**10. Peace and Conflict**  
**How can shared values and new security strategies reduce ethnic conflicts, terrorism, and the use of weapons of mass destruction?**

Half the world is still vulnerable to social instability and violence due to the global economic crisis, to aging populations and decreasing water, food, and energy supplies per person, to climate change, and to increasing migrations due to political, environmental, and economic conditions. These can trigger complex interactions of old ethnic and religious conflicts, civil unrest, terrorism, and crime, forcing countries to broaden their security policies from conventional warfare to include asymmetrical conflicts and attacking the root causes of unrest in local communities. Since many countries affected by conflict return to war within five years of a cease-fire, more serious efforts are required to dismantle the structures of violence and establish structures of peace.

The vast majority of the world is living in peace, conflicts actually decreased over the past decade, cross-cultural dialogues are flourishing, and intra-state conflicts are increasingly being settled by international interventions. India and China are peacefully seeking wider global involvement. The probability of a more peaceful world is increasing due to the growth of democracy, international trade, global news media, the Internet, NGOs, satellite surveillance, better access to resources, and the evolution of the UN and regional organizations. Major powers, in particular the United States, are exhibiting somewhat less rigidly assertive stands on international issues. However, some recent setbacks have occurred, with decreases in press freedom and the rule of law, and piracy becoming a serious problem off several African coasts. Space and the Arctic may become areas of conflict.

By mid-2009 there were 15 conflicts with 1,000 or more deaths per year—one more than in 2008. These occurred in Africa (4), Asia (4), the Americas (2), and the Middle East (4), with 1 conflict classified as worldwide anti-extremism. The Global Peace Index’s rating of 144 countries’ peacefulness declined slightly, reflecting intensification of conflicts and the economic crisis. In 2009, there are 113,000 UN peacekeepers from 117 countries in 16 operations. Total military expenditures are about $1.5 trillion per year. There are an estimated 20,000 active nuclear weapons in the world, approximately 1,700 tons of highly enriched uranium, and 500 tons of separated plutonium that could produce nuclear weapons. About 150–160 incidents of unauthorized use of nuclear or radioactive materials per year were reported to IAEA between 2004 and 2008. Unmanned aircraft are playing an increasing role in conflict but are accused of responsibility for heavier civilian losses.

Future desktop molecular and pharmaceutical manufacturing and organized crime’s access to nuclear materials give single individuals the ability to make and use weapons of mass destruction—from biological weapons to low-level nuclear (“dirty”) bombs. Cyber-warfare is already a component of international conflicts, and our Internet-dependent society could be destabilized by an individual with a home-hacked cyber-weapon. We have to apply cognitive science to improve and connect education and mental health systems to detect and treat individuals who might otherwise grow up to use such weapons, as well as using networks of nanotech sensors to alert authorities to those creating such weapons.

Early warning systems of governments and UN agencies could be better connected with NGOs and the media to help generate the political will to prevent or reduce conflicts. Massive public education programs are needed to promote respect for diversity, equal rights, common ethical values, and the oneness that underlies human diversity. It is less expensive and more effective to attack the root causes of unrest than to stop explosions of violence. Peace strategies without love, compassion, or spiritual outlooks are less likely to work, because intellectual or rational systems cannot overcome the emotional divisions that prevent unity and harmony. Counter-terrorism strategies should include many conversations with hardliner groups and heavy support for moderate factions. The capabilities of Web 2.0 should be exploited to defuse tense situations and to provide fact-finding and collaboration for solving global problems. They should also be used to bring worldwide populations closer together, inform them of each other’s lives and ambitions, and turn personal feelings from revenge and retaliation to forgiveness. Back-casted peace scenarios should be created through participatory processes to help change the conflict stories and to show how peace is possible (see CD Chapter 3.7). It is still necessary, however, to bring to justice those responsible for war crimes and support the International Criminal Court.

The UN Counter-Terrorism Committee is undertaking a major exercise to evaluate its activities. Networks of CDC-like centers to counter impacts of bioterrorism should be supported. Governments should destroy existing stockpiles of biological weapons, create tracking systems for potential bioweapons, establish an international audit system for each weapon type, and increase the use of nonlethal weapons to reduce future revenge cycles.

Challenge 10 will be addressed seriously when arms sales and violent crimes decrease by 50% from their peak.

**Regional Considerations**  
  
**Africa:** Although decreasing over the past 10 years, coups, unrest, and ethnic conflicts continue to plague the continent, while Al Qaeda increases its influence from Mauritania to Somalia. Conditions in Zimbabwe and Somalia worsen, and the slaughter in Darfur continues as the UN and the African Union hold talks. The UN estimates that there are more than 11 million internally displaced persons and refugees in 16 Central and East African countries. Increasing youth unemployment and millions of AIDS orphans may fuel a new generation of violence.  
  
**Asia and Oceania:** The continuing lack of an internationally acceptable solution to Iran and North Korea’s nuclear and missile ambitions is still an unsettling factor on the continent, and Pakistan’s internal instability and uncertain relationships with India and Afghanistan hinder the counter-extremist efforts in all three countries. The U.S. is embarking on a major new approach to the Afghan situation. Relations between North and South Korea have deteriorated. Thailand has been undergoing both a political crisis and Muslim unrest in its south. Central Asia is still in contention as a sphere of influence for the U.S., Russia, and China. The 26-year Tamil Tiger conflict in Sri Lanka has ended; rapid reconstruction may be needed to prevent a return to conflict. China’s severe environmental problems may cause such effects as the relocation of 150 million people from its northwest, while its military budget increased 15% in 2009. The Philippines military conducts environmental work to improve its image with the people.  
  
**Europe:** Russia continues efforts to restore the country’s standing as a major military power and reports the possibility of a war over Arctic oil and gas in 10 years. The large numbers of migrant laborers entering the EU and Russia will require new approaches to integrate them better into society if increased conflicts are to be prevented; nearly half of young Algerian men want to illegally immigrate into Europe. Turkey’s attempt to join the EU is still stalled by the EU’s need for Turkish domestic reforms. The EU’s Eastern Partnership aims for closer ties with former Soviet republics; as stresses continue in Russia’s “near abroad,” from Estonia to Georgia.  
  
**Latin America:** The lack of policies to give equal opportunities for indigenous and poorer people, such as better land-owning opportunities, plus the use of public funds and projects that benefit mostly monopolistic corporations increase the risk of social conflicts. The Colombian drug “industry” continues to cause widespread violence and deaths, with accusations of collusion among corrupt military, drug cartels, and paramilitary groups. Venezuela is forming associations with like-minded states worldwide. Although Latin America is one of the more peaceful regions in the world, tensions exist between Colombia and Venezuela and among Bolivia, Chile, and Peru.  
  
**North America:** The new U.S. administration is cutting back on the procurement of new weapons, is attempting to solve the abrasive problem of what to do with suspected-but-not-proven terrorists, and is actively engaged in arms control talks with Russia. Intelligence technology and military power have never provided security in asymmetrical warfare without genuine cross-cultural understandings and better multilateral cooperation. The knowledge of how to bring about mass destruction through emerging mechanisms such as genetic engineering, nanotechnology, and artificial intelligence could have more potential to destroy civilization than nuclear, biological, and chemical weapons.