have never directly killed anyone.

Second, nonkilling spiritual potentials. The spiritual heritage of humankind, expressed in various religions and humanist philosophies, contains injunctions not to kill that have been courageously obeyed by some adherents of every faith and conviction. Humans are capable of responding to, as well as creating, spiritual imperatives not to kill. What a few can do is ultimately possible for all, through global processes of emulation and innovation.

Third, science - meaning all approaches to validated knowledge from bio-neuroscience through the social sciences, humanities and professions. The sciences increasingly offer hope of discovering ways out of humanity's homicidal, genocidal, ecocidal, omniscidal trajectory. The historic 1986 call for liberation of humanity from biological pessimism by twenty scientists from a broad range of disciplines in the "Seville Statement on Violence" (Adams 1997) constitutes an example.

Fourth, nonkilling societal components. Viewed globally, some prototypical components of a nonkilling society already exist that forecast its attainability. For example, 67 countries have abolished the death penalty for all crimes (Amnesty International 1999); 47 countries recognise conscientious objection to killing in military service (Horeman et al 1998); and 28 countries have no armies at all, although 12 of them have defence treaties with other states (Barbey 1989: updated).

There are institutions dedicated to principled non-violence in such fields as religion (Jains of the East; Quakers of the West); politics (Britain's Fellowship Party); defence (Germany's Association for Social Defence); economics (Pax World Fund; United Farm Workers of America; Sri Lanka's Sarvodaya Movement); education (India's Gandhigram Rural University); research (America's Albert Einstein Institution); the arts (India's Centre for Nonviolence through the Arts); human rights (Amnesty International; Human Rights Watch); environment (Greenpeace); and many others. If such organisations, institutions, and policies are creatively combined and adapted to the conditions and aspirations of any given society, experience-based approximations of nonkilling societies are even now demonstrable.

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Fifth, nonviolent popular movements. Although not new to history, nonviolent popular struggles that have accompanied global processes of democratisation increasingly demonstrate alternatives for achieving political change in lieu of armed revolution, civil wars, coups, and assassinations. Appearing to varying degrees in all parts of the world, they include the Gandhian movement for Indian independence, the Kingian movement for racial equality in the United

States, the people's power movement for Philippine democracy, the South African anti-Apartheid movement, and the dissident movements for freedom and justice that contributed to dissolution of the Soviet Union and liberation of Eastern European and Baltic countries from Soviet control (Powers and Voegelé 1997). Although not without defeats, as recently in Burma (1988-89) and China (1989), such nonviolent movements - variously constituted by principled nonkilling and pragmatic nonviolent elements - contrast greatly with revolutionary and civil war bloodshed associated with the American, French, Russian, and Chinese revolutionary traditions.

Sixth, nonkilling lives. Just as democracies are made by democrats, or x-ocracies by x-ocrats, nonkilling societies will be made by nonkilling individuals. The lives of men and women dedicated to principled nonviolence throughout history and in

contemporary societies, inspire confidence that killing can stop (Josephson 1985). Mutually supportive couples are extremely significant such as Mohandas and Kasturba Gandhi, Martin Luther Jr, and Coretta Scott King, Jean and Hildegard Gross-Mayr, Dorothy Day and Peter Maurin, and Cesar Chavez and Dolores Huerta. Furthermore, as the late great Gandhian educator Dr. G. Ramachandran reminded us, "The unknown heroes and heroines of nonviolence are more important than those that are known." If some humans can stop killing, others can too.

Implications for Political Science

If political scientists envisioned the possibility of realising nonkilling societies, what implications would it have for the discipline and its role in society? Five transformative revolutions can be expected: First, a normative revolution from varying degrees of acceptance of killing to principled rejection.

Second, a factual revolution brought about by incessant curiosity to discover evidence of nonkilling human capabilities past and present.

Third, a four-part theoretical revolution to understand the causes of killing, the causes of nonkilling, the causes of transition between killing and nonkilling, and the characteristics of completely killing-free societies.

Fourth, an applied revolution in which nonkilling normative, empirical, and theoretical insights are combined to assist decision-making and problem-solving by all who seek the continued survival and well-being of human and planetary life. Among momentous tasks of the present era are achieving disarmament; ending the holocaust of the poor; respecting universal human rights; ending ecocide; and creating processes of peaceful, planetary, problem-solving cooperation. In short, unabashed commitment to contribute to a world in which nonkilling, life, liberty, happiness, and even love (Sorokin 1954) are meaningful terms in politics and political science.

Fifth, an educational revolution to prepare professional political scientists and competent citi-

zens to contribute to removal of killing, its causes and consequences, from global life. Professional education explicitly will seek to respond to needs for researchers, teachers, creative leaders, and critical communicators to realise a nonkilling societal transformation. Political science education for nonkilling service will affirm both needs for specialisation and for life-celebrating mutual supportiveness among specialisations.

A four-part logic of nonkilling political analysis will guide the curriculum and subsequent specialisations. First, students will be confronted by the most monstrous record of human capacity to kill that can be assembled by audiovisual and documentary means. They will next be introduced just as vividly to the record of human commitment to nonkilling political and social action. Then the

transitional record of killers becoming nonkillers - both individuals and collectivities - will be examined, as when generals become pacifists, when revolutionary movements renounce violence, and when states abolish capital punishment, demobilise, and convert military economies to serve civilian needs. Finally, the record of human inventiveness in envisioning and implementing nonviolent conditions of social life will be explored, combined with a challenge to envision and to contribute creatively to liberate human potentials in societies characterised by no killing and no threat to kill. Mutually rein-

forcing innovative enclaves focused upon research, teaching, servant leadership, and critical communication will characterise each stage of professional development and continuing service.

The impact of a nonkilling shift upon the broad fields that underlie contemporary political science (political theory, national politics, comparative politics, and international relations) - despite current trends of disintegration and reconfiguration - can be briefly suggested. The challenge to theory is to explore the nonkilling potentials in the often neglected thought of Gandhi (1970), Sharp (1973), Burton (1979), and Galtung (1996) and to revisit classical and contemporary political theorists to extract nonkilling insights for creative extrapolation.

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The challenge to national politics is to discover nonviolent resources in history and contemporary societies; for example, four centuries of nonviolent experiences that can assist transformation of the world's leading military superpower and most violent of the industrialised democracies into a nonkilling United States of America (Lynd and Lynd 1995).

For comparative politics, the challenge is to compare societies on all indicators, processes, and consequences of lethality for insight into factors conducive to nonkilling transformation and sustainability. Changes in lethal (and nonlethal) characteristics of societies should become at least as important in world media reporting and global public attention as changes in stock markets, sports and the weather.

In international relations, inquiry is channelled into bottom-up, top-down, and horizontal processes of nonkilling interactions that can restrain the violent, empower the nonviolent, and progressively lead to recognition and universal realisation of a nonkilling human right: "Everyone has the right not to be killed and the responsibility not to kill others."

Taken as a whole, the academic discipline of political science must become committed to realisation of nonkilling societies by nonkilling means, unabashedly engaged in helping to solve local and global problems correlated with continuation of lethality, and devoted to combining spirit, science, skill, song (arts), leadership, citizen competence, and other resources required for responsive service to life-respecting human needs and potentialities.

Nonkilling Institutions

Given the assumption that nonkilling societies are not beyond realisation, and assuming that political science as an academic discipline can contribute to processes of nonkilling social transformation, what are some transitional institutions that can assist problem-solving implementation?

Whereas a nonkilling spirit needs to be infused in each existing political science specialisation, department, and association, it will be appropriate to create new nonkilling departments of political science within new colleges and universities that are arising in response to the educational

requirements of a growing global population. Because of the complexity of nonkilling causal analysis and the need for comprehensive systems insights to guide transformative decisions by individuals and collectivities, such departments can be expected to be increasingly hybrid. They will draw upon all sciences, humanities, and professions, thereby continuing a trend established over the past half century. Such departments need to be structured explicitly to provide service in the fields of research, training public/private leadership and communication. A special need is to support the creation of nonviolent *shanti senas* (peace brigades) as alternatives to military training in schools, colleges, and universities (Radhakrishnan 1992; Weber 1996, Moser & Weber 2000).

To take seriously the possibility of realising nonkilling societies implies requirements for knowledge and skills beyond the capabilities of any discipline or academic department. Therefore the resources of entire nonkilling universities and colleges are required for research, education,

training, and service.

In democratic politics, nonkilling political parties are needed that are dedicated to responsive processes of social problem-solving that seek the well-being of all. A generic term might be an *ahimsa sarvodaya* party ("ahimsa" meaning nonviolence; "sarvodaya" referring to well-being of all) - such parties emerging creatively in concept, name, organisation, and activities out of specific socio-cultural conditions. *Ahimsa sarvodaya* parties differ from past violence- and class-based parties in their nonkilling goals and nonkilling means of attainment through need-responsive processes of problem-solving for universal well-being. Single party domination is not implied, but only dedicated commitment to shift politics toward realisation of nonkilling needs. There can be many *ahimsa sarvodaya* parties engaged in the processes of realising and advancing nonkilling societies.

Public service departments of nonviolence are needed at every level of governance with cabinet responsibilities. Their tasks are to monitor conditions conducive to lethality, to support professional training for prevention and post-lethal transformative rehabilitation, and to advise on public policies that will facilitate nonviolent communi-

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ty well-being. Since nonviolence is so pervasively important, such departments are needed no less than those dedicated to public health, refuse removal, and the provision of a clean water supply.

Transitional societies will require nonkilling common security institutions. Nonkilling security forces, akin to traditional military and police, are essential for protective and humanitarian service operations by land, sea, and air. Such forces are to be trained for preventive, crisis-coping, and restorative actions and for after-action evaluations of effectiveness. Appropriate training institutions will be needed. Since nonviolent common security requires the engagement of entire populations at local, national and transnational levels, nonviolent study circles are essential in civil society for study of the theory and practice of civilian social defence (Sharp 1990).

Nonviolent security also implies nonviolent common security councils and nonviolent intelligence agencies (reveal, not conceal) at national and transnational levels as well as nonviolent cultural attachés in diplomatic establishments. All would be dedicated to provide nonviolent policy alternatives to decision-makers and to promote nonviolent mutual understanding and cooperation among all societies for common security. To enhance skills for a nonkilling public service in governmental and private organisations, institutions for nonviolence training are needed. Beginning in subcomponents or independently, they may evolve as nonviolent alternatives to war colleges, national defence universities, military academies, police academies, diplomatic training schools, and schools of public administration, as well as to violence-accepting professional schools in civil society.

Civil society institutions are needed to contribute to the emergency, maintenance, and creativity of nonkilling societies. Among them are nonkilling spiritual councils to affirm and advance multi-faith respect for life in all matters from birth to death; nonkilling research and policy analysis institutes to assist societal decision-making from international security policies to all matters of political, economic, social and cultural life; nonkilling media to provide information, news, analysis and commentary to assist individual and public policy decision-making; nonkilling memorials jointly to lament the victims of past lethality and to celebrate pioneers of nonkilling alternatives; nonkilling economic enterprises to respond to

genuine needs of people in transition to nonkilling societies in local and global contexts; nonkilling consulting groups that are independent of violent states and their lethal antagonists to assist nonviolent problem-solving within and across societies; transnational and nonkilling problem-solving consortia such as Amnesty International and Doctors Without Borders; nonkilling training institutions that provide skills in nonviolent leadership for conflict resolution and social change, drawing upon scientific advances and experiences of Gandhian, Kingian, Buddhist, Christian and other spiritual and secular traditions; nonkilling leadership study and revitalisation centres to provide opportunities for rest, reflection and sharing of experiences among leaders engaged in nonviolent actions in every sector of society; and centres for nonkilling creativity in the arts to provide complete freedom to explore and express nonkilling human potentials from the perspectives of and in creative interaction with all the arts.

**“Everyone can be
a centre for global
nonviolence.”**

A generic institution appropriate for adaptation from local to global levels is a centre for global nonviolence. Small, creative, catalytic, and economic, its motto is “Everyone can be a centre for global nonviolence.” Seven workers with communication capabilities scan local and global communities for nonkilling knowledge emerging from research, education-training and social change efforts. They share knowledge across sectors with all who are engaged in transformative action, and with institutions that have large-scale implementational capabilities. In the process, needs for new theoretical, training and applied knowledge are identified and projects for discovery are facilitated. The core working group is composed of facilitators for research, education-training, problem-solving applications, communication, resources, local-global correspondence, and overall coordination. Findings are shared in associated global nonviolence leadership academies, where experienced and younger leaders come together to enhance skills for nonviolent service in all sectors of society. Linked through information technologies, centres for global nonviolence and associated leadership academies can constitute a network for facilitation of mutual learning and innovation for nonkilling local-global transformation.

For Nonkilling Global Transformation

Although, of course, not the only source of

knowledge and skills required for liberation of humanity from lethality, a nonkilling political science - in concert with all who respond to the spiritual and scientific realist imperative of "No more killing!" - can be a creative source of transformative service. It will take vision and courage to go forward. The cooperative contributions of political scientists, their students, and all who support their work throughout the world are needed.

On the other hand, for those who are inclined to dismiss the thesis of a nonkilling society as "utopian" and to return to "business as usual," the invitation is extended to contribute to two critically important scientific tasks. First, for every obstacle deemed to make nonkilling human life impossible, help creatively to identify nonviolent behavioural and structural changes that practically or hypothetically would be required to transform them. Second, ponder the peace and nonviolence value implications of violence-affirming Max Weber's observation: "Certainly all historical experience confirms the truth - that man would not have attained the possible unless time and time again he had reached out for the impossible" (Weber 1958: 128). ■

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Endnotes

1 This is a slight revision of a paper presented to the International Studies Association in Los Angeles on March 17, 2000 entitled "The Case for Nonkilling Political Science in Service to Nonkilling Global Transformation." It is a companion to "Nonviolent Political Science," presented to the International Political Science Association in Moscow in 1979, first published in *Social Alternatives*, Vol. 1, Nos. 6&7 (June 1980), pp. 104-112.

2 The present question is addressed primarily to students of political science but is appropriate for all disciplines and vocations. The focus is on killing and readiness to kill as major contributors to other forms of behavioural and structural violence. The term nonkilling is employed and repeated to underscore two realities: killing and the possibility of nonkilling alternatives. Colleagues who prefer concepts such as "peace studies" and "nonviolence" are invited to consider how legitimisations and preparations to kill affect our shared concerns.

HOT DAY

Loquats ripen suddenly.
small orange fruit swollen with pink sun
and the early October morning
is already an oven of light
the school caretaker sleeping late
has left the floodlights on the oval on
soft lining at the back of the eye
squats in horror for any shade
there is a sluggishness in commerce
buses and trains run late
power has failed twice and an ambulance
screams at dried blood on the road
at four o'clock the day blows itself out
with clouds and warm rain
there is a rhythmic clicking
in hot stones of the house
and I pick a loquat
from the late blue vitreous sky.

Geoff Guess

Presbyterian Section (Town Cemetery)

Rim to curved rim
extend the long plains
of wheat and grass
fallow ploughed land
scudded with light
and shadow : life
throbbing rising
dying rising again
from each year's
dark-scented loam.

But our ancestors
have chosen to lie
decently fenced off
behind the pious town
their dour granites
crowned by seraphim
names birth death dates
good deeds chiselled
in narrow straight lines

awaiting Resurrection's
covenanted day.

Nicola Knox

we looked through the gates

We looked through the gates of what used to be
A mountain, till mechanical chains
Of shovel, truck and train, steep tyres
Taller than a house, processed, conveyed it
To a mile-long conveyor belt, to long, calm ships
Bound for Japan. So the sea
Inherits the earth, passes it on. You don't mine
Ore without it mining you; you change
For every morning in the fire-blue sunlight.
Flesh slides into ready flesh to nurture; breaths pulse;
Hair streams like the hours; the clean taste
Of pubic hair in the mouth. Defences strip
When the flesh falls into play.
I rose to penetrate, woke myself impaled.

Michael Robinson