

TWENTY-FIRST ANNUAL INTERNATIONAL
ADVOCATE FOR PEACE AWARD,
HONORING WILLIAM URY

On March 11, 2022, the *Cardozo Journal of Conflict Resolution* presented the twenty-first annual International Advocate for Peace Award to William Ury. The following is a transcript of the event's speeches.

SAMUEL DITCHEK, OPENING REMARKS: Welcome to the twenty-first annual International Advocate for Peace Award, as well as the 11th Melnick Annual Symposium of the *Cardozo Journal of Conflict Resolution*. We will begin with introductory remarks from the Dean of Cardozo School of Law, Dean Melanie Leslie.

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Thank you, Dean Leslie, and thank you, Professor Love. Hello, everyone. My name is Samuel Ditchek, and I am the Editor-in-Chief of the *Cardozo Journal of Conflict Resolution*. We appreciate your presence and you taking the time out of your morning to join us. Before we begin, I would like to thank Jed Melnick, a founding member of our Journal, whose generosity made this event possible. I would also like to thank our Symposium Editor, Alexandra Sandler, and Professors Lela Love and Donna Erez-Navot, whose hard work, dedication, and thoughtful advice were instrumental in planning our events today. And of course, thank you to all the incredible panelists and moderators who will be speaking today. It is truly an amazing group of people. We feel very lucky to have you, though we are sad that we cannot celebrate together in person at Cardozo this year.

The *Cardozo Journal of Conflict Resolution* is working on publishing its twenty-third volume this year, and we are very honored to present William Ury with the twenty-first annual International Advocate for Peace Award.

Before hearing from our incredible speaker, I would like to share some of the history and meaning of the Award. Each year, our Journal awards an individual or an organization with the International Advocate for Peace Award for their remarkable work in the field of peace building and conflict resolution.

Since it is such an impressive list, I will go through some of the past recipients of the Award. Some of the past recipients include

Presidents Bill Clinton and Jimmy Carter; Ambassador Richard Holbrooke; Archbishop Desmond Tutu; folk group Peter, Paul and Mary; Senator George Mitchell; Seeds of Peace; Ambassador Dennis Ross; Abigail Disney; the Honorable Daniel Weinstein; Mediators Beyond Borders International; and, recently, Sir Paul McCartney. Our recipients, with different approaches and means, have helped shape a better—more peaceful and connected—world for future generations. We are proud to add William Ury to this list.

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At this point, I would like to introduce our Symposium Editor, Alexandra Sandler, who will be introducing our honoree, William Ury.

ALEXANDRA SANDLER, INTRODUCTORY REMARKS: Good morning. Thank you all for joining us on this special day. I am Alexandra Sandler, and I am the Symposium Editor of the *Cardozo Journal of Conflict Resolution*.

I had the pleasure of being on the committee that considered the potential recipients for this year's International Advocate for Peace Award, and I have to say, the decision to pick this year's Award recipient was not a difficult one. Professor William Ury is truly an "International Advocate for Peace." He has focused his life's work on promoting peace and conflict resolution throughout the world. At this time, I would like to discuss a few of Professor Ury's amazing achievements and contributions, for which we honor him today.

Professor William Ury has helped develop many negotiation theories that speak to individuals negotiating, as well as countries trying to sort out differences. His and Roger Fisher's and Bruce Patton's seminal book, *Getting to Yes*, is one of the most influential books in the field of negotiation, having sold over fifteen million copies and being translated into more than thirty-five languages. This book was followed by many more, including *Getting Past No*, *The Third Side*, *The Power of a Positive NO*, and *Getting to Yes with Yourself*. Through his writing and speaking, Professor Ury has helped millions in conflicts secure win-win outcomes by influencing those studying negotiation to separate the people from the problem, focus on shared interests, develop fair criteria, and discover creative ways to move forward and avoid the negative spiral of conflict.

In *The Third Side*, Professor Ury taught negotiators about the “third side”—us, the community, our family, peers, and strangers—who are not necessarily involved in the conflict, but who can help transform it, by viewing the conflict from the larger perspective, stepping into both sides’ shoes, reminding the parties what is at stake, and supporting a process of dialogue and non-violence. Throughout his books, Professor Ury reminds us that the goal is not to end conflict, but to transform the way it is expressed from destructive fighting to constructive change. We hope to learn more about that today from his remarks and this Symposium.

Over the last four decades, Professor Ury has served as a negotiation advisor and mediator settling conflicts in the Middle East, the former Soviet Union, the Balkans, Indonesia, Venezuela, Colombia, and beyond. During the 1980s, Professor Ury assisted the U.S. and Soviet governments to develop nuclear crisis centers designed to prevent an accidental nuclear war. Together with former president Jimmy Carter, he co-founded the International Negotiation Network, a non-governmental body seeking to end civil wars around the world. In an advisory capacity, Professor Ury helped end a war in Indonesia and Aceh and aided in preventing a war in Venezuela.

We are honored that William Ury is accepting the International Advocate for Peace Award. It is not his first award. He has received the Cloke-Millen Peacemaker Award, the Whitney North Seymour Award from the American Arbitration Association, and the Distinguished Service Medal from the Russian Parliament.

More recently, Professor Ury founded the Abraham Path Initiative, which seeks to promote peace in one of the most conflict-prone regions in the world—the Middle East—by developing trails throughout the area to connect people across cultural divides. The Path was inspired by the story of Abraham, the legendary common ancestor of over half of humanity and a common patriarch for many religions. The Path, at its core, is an opportunity for people to connect and build understanding, by walking together and sharing stories along the Path.

Professor Ury, we are inspired by your work and all the ways you have helped individuals and communities achieve meaningful peace around the world. We honor you, for your passion for conflict resolution and for your vision for a more peaceful world. It is my privilege and honor to recognize you as the twenty-first International Peace Advocate. And now, I would like to introduce Professor William Ury. Thank you.

WILLIAM URY, INTERNATIONAL ADVOCATE FOR PEACE AWARD ADDRESS: It is an enormous pleasure and privilege to speak with you today. I am only sorry that I am not there in person to meet you.

I receive this very beautiful award with profound gratitude and a considerable dose of humility, acknowledging the painful and tragic wars that are raging at this very moment in Ukraine, Yemen, Ethiopia, and other hotspots. These underscore the critical importance of dedicating ourselves even more deeply to the sacred cause of peace.

As a young child, I grew up under the shadow of the atomic bomb. My friends and I went on with our lives as if it were normal but punctuated with intense moments—a nuclear crisis or sometimes simply a disturbing conversation—that reminded us of the ever-present possibility of an instantaneous Armageddon.

I could never understand as a boy why our countries were prepared to blow to smithereens all that we hold precious—our lives, our families, our beautiful world. Even then, I knew deep down there had to be a better way to deal with our deepest differences.

I went on later to study anthropology to try to understand human beings, our ways of handling conflicts, and our self-destructive proclivity for resorting to war. And, because I felt compelled to do something practical, I studied negotiation and mediation and became a practitioner because these methods offered a realistic alternative to war.

When I was a graduate student in the 1970s, it was widely believed by experts and laypeople that the Cold War would go on for generations. Throughout the 1980s, I had the chance to make many trips to Moscow as well as to Washington while working on the problem of how to head off an accidental or inadvertent nuclear war. As an academic and a negotiator, I had a front-row seat on the astonishing transformation of this seemingly impossible conflict that, throughout my childhood and youth, had threatened an imminent end to life as we know it. And with my own eyes, I watched the seemingly impossible become possible.

As a Russian friend of mine said to me at the time, “William, if you want to go to a new country, you have to go to the airport and get on a plane. If I want to go to a new country, all I have to do is wake up the next morning.”

It was a time of hope—of glasnost and perestroika. I remember an academic conference of experts in Soviet history and politics who had been asked the question, “If the Soviet Empire collapses,

how many people will die?” The answers from the assembled experts ranged in the millions and as high as ten million, as I recall, because that is how many died when the Russian Empire collapsed. The end of Soviet Communism was perhaps the greatest peaceful revolution in history. And with it, the greatest threat to all of us on Earth had radically diminished.

Yet today, I am sad to say, at this very moment, the world finds itself in a new crisis between Russia and the West, in good part because we—all of us—failed in the last thirty years to realize and act on the full opportunity for peace. Tanks are rolling across Europe in a way that has not been seen since 1945. Nuclear threats are being made, and some analysts are speaking about the beginning of World War III.

Where is the diplomatic off-ramp? Where is a peaceful way out for our world?

I have spent forty-five years now wandering around this planet as an anthropologist and negotiator, observer, and participant, in two dozen deadly conflict zones around the world seeking answers to the question: “How might we as human beings deal with our deepest differences constructively and creatively for the benefit of all?”

People often ask me if, after working on all these seemingly impossible conflicts, are you an optimist or a pessimist? I like to respond: “Actually, I am a ‘possibilist.’” I believe in our human potential, our potential to transform conflicts from destructive fighting into creative negotiation and constructive coexistence.

After all these years of wandering around the world’s war zones, I believe I have found the secret to peace. It is very simple, even if it is not at all easy. The secret to peace is us.

The secret to peace is the latent power of us all, working together to contain and transform deep-seated conflicts. We typically see conflicts as two-sided—one party versus another, but in fact, there is always a third side present. The Third Side is the larger community surrounding the conflict, the family and friends, neighbors, and allies, near and distant. Even the parties themselves are part of that community.

The Third Side is people using the power of peers, adopting the perspective of the whole, supporting a process of dialogue, negotiation, and nonviolent action.

The Third Side can be instrumental in calming things down by helping the parties go to the Balcony, a place of calm and perspective where we can get in touch with our deeper interests and dis-

cover new ways forward. The Third Side can then build a Golden Bridge, helping the parties move from entrenched positions to creative options for mutual gain.

The Third Side is people power. No matter how powerful an individual party may be, they are not more powerful than the surrounding community if that community is mobilized. If negotiations prove difficult or break down, the Third Side offers a robust alternative, what we call in negotiation lingo a strong BATNA.

I first came to truly appreciate the real power of the Third Side as I traveled around the world in 1989. It was on these travels that I understood how the Third Side is both our most ancient human heritage and a possible answer to today's most difficult conflicts.

I started the year in wintry Moscow. With my Harvard colleagues, I sat stunned as I listened to the living participants of the Cuban Missile Crisis as they discussed what had transpired in those tense thirteen days in October 1962 when the fate of the world hung in the balance.

Among them were former Secretary of Defense, Robert McNamara; former National Security Advisor, McGeorge Bundy; and President Kennedy's close advisor, Ted Sorensen. Representing the Soviets were the son of former Premier Nikita Khrushchev, Sergei Khrushchev; the former Minister of Foreign Affairs, Andrei Gromyko; and the former Ambassador to Washington, Anatoly Dobrynin. For the first time, these former adversaries sat face-to-face to share their perceptions.

I emerged from those cold days in Moscow, shocked by how close, against the intentions of both leaders, we had come to mutual annihilation and how lucky we had all been to survive the Cold War. How could we, our children, grandchildren, and succeeding generations, continue to live together on this planet, given our genius at devising weapons of mass destruction and our tendency to go to war?

On my very next trip a month later, I caught a glimpse of an alternative to war and violent conflict in a place that could not have been more different than icy cold Moscow.

I traveled to southern Africa to spend some time with the Kua tribe, a hunter-gatherer group who lived deep in the Kalahari desert. Since hunting and gathering was our way of life as humans for over 99% of our time on Earth, I wanted to understand how they dealt with their difficult conflicts.

The Kua, like us, are perfectly capable of violence. Each man has in his possession hunting arrows coated with a deadly beetle poison. If someone is shot, it takes three days to die, long enough for them to take revenge and start a chain of deaths, thus decimating a small hunting community. In a small-scale society like this, each poison arrow is the rough equivalent of a nuclear bomb.

So, I wondered: how do the Kua deal with bitter differences, given the ever-ready access to weapons of enormous destructiveness?

Whenever tempers rise suddenly, and violence threatens among the Kua, Third Siders—those around the parties—are alert. People gather the poison arrows and hide them far away in the Bush. Others try to separate the antagonists. And the talking begins. All the men and women—even the children—gather around the campfire and talk and talk . . . and talk. Each person has a chance to have their say. This open and inclusive process can take days until the dispute is literally talked out. At night, the community gathers around for chanting and trance dancing so as to appeal to the gods for help and insight into how to resolve these explosive differences.

The Kua do not rest until they find a solution. Nor is it enough to resolve the particular issue. They know that a dispute can easily erupt again if the underlying relationship is not repaired. There must be a reconciliation of the parties, repair, apologies, and forgiveness.

It is not always easy. If tempers are too high, the elders counsel the parties to go off and spend time with relatives at other waterholes. I recognized the technique; in labor-management conflicts I had worked on, we called this a “cooling-off period.”

The Kua’s secret to managing conflicts, I learned, is the vigilant, active, and constructive involvement of the surrounding members of the community.

The Third Side, I came to recognize, may be our oldest and most reliable form of conflict transformation. It may be why our ancestors did not kill each other off eons ago. The Third Side is our birthright.

But the Kua, of course, is a very small-scale society, different in so many ways from our modern societies. How could the Third Side function to interrupt our destructive fighting in the world today?

As it turned out, I did not have to look long for my next clue. Shortly after studying the Kua Bushmen, I traveled to apartheid

South Africa, trapped in a violent, seemingly impossible conflict. Guerrilla warfare, bombings, riots, violent suppression—it felt like it would never end. The differences appeared irreconcilable.

I had scheduled an interview with David Webster, a fellow anthropologist who was a determined opponent of Apartheid. But just days before our meeting, he was tragically assassinated on his doorstep in front of his wife by a government-sponsored death squad. I later spent a long evening conversing with Anton Lubowski, a political opponent of the South African government; shortly after, he too tragically fell to the bullets of a death squad.

Yet, when I returned six years later, I felt as if I had entered an entirely different country. I had to pinch myself to believe this was real! Nelson Mandela, who had been in decades-long imprisonment on my first visit, was now president of the country. His deputy president was former President de Klerk.

Bullets had given way to bridges. And behind all this was the work of the Third Side.

As Desmond Tutu—another fellow winner of this distinguished award—once declared: “You must believe! This spectacular victory over Apartheid would have been totally impossible had it not been that we were supported so remarkably by the international community.”

Governments imposed economic sanctions, sports federations ostracized South African teams, the United Nations provided financial and political support to Mandela’s African National Congress, and respected statesmen offered to mediate the situation. Churches mobilized the public conscience; university students carried out protests, and under intense pressure, businesses and corporations made decisions to stop investing in South Africa. Sound familiar?

Just as essential as the work of Third Siders outside South Africa was the work of Third Siders inside the country. Youth, women, and other civic movements mobilized to reach across ethnic lines.

Faith, business, and union leaders came together to work with political leaders to create the National Peace Accord. Citizens across the country worked together to stop the violence so that democracy could emerge.

Remarkably, Desmond Tutu and Nelson Mandela themselves were Third Side leaders while fighting staunchly for their cause. To heal the deep wounds left by Apartheid, they appealed to the Afri-

can spirit of *ubuntu*, which means: “I am because you are. You are because we are.”

Ubuntu is the essence of the Third Side. It is the recognition that we all belong to a wider community within which even the most destructive conflicts can be contained and slowly transformed. *Ubuntu* was the very same inclusive spirit I had encountered among the Kua.

Here in Africa was the answer I had been seeking in Moscow. Here was a possible way we might choose to interrupt the destructive fighting in our lives. Here was a way we might instead choose creative negotiation to transform our relationships and societies.

As I reflected on what I had learned from the Kua and the ending of Apartheid, I recognized three fundamental Third Side practices.

The first practice is to *include*. At the core of almost every deep-seated conflict I have ever worked on is the wound of exclusion. When the Kua circle up around the campfire, they begin to heal this wound by including the disputants as well as all community members. No one is left outside the circle. In South Africa, the very essence of Apartheid was exclusion. Not only did Black people feel excluded, but curiously, so did the white Afrikaner people, who carried the traumas of war and domination by the British. Mandela’s leadership genius was to reach out to include the Afrikaners so that a South Africa could emerge in which all were included.

Through inclusion, the keen sense of rejection felt by the different groups is turned into a sense of belonging. Inclusion creates the right psychological conditions for what comes next.

The second practice is to *mediate*. Among the Kua, the elders step into the conversation around the campfire. They do so to listen carefully to each party and the perspectives of the community. In South Africa, eminent politicians from abroad showed up to help mediate, as did leaders of faith and business within the society.

Yet, to interrupt destructive fighting, the Third Side needs to go further. The third and perhaps most important practice is to *swarm* the conflict, a bit like a flock of birds swarms an intruder attacking a nest. A critical mass of persuasive peer influence is brought to bear on the parties to get them to stop the fight and start the talk. Among the Kua, the parties’ relatives, friends, and neighbors intercede to bring them to the campfire and to help them see sense. In South Africa, Third Siders from the global commu-

nity combined with Third Siders in the society to create a power strong enough to end apartheid. Through the act of Swarming, the latent power of the Third Side is activated.

Whether among the Kua or in South Africa, the Third Side community is the only thing I know that is able to contain and transform even the most profound and most intractable conflicts. The Third Side makes the impossible, possible.

Today, how can we in the mediation community help to activate the Third Side? My more recent experience supporting a negotiated peace in Colombia suggests a way that we, as mediators and citizens of a global community, can help deliberately activate the Third Side.

In 2011, Colombian President Juan Manuel Santos convened what he called a “*Kitchen Cabinet*” of international peace advisors. His purpose was to learn the lessons from other conflicts around the world and harness the best practices to help him, and his negotiators, figure out a way to end the civil war that had tormented his country for half a century, with over 250,000 deaths and 9 million victims.

I was honored to be part of this team and work alongside extraordinary people such as former Israeli foreign minister and lead negotiator during Camp David, Shlomo Ben-Ami; former Downing Street Chief of Staff and lead U.K. negotiator for the Good Friday Agreement, Jonathan Powell; U.S. Special Envoy, Bernie Aronson; and ex-guerrilla leader in El Salvador, Joaquin Villalobos. I felt a bit like I had joined the Avengers of peace negotiators.

This small group brought a continuous critical mass of practical negotiation support to the challenge of ending the armed conflict. In seven years, we made over twenty-five trips to Colombia, often at a day’s notice, to advise President Santos and his negotiators on everything from the secret talks to the negotiation agenda and from healing the traumatic divide within his country to navigating the periodic crises that threatened to end the negotiations.

Perhaps our most important role was to help him activate the Third Side to serve as a container within which the conflict could be transformed from violence to a peaceful democratic struggle. Inspired by the experience of other peace efforts, President Santos rounded up other players, like the Kua do as they gather around the campfire, in order to swarm the conflict with persuasive peer influence.

The first thing Santos did was reach out to Venezuelan President Hugo Chavez, who was a friend and patron, and supporter of the FARC guerrilla leadership. Santos asked Chavez for his help in bringing the FARC to the table. Chavez, eager to create a peace legacy for himself, readily agreed. Santos then appealed for help to Fidel Castro, who was a larger-than-life mentor and supporter for the FARC. Chavez and Castro proceeded to act as credible Third Siders to persuade their FARC friends to come out of the jungle and negotiate a peace agreement. The argument they made: guerrilla war was no longer the best path to power. It was time to engage openly in the political process and win by ballots, not bullets. Castro agreed to host secret peace talks in Havana.

Santos also activated a strong Third Side constituency for peace inside Colombia. The business community got engaged, understanding that war was bad for business and that peace would create a favorable environment for economic growth and foreign investment. As a former naval officer, Santos spent a lot of time seeking to persuade the military and retired military that the peace process was in their interest, that he was not selling out the country, and that peace would make Colombia a stronger, more secure country.

Even though there was no official mediator, various Third Side players—both international and domestic—helped unofficially mediate the conflict, providing legitimacy for both the Government and the FARC guerrillas, encouraging them to sit down and talk, helping facilitate the negotiations, and offering technical advice when things got stuck. The countries of Venezuela, Chile, Cuba, and Norway, together with the United Nations, supported the negotiations and acted as facilitators and guarantors. The U.S. and European countries provided political, diplomatic, and economic support.

As the saying goes, “it takes a village.” That village is the Third Side.

We, the international advisors, served as part of this informal mediation of the conflict. We were advising one side, the Government, and, at the same time, we were acting as Third Siders, exploring the Zone of Possible Agreement and choreographing the complex dance that led to an eventual agreement. While we did not mediate between the government and the FARC, we did often mediate the internal conflicts on the government side. These internal negotiations, I have found, are often even more difficult than the external ones.

This was all good but, as I learned from my time with the Kua in the Kalahari, it is not enough to find a negotiated agreement. Divisions and injuries remain, and conflicts can easily flare up again. If there is to be lasting peace, there must be social healing.

A core principle of the Colombian peace process has been to bring *Truth, Justice, Reparations, and the assurance of Non-Repetition* to the 9 million victims in the country. Indeed, one of the core innovations of the Colombian peace process was to include the victims of the war in the negotiation process itself. A number of hearings were held in Havana, in which groups of carefully selected victims of all sides in the conflict brought their testimony to the negotiators. Skeptics had worried that this would be a waste of time, at best, and at worst, an exercise in opening up old wounds and calls for vengeance. But in fact, the opposite happened. The victims—women and men, Black and white—spoke to the nation, calling for peace and support for the process.

One man I met had lost his father, his mother, and most of his family when, in a firefight between the FARC and the army, a FARC explosive landed on a church in his town where all the townspeople had gathered for safety. Still, he offered forgiveness to the FARC and called for a peace agreement. The FARC responded by offering a deep apology and contrition. That is the power of the Third Side, through the magic of inclusion, to heal hearts torn apart by years of suffering and war.

The examples of the Kua, of South Africa, and of Colombia all illustrate the power of the Third Side in action. So, turning to today, what is the challenge for the Third Side now in conflicts like the one raging in Ukraine? How can we activate the Third Side?

Here are some questions we can ask ourselves for each of the three fundamental practices of the Third Side:

First, *include*: How can we engage and activate external and internal Third Siders? How can we, in a spirit of deep respect, listen to all sides, even when we disapprove of their actions? How can we include even our enemies and stop creating pariahs or humiliating any of the parties?

Second, *mediate*: How can we equalize power imbalances, since the strong often refuse to negotiate with the weak? How can we deal with the distrust the parties feel—with confidence-building measures, for example? How can we understand what each side is really asking for? How can we generate creative options for mutual gain?

Third, *swarm*: Who are the individuals and countries who can help interrupt the fighting and encourage the parties to come to the negotiating table? Who are the experts and outsiders that can bring best advice and learning from other complex, multifaceted peace processes? How can civil society be engaged across all sectors—from business and labor to faith leaders to mothers of victims?

These are the kinds of questions we must ask ourselves now.

It is not easy. This may be the hardest work we humans can do. So many of the conflicts we encounter today are deep-seated and intractable, rooted in painful traumas.

We may not be able to *resolve* these conflicts, at least not now, but with the vigilant, active, and constructive engagement of the Third Side, we may be able to *transform* these conflicts, in other words, change their basic form from destructive to constructive, from combative to collaborative, and from reactive to creative. This is what happened in South Africa and is happening today in Colombia. That is my hope and prayer for the conflict in Ukraine.

Peace work takes extraordinary patience and persistence. It is marked by constant setbacks. I recall George Mitchell, a previous recipient of this award, musing that in the 700 days of negotiations over Northern Ireland, he experienced 699 days of failure and one day of success. And that one day is worth the other 699. While the work is tough and often frustrating, I must confess, in these forty-five years, I have found it deeply rewarding, stimulating, never boring, and always a chance to learn.

The work requires, I find, cultivating a spirit of humble audacity. We must be audacious to imagine success in the face of constant failures. And we must be equally humble to face harsh reality, to learn from our mistakes, and to listen again and again with a beginner's mind. A guiding motto I have found useful is: "High aspirations, no expectations."

So now you understand why I am a "possibilist." I believe in our human capacity to deal with our deepest differences constructively and creatively. I believe this not as an article of faith but because I have witnessed firsthand the power of the Third Side. I know it is possible to transform even the most impossible-seeming conflicts. It is not certain, far from it, but it *is* possible. It depends, in the end, only on us. In the immortal words of Rabbi Hillel, "If not us, who? And if not now, when?"

So let me conclude this talk by inviting you to be "possibilists" too. I have a hunch you already are. You probably would not be

sitting here if you did not believe in the power of us as humans, working together, to help create peace in this troubled world.

I invite you to activate the Third Side in the intractable conflicts you are tackling. To leverage collective intelligence, compassionate hearts, and focused creativity to contain and transform conflicts like the one right now in Ukraine. Or in Ethiopia. Or in Yemen. Or in countless other places around the globe.

As “possibilists,” let us stand together and unleash the power of the Third Side to transform the course of these wars from destructive confrontation into creative cooperation for the benefit of all.

Let’s show that history need not repeat itself and that war and violence are not inevitable. Conflict is inevitable, but war is not. We have a choice. And we have a tool—we can choose to wield the ancient power of the Third Side, our birthright. We can recreate it in the world of today. That power, I believe, is right here, right now, among us in this virtual room.

An old African proverb goes, “When spider webs unite, they can halt even a lion.” Each of us can spin a single spider web, which, when united with others, has the potential to halt even the lion of war.

May the Third Side be with you and with us all! Thank you!

SAMUEL DITCHEK, CLOSING REMARKS: Thank you so much to all of the incredible speakers and to the many attendees for making the twenty-first annual International Advocate for Peace Award and 11th Melnick Annual Symposium a truly special event.