

War and Peace in the Information Age

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Receiving Honorary PhD

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“Dr. Spurgin, distinguished faculty, board members, graduates, ladies and gentlemen.

It is my great privilege to receive this honorary doctorate from the Unification Theological Seminary. I thank you deeply.

Woody Allen, the comedic writer and filmmaker, once said that 80 percent of life is showing up.

He was talking about his formula for success. To be successful in life requires hard work, dedication, sacrifice and discipline – concepts too often shunned in today’s culture of instant self-gratification and self-entitlement – that feeling that someone deserves something despite having done little to earn it.

I believe strongly that you have to show up I life, and if you work hard, success will be yours. Reject narcissism. Give up your life for the sake of others and blessings will be yours.

I was reminded of that during a meeting with Rev. Moon in Washington more than 20 years ago. I was becoming a well-known national security reporter. He was at the Washington Hilton for a conference. Father looked at me and said in his deep voice: “You’re a big shot now.”

As was his way, he never missed an opportunity to teach and preach. He then told me two things: One is I need to create more people like myself. Second, he said remember that America’s motto – One Nation Under God should be expanded to One World Under God. That, he explained, is God’s ultimate hope for America -- to become a beacon of hope, freedom and truth and true families.

My topic today is War and Peace in the Information Age. The title suggests you may be in for a long speech. But I promise you my remarks will be brief.

I started in journalism in the early 1980s when IBM Selectric typewriters were cutting edge technology. Within a few years of joining the Washington Times, the first Radio Shack TRS-80 computers came out. We nicknamed them Trash 80s. They had small, difficult-to-see screens about this size. But they represented a sea change. For the first time in history, news reporters could file stories from a small device by transferring copy digitally through the telephone. The often-iffy phone connectivity was an adventure, but it allowed transferring news stories remotely and revolutionized the news business since.

Today, this handheld device is at the cutting edge of the information age. Most handhelds today possess more computing power than room-sized supercomputers of the 1990s. They often dominate our lives and those of our loved ones. The information age is upon us. And it is transforming our lives. Yet even with the technological marvels that we take for granted, we are really in the early stages of applying that technology. The possibilities seem limitless.

On the horizon is something called the Internet of Things. It will expand our electronic connectivity beyond computers and cell phones. Future networks will reach the myriad of micro-mechanical devices, from our cars, to our home appliances to thousands of other devices. Information dominates our lives. It affects everything from how we communicate, educate, and inform, to how we do business and entertain ourselves. Unfortunately, there is also dark side to the technology. It is changing the nature of modern warfare.



It is my belief that warfare in the 21st Century will be dominated by information operations. Cyber, media, legal, financial, intelligence, and other forms of warfare are emerging, all with a common denominator: The Internet.

Cyber-attacks once limited to defacing web sites are becoming increasingly dangerous and destructive. Sophisticated intelligence services like those in China and Russia are now capable of causing widespread destruction and resulting in mass casualties. China already has infiltrated U.S. networks and is believed to be planning for future warfare using computer-based attacks that would shut down U.S. electrical power grids, or destroy the networks used by financial institutions, crippling the economy.

North Korean cyber-attacks against Sony Pictures last November were used to curb our freedoms, and were linked to propaganda activities designed to achieve state objectives.

Russian President Vladimir Putin's disinformation and subversion in Ukraine, and China's controls over the Internet are further examples. Beijing pays thousands of bloggers to post pro-government content as part of strategic influence operations against online posts Beijing finds contrary to the Party's monopoly of control and power.

Iran carried out denial-of-service attacks against U.S. banks and financial institutions and attacked a Las Vegas casino network. Like our information technologies, such non-kinetic Information warfare is in the early stages of its capabilities and is being developed by several powers.

And Islamist terror groups like the Islamic State also are waging information operations to foment jihad – holy war against the West. They are effectively exploiting social media to recruit terrorists and financial backers. The United States, for its part, under the current leadership, is preparing for cyber warfare, but has been limited by policies designed to wish away these threats as somehow relics of an earlier age.

The Obama administration remains in self-denial about the problem. The dominant thinking of the current

administration is that the United States is living at a time when adversaries are things of the past. The president and his advisers have adopted illusory policies falsely predicated on the notion that our age is a time of global community where all states share common interests. The reality is that is not happening. The world is becoming more dangerous, and the danger of new conflicts is increasing.

America urgently needs to recognize the new threat of strategic information warfare and address it.

That brings me to peace in the information age.



The country today is currently facing a crisis of morality. The lines between right and wrong, good and evil, once clearly defined, are now blurred.

And religious people, those who declare there is good and evil, have been put on the defensive by anti-religious secularists who regard concepts such as faith, family and freedom as things of the past, outdated and anti-progressive.

Our challenge now is to harness information technology for good. That requires new efforts at disseminating information to expose evil and educate about the good.

We urgently need to develop and initiate innovative ways to present the truth – far and wide.

This is our challenge: To use the blessings of the Information Age, its wizardry and technology, not to destroy but to educate and inform: To spread truth far and wide.

As Winston Churchill once said: “The truth is incontrovertible. Malice may attack it, ignorance may deride it, but in the end, there it is.”

We must show the world where that truth is. I challenge each of you to take up this cause.