

RELEASE IN PART B6

From: Anne-Marie Slaughter [redacted]
Sent: Friday, March 2, 2012 6:46 PM
To: H
Cc: Abedin, Huma
Subject: Weekend Reading: I think you will like this -- it's a short personal reflection I wrote for The Rotarian

B6

I really don't see how your job could get any harder! AM

Do-it-yourself democracy

by Anne-Marie Slaughter

The Rotarian -- February 2012



Illustration by Louisa Bertman

I owe my existence to Rotary. In 1956, my father went to Brussels for a year as an Ambassadorial Scholar. One enchanted evening, as he would put it, he looked across the room at a beautiful young Belgian woman and fell in love. They were engaged three months later and married in the summer of 1957. I arrived in September 1958. And every Tuesday night throughout my childhood, my father went to his Rotary club.

My family is a direct testament to how Rotary builds bridges of international exchange and understanding. Today technology is multiplying those bridges exponentially, across every country, region, continent, and ocean. It is theoretically possible to connect every human being on the planet to one other and to vast stores of knowledge and sources of assistance. All it takes is seven billion smartphones, a relatively small order in a multitrillion-dollar world economy.

Connections are wonderful in many ways. According to Steve Jobs, "Creativity is just connecting things." The great novelist E.M. Forster wrote, "Only connect." I have argued that in a networked world, connectedness is a measure of power. "Power over" assumes that the power-wielder is at the top of a ladder and exercises power over those below. "Power with" assumes that the power-wielder is at the center of a web of relationships and can mobilize all her direct and indirect connections to solve a problem with the combined resources, energy, and talent across the web. More traditionally, "connections" have long been presumed to be the preserve of the powerful – connections to get a job, an audition, an interview, an opportunity. Less conspiratorially, think about how Rotary clubs empower their members by bringing diverse individuals from across a community together.

Global connections

That's the rosy side. But Al Qaeda is equally powered by global connections; that is part of what makes it so hard to fight. Defeat it in one country and it moves to another. Global criminal networks that traffic in drugs, arms, money, and people take advantage of the same technology that human rights or environmental networks do. Governments determined to crush popular opposition can track connections in ways that give them a dangerously precise map of political and social activity. Thus, the question of whether technology helps or hurts the cause of global peace and conflict resolution will inevitably have a mixed answer. But in the Rotarian spirit of optimism, let me offer five ways in which technology is advancing peace and prosperity, at least over the longer term.

First, as the revolutions that have swept across the Middle East and North Africa over the past year continue to demonstrate, the lightning connections and communication enabled by social media have allowed the technology of liberation to stay ahead of the technology of oppression. Revolutions occurred long before the era of Twitter and Facebook, but in recent decades, surveillance technology has steadily strengthened the power of the state to lock up activists and snuff out dissent almost before it starts. The speed and decentralization of social media gave the protesters in Tunisia, Egypt, Libya, Bahrain, Syria, and Yemen a fighting chance by enabling them to stay one step ahead of state security forces. Technology alone is no match for a government's willingness to use obliterating force, but even today in Syria, one of the ways the protesters maintain determination and cohesion is by persistently bearing witness to the government's atrocities and exposing them to the world at large.

A second way in which technology is changing the face of conflict is through the individualization of both war and international law. War traditionally has been army to army, or army to insurgent force. Today the technology of drones, smart bombs, and precision-guided missiles, and soon the miniaturization of countless deadly weapons, makes it possible to fight an enemy one human target at a time. As frightening as the perpetual threat of assassination may seem, and as desperately as we need to adapt the traditional rules of war to govern new technologies and tactics, the individualization of war could save millions of civilian lives – the women, the old, and the young, who were the collateral damage of clashing armies. The individualization of international law similarly holds the promise of holding individual leaders accountable for their crimes against other countries and their own people, rather than punishing their populations through sanctions and even invasion. Technology plays a critical role in making international criminal cases possible, because any bystander or even victim can photograph evidence of a government's crimes both as they are happening and as they are covered up. It is that evidence that allows international and domestic criminal prosecutors to build their cases.

In a third and very different direction, technology reduces global conflict by saving lives directly – particularly the lives of women, who can then care for their children, educate their families, and anchor their communities. Cell phones are lifelines to better maternity care, allowing pregnant women to monitor the course of their pregnancies by receiving general information about what to expect and how to care for themselves and their fetus week by week, and by providing information about what they are feeling and experiencing well before labor begins.

Do-it-yourself

Fourth, technology and globalization together enable do-it-yourself foreign policy through public-private partnerships and bottom-up coalitions of social actors. Where once development was the province of government ministries and international organizations, today actors such as the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, nongovernmental organizations such as Oxfam and CARE, and countless smaller organizations, universities, research institutes, and corporations are all actively engaged. Where once the United States gave through USAID, hundreds of thousands of Americans now contribute hundreds of millions of dollars through Kiva, an online lending platform that allows individuals to find development projects they wish to support directly. Where government-funded foundations such as the National Democratic Institute and the International Republican Institute specialize in monitoring elections in countries around the world, now citizens can send in

real-time information about what they see happening at their local polls through Ushahidi, a software mapping platform developed by four entrepreneurial Africans. Created to allow Kenyans to share information about disputed national elections that were descending into violence, Ushahidi has been used to share and map crisis information in many different situations around the world; State Department officials helped adapt it for disaster relief efforts after the Haiti earthquake. The State Department, USAID, and the White House are all opening and expanding offices dedicated to orchestrating and welcoming public-private partnerships of many different shapes and sizes.

Finally, perhaps most elusively but most optimistically, scholars such as Yochai Benkler argue that the Internet has enabled the cooperative human activity that has helped us survive as a species for millennia to take its rightful place alongside the egoistic self-interested behavior that drives our markets, our conflicts, and our current assumptions about human nature. The Internet thrives on a culture of generosity, with people willing to share everything from recipes to medical information to technical assistance on almost anything. Benkler draws on psychology, neurobiology, sociology, behavioral economics, computer simulations, and his own multidisciplinary experiments to demonstrate the deeply rational roots of cooperation and the ways in which technology and transparency can now empower cooperators as much as egoists. If in fact technology can make the two-thirds of people who are more likely to participate in positive-sum than zero-sum activity aware of one other's preferences, thereby diminishing the fear of becoming a sucker in a ruthlessly selfish world, the prospects for genuinely improving the human condition just may be brighter than ever before.

Certainly the spirit of Rotary is the spirit of cooperation. When I spoke at the Rotary Club of Princeton, N.J., last spring, I was also struck by how effectively Rotary strengthens global connections at the local level, bringing together business and civic leaders who have ties to countries all over the world. Those local clubs engage in many different projects that are generated by their members, in addition to Rotary's formal programs. They are animated by a spirit of collective human potential, powered by coming together and working together. Spreading that philosophy and acting on it, citizen to citizen, is the best long-term antidote to conflict and prescription for peace.

Anne-Marie Slaughter
Bert G. Kerstetter '66 University Professor of Politics and International Affairs
Princeton University
440 Robertson Hall
Princeton, NJ 08544

Assistant: Terry Murphy
Website: www.princeton.edu/~slaughtr

B6