

# Proposed Peace Amendment to the United States Constitution. Emanuel Pastreich

By [Emanuel Pastreich](#)

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*It is one of the great ironies of history that at the very moment the United States plunges deeper and deeper into war hysteria, that our politicians and government officials are possessed by the demons of complete annihilation and endless expansion, that falsehood and hypocrisy wrap their tentacles around the arms and legs of public intellectuals, at the very moment that it becomes impossible in Washington DC to talk about any subject that is not tied to war, at the very moment that the entire United States is being transformed into a military economy—one wherein all critical decisions are made by military contractors, privatized police, prisons, and for-profit intelligence (and at the top, the militarized private equity firms who pull the strings) it is a terrible and comic irony that the United States, of all the nations of the Earth, should be pressuring Japan to give up its commitment to oppose militarism as expressed in the Japanese constitution and to join us, as junior partners, in our suicide march towards world war and nuclear holocaust.*

We have things so completely backwards. **The United States does not have any need to, let alone have any right to, pressure Japan to give up its peace constitution,** or to stir up the desires for fortune latent in Tokyo's military contractors. We know that some Japanese are already itching for an excuse to prepare for war, and to destroy Japanese civil society by creating a military economy as a means of bringing even more wealth and power to the few.

**No! It is the United States that needs a peace constitution, and it needs it right now.**

We failed to return to a peace economy after the Second World War and the institutional and cultural cancer resulting from an economy stimulated by, and propped up by, war, has metastasized and spread throughout the entire society so that war is everywhere, from children's toys to parking spaces for veterans, to glowing tributes by politicians to those who kill in blind obedience to the state.

**We need now an institutional, intellectual, and spiritual commitment to an economy and a society that is founded in peace,** that is committed to peace, and that rewards citizens for their constructive economic contributions to the wellbeing of their families, their neighborhoods, their regions, their country, and to the entire Earth.

I do speak these words lightly. And I speak them as someone who has spent decades thinking about, and writing about, security and conflict. But the truth must be spoken, and we do not have long before the great reckoning.

Maybe there are those who can justify a society that is addicted to war, to destruction, and

to endless expansion. That is not my job.

War is not caused by a few bad apples, or a lack of maturity among political leaders. It is the product of an economic system that demands consumption and praises growth. For war is the greatest force for consumption and growth—until, of course, it leaves everything in ruins.

War is a product of a concept of economics, detached from morality and humanity, that has no concern for the long-term and that focuses on returns for the rich calculated over weeks and months, an inhuman economics wherein the long-term wellbeing of the citizens of the Earth is irrelevant.

This speculation-driven casino economy has pushed overproduction across the country which forces us to wrap everything in plastic so as to keep profits flowing to petroleum companies, and to prepare for war because the only factories left in America are those making military parts. Yes, most constructive factories have been moved overseas as part of the great “free trade” fraud perpetrated by the corporate parties.

## **The Japanese Constitution**

Let us take a look at article nine of the Japanese Constitution, that part of Japan’s post-war legacy that is so offensive to the American politicians and bureaucrats who have become the slaves of military contractors, and that is also repulsive to the bankers behind the stage who benefit from war preparations in Asia.

Article nine is also a rallying cry for Japanese militarists who wish to create a new empire and for well-paid security consultants deployed in Japan to promote expensive fighter planes that cannot even take off and land, missile defense systems that cannot stop anything, but who are unconcerned by the fact that Japan cannot provide its own food, that its water is being slowly poisoned with chemicals from factories and military bases, or that its nuclear power plants are sitting targets just waiting for an enemy attack.

Article nine states,

“Aspiring sincerely to an international peace based on justice and order, the Japanese people forever renounce war as a sovereign right of the nation and the threat or use of force as a means of settling international disputes.”

Article nine is invaluable in its intentions and spirit and it has had a positive impact around the world, even as its meaning has been diluted, then distorted, and then eviscerated though shifts in Japanese policy, starting with the establishment of the “Self-Defense Forces,” followed by the integration of the Japanese economy into the American war economy during the Korean War, and culminating in the false concept of “collective security,” a fig leaf for aggressive military expansionism and entry into the international arms market.

At the same time, we must recognize that there are problems with Article Nine.

First, the text suggests that Japan must renounce war as an idealistic aspiration for “international peace based on justice and order,” rather than as a necessity in an age in which we are faced with the choice between “hegemony and survival,” as Noam Chomsky

famously put it.

The absence of a concrete articulation of the logic behind renouncing war for a practical goal, not only for the abstract ideals of justice, has generated unending criticism holding that the Japanese constitution is overly idealistic and even a violation of Japan's sovereign rights.

It will be critical in future debates on security policy to explain how Japan's position on the use of war is realistic and strategic, and how it is unmistakably in the long-term interests of the Japanese and the international community.

It is also critical that Japanese, and Americans, challenge the assumptions underlying American security policy. Failure to do so, that is to merely assume that somehow Japan is protected by the United States while it enjoys its "peace constitution" encourages criticisms in the United States that Japan is a free rider, and complaints in Japan that Japan has become an American colony. That is to say that both the United States and Japan must express a similar commitment to peace.

In addition, article nine employs the terms "war" and "nation" as if they are static, unchanging, objects whose parameters are clear and that do not shift or evolve over time.

The essential nature of war does not change; the means by which war is waged, and the subjects in war, are constantly evolving. It is still true that guns, tanks, and fighter planes are used to wage war. Yet war today extends into diverse fields and takes place in visible and invisible forms at multiple levels. The media, entertainment, and AI have been weaponized and used to dumb down and render the population passive. This is not technology for a more convenient life, but rather another form of war.

Nano technologies are employed to invisibly attack the functions of the body, or to alter the environment. New biotechnology weapons can render victims ill, or incapacitated. The same for electromagnetic radiation, infrared radiation, and a host of other new weapons, or potential weapons.

Information warfare similarly is employed to create false narratives that confuse citizens as part of a divide and conquer strategy.

These forms of war fall outside of the narrow definition of "war" put forth in Article Nine, even though these forms of war are being conducted today in a more devastating manner than traditional warfare.

Similarly, the concept of "nation" has shifted so radically as to demand significant revision of the concept of war. War today is not conducted just between nations, but also between ethnic groups, between multinational corporations, and increasingly between classes. The driving force behind the current global war is a class war between the super-rich and everyone else, that it to say a war that goes beyond the assumptions of Article Nine.

We are confronted by a brave new world stretching to the horizon in which national borders are only for little people, in which the nation state exists only for television broadcasts and United Nations events, in which the real decisions behind the war against humanity are made by hidden financial powers who manipulate all the governments of the world, presenting us with pathetic puppets who stumble through a tragically amusing diplomatic show that is put on for the working man and women by private equity.

Sadly, the current discussion of Article Nine of Japan's constitution revolves around how to remove it, or to misinterpret it, so as to transform Japan into a nation that wages war, and that will have the third largest military in the world.

Very little is said about how Article Nine could make Japan a leader in security because Japan is positioned to make real security threats like climate change, the collapse of biodiversity, pollution, information warfare, and class warfare, the center of its security policy to a degree that other nations are not capable of.

## **An American Peace Constitution**

The need for an American peace constitution is so obvious, and the situation so desperate, that absolutely no one even mentions this topic.

The term "peace constitution" refers here to the adoption of a constitutional amendment, the twenty-ninth amendment, that will spell out a fundamental shift in the concept of security for the United States.

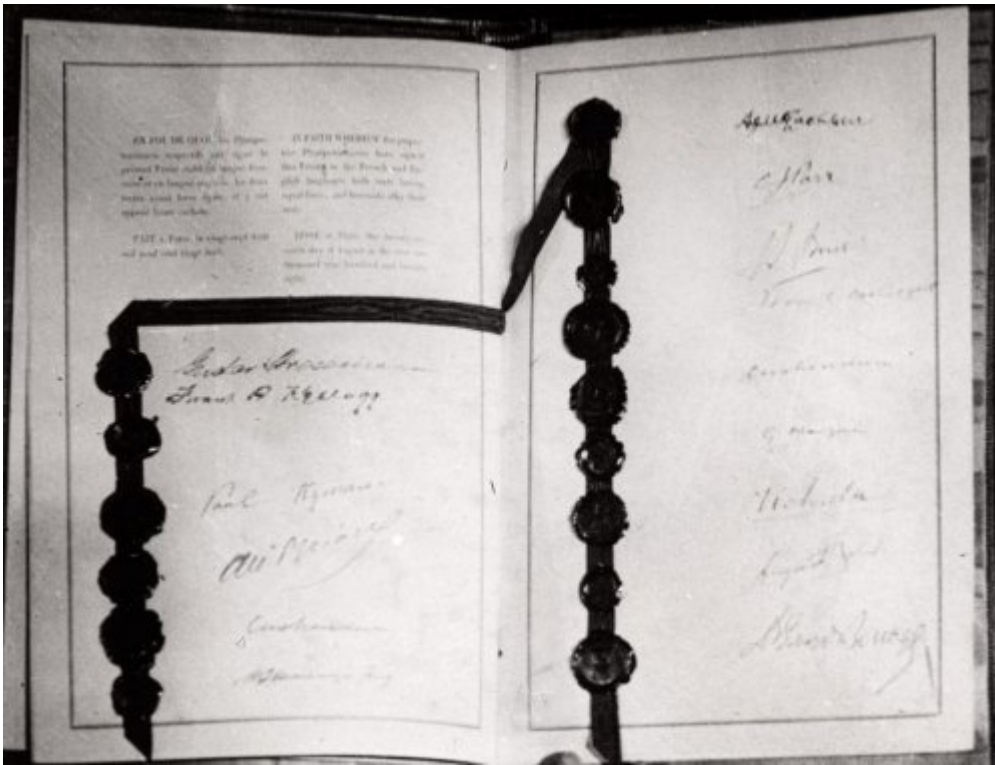
However, constitutional amendments are not magic and they cannot change the culture, the economy, or the politics of a nation. Just look at how much of the current Constitution is routinely ignored.

The Constitution, and the amendments to it, will serve a lodestar, a goal that will lead us forward as a citizens' movement to make peace and establish true human security as the fundamental priority for the nation, and for the world, and to leave behind profit-driven conflicts for the benefits of bankers and billionaires.

## **Precedents for the Peace Constitution**

We must recognize two important institutional precedents for this constitutional amendment.

The first precedent is the Kellogg-Briand Pact to outlaw war (specifically wars of aggression) that was signed by the United States and 15 other nations on August 27, 1928. The Kellogg-Briand Pact outlawed war as an instrument of national policy and it called upon its signatories to settle disputes by peaceful means. Although this effort to create an international consensus against wars of aggression was ultimately unsuccessful, it offers us a desperately needed precedent for a policy that promotes peace, not war, and the diplomatic resolution of conflicts.



Briand-Kellogg Treaty, with signatures of Gustav Stresemann, Paul Kellogg, Paul Hymans, Aristide Briand, Lord Cushendun, William Lyon Mackenzie King, John McLachlan, Sir Christopher James Parr, Jacobus Stephanus Smit, William Thomas Cosgrave, Count Gaetano Manzoni, Count Uchida, A. Zaleski, Eduard Benes. (From the Public Domain)

The second precedent is the House Resolution “To Establish a Department of Peace” submitted by Dennis Kucinich of Ohio to the House of Representatives on July 11, 2001 in a clear effort to counter the drive for war pursued by the George W. Bush administration at that time.

Kucinich’s vision of a Department of Peace that promotes international peace with the resources normally allocated to preparing for war has tremendous merits and deserves consideration as we ponder the concrete policy implications of a peace constitution for the United States.

Let me offer a draft for this amendment that can serve as the starting point for a serious moral and scientific debate as to how we can best lead this transformation of our nation. I write with the assumption that an amendment must be brief and must outline the fundamental issues without too much detail about either policy or technology.

## **Twenty-eighth Amendment to the United States Constitution**

The United States will assume the pursuit of peace to be its primary goal in foreign and domestic policy, make a peace economy its highest priority, and in that process reduce its nuclear weapons to zero within ten years, and demand that all other nations reduce their nuclear weapons to zero as well.

**Other dangerous weapons such a depleted uranium, mines and cluster bombs, biological and nano weapons, electromagnetic and infrared weapons, and the**

**project of information warfare will be ended decisively. The United States will oppose efforts to wage war by conventional, nuclear, or psychological, biological, or nano-technological means.**

**The United State military will be restructured to focus on the long-term security of the United States, calculated in the hundreds of years, giving up its short-term obsession with weapons and war, and devoting itself to preventing the destruction of the environment, earth, water, and air, the rising power of the rich and powerful, the use of technology to manipulate citizens and to destroy information, and other threats to human security.**

**Americans will only be deployed outside of the United States in a transparent and accountable manner for multinational efforts that are clearly defined, and such deployments will only be for a proscribed period of time.**

Let us advance the debate about what exactly the text of this amendment should be, and how we can create a nation dedicated to peace and security in the United States that will replace the nightmare tyranny of war and consumption that is presently being drawn toward the apocalypse by the dark horses of debt, consumption, and extraction.

[For greater detail on possible approaches to security policy, please see the [“Green Party’s World Peace Platform”](#) (Gloria Guillo and others, 2020) and Emanuel Pastreich’s article [“A Call for True Security in a Misguided Age”](#) (Korea Times, August 4, 2018)]

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