Activity 4 – War and Peace

Much has been written about war in international society and about war more generally. Visit any high-street bookshop, go to the history section, and you will find shelves of books about military history, but it is a rare event to find even one single book dedicated to peace. Organisations such as the Peace Research Institute Oslo (PRIO: see www.prio.org) conducts research on the conditions for peaceful relations between states, groups and people, yet is far less known than groups that investigate military history. Achieving peace is far more difficult than going to war: peace treaties are invariably imposed by the winning side and hardly ever address the underlying causes of the conflict; often they impose a “peace” which contains, within the settlement, the seeds for the next conflict.

Moving on and rebuilding civil society (with the needs for, among many other things: an independent and impartial judiciary and police force; building or re-building infrastructure such as roads, schools and hospitals; water, electricity and sewage distribution and removal networks; let alone people’s homes) is a far more complex task than starting or even winning a war, yet it receives far less media coverage than war and conflict. Whilst international society is far more peaceful than it has been in the past and we have avoided a large-scale exchange of nuclear weapons with the threat to life on planet Earth that this represents, our efforts at creating, building and maintaining peace, with all the potential benefits for the international society, are limited. Sending in a force of blue-helmeted troops under a United Nations mandate may stop the fighting, but will not necessarily build peace.

Task

Read the following:


http://permaculturenews.org/2014/09/12/seven-reasons-world-peace-possible/

https://aeon.co/essays/waging-peace-is-much-more-than-ending-war

Watch this:

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wwbkPFPIVuE

1. Why is peace so hard to achieve?
2. Will we ever reach a point where wars do not happen? Why?
3. Is peace anything more than an absence of war?

4. How might peace rather than war better shape the international order in the future?