The War In Iraq

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Hello friends,

Allow me to make a few comments on a situation about which virtually nothing can be said, or heard, with any sort of equanimity: the war in Iraq.

For many years—actually, for about 3 decades—I have respectfully declined any sort of in-depth interview about my work, simply because I did not want my person to be the point; I wanted the ideas themselves to be the point, and so I have kept a very low public profile (as I'm sure I don't have to tell most of you).

Starting a year or two ago, I made an exception for my friend Jordan Gruber, who did a terrific job producing *Speaking of Everything*. I had long promised another friend of mine, Tami Simon, of Sounds True (the largest audio producer in the world), that if I ever did a full interview about my work, I would do so with her and Sounds True. Tami is a remarkable woman, one of my favorite people anywhere. So last month I said, what the heck, let's do it. Tami and her crew came over to my loft in Denver, and for 4 or 5 days we recorded approximately 20 hours of material, basically covering all the essentials: quadrants, levels, lines, states, types; plus all the requisite personal, embarrassing, humiliating stuff that goes with this sort of thing (:-). Sometime this fall, Tami is planning on bringing out a 10 CD set of this material, called, I think, *Kosmic Consciousness*, which is all 20 of those hours, for those of you so disturbed as to find that possibility interesting.

During the course of that long discussion, the topic naturally turned to the war in Iraq: what it might mean, why it might be occurring, what the role of protest is, and so on. Up to that time, I had made one basic statement on the Middle East situation—"The Destruction of the World Trade Center" [posted on wilber.shambhala.com]—and that statement still contains my general orientation to this (or any) war. When I was asked to make a specific statement on the present war in Iraq, I released only the following:

(KEN: do you have anything you would like to add since you wrote "Deconstructing the World Trade Center?")

no, but just remember: if you are green, you are against the war. but if you are against the war, you are not necessarily green. there are second-tier reasons not to go to war. but there are also second-tier reasons to go to war. green doesn't have a choice--it won't go. second tier has a choice, so weigh the evidence carefully. second tier might indeed recommend war, it might not. but you can check and see if you are "merely" green by asking under what conditions you would recommend war. if you can't think of any, ahem, welcome to green. still, the issue is enormously complicated, even through integral lens, so again, weigh the evidence carefully.

the problem with this discussion at large is that it is entirely first-tier. blue says bomb the hell out of the evil ones; orange says, okay, but hurry, because it's hurting the stock market; green says, no way, let's be loving. first tier has such a hard time seeing big pictures, so it moves around within the partial value structures that define it. this is a discussion that i have stayed out of since doing WTC essay. it's just a big first-tier food fight.

unfortunately, the world needs integral action. unfortunately, it will not get it, whether we go to war or not. still, better to light one candle than curse the darkness. so we work on ourselves and attempt to increase our own integral consciousness to some degree each day, so that in the end we leave the world just a little bit more whole than we found it.............

I am going to make a few more statements now, not because I believe saner voices can be heard, and not because I believe I have a saner voice, but simply because the insane voices are so shrill, a few more worthless words can't hurt anything now.

Let me start by repeating a question Tami asked me. We had finished the "first half" of the interview, which covered the theoretical material, and we were now talking about its applications in the real world, nothing of which is more real than war. Tami asked, "If you could arrange the world situation, what would you do? What is your Utopian vision of how to handle war?"

As I often do, I used the terms from Don Beck's Spiral Dynamics Integral to make a few points. As students of my work know, in my opinion Spiral Dynamics focuses on one developmental line—that of values (vMemes)—among at least two dozen other developmental lines (cognitive, interpersonal, psychosexual, mathematical, kinesthetic, etc.). But it is such an important line, and one that is easily grasped, that it makes a terrific introductory view. Don has also situated this stream in an AQAL framework (which he also calls 4Q/8L, "four quadrants, 8 levels in the line"), to produce Spiral Dynamics Integral, a wonderful version of an integral psychology. Of course, I am here speaking neither for Don nor Spiral Dynamics, but for my own integral psychology, but happily using a few SDi terms to get the points across.

As a Utopian point of departure in response to Tami's question, I therefore suggested a few things about what a world governance system operating at yellow might look like. "Yellow"

is the level of consciousness at which "second tier" or truly integral awareness begins to emerge. It is thus contrasted with the previous 6 levels or vMemes—which are called **first tier**, each of which believes that its value system is the only true, correct, or deeply worthwhile value system in existence. Those first-tier waves are, very briefly: **beige**: instinctual; **purple**: magical-animistic, tribal; **red**: egocentric, power, feudalistic; **blue**: mythic-membership, conformist, fundamentalist, ethnocentric, traditional; **orange**: excellence, achievement, progress, modern; **green**: postmodern, multicultural, sensitive, pluralistic.

Those first-tier waves of development are followed by what Clare Graves called "the momentous leap of meaning" to **second tier**, which has, as of today, two major levels or waves of awareness: **yellow**: systemic, flexible, flowing; **turquoise**: cosmic unity, integrative, nested hierarchies of interrelationships, one-in-many holism. The point of the Utopian discussion was simply: what might a world be like whose center of gravity was second tier? In the following I will often use the terms "second tier," "integral," "yellow," and "turquoise" interchangeably; the points I want to make are very general.

The reason that Graves called second tier a "momentous leap" is that unlike all first-tier waves (which imagine their values are the only correct values), second tier has an understanding of the crucial if relative importance of all previous values—including red, blue, orange, and green. Orange thinks green is mindless; green despises orange; blue thinks both of them are going to burn in hell forever. Yellow, on the other hand, finds all of them necessary and acceptable, as long as none of them gets the upper hand and starts repressing the others. This, needless to say, would have a profound influence on any World Federation operating from yellow or second tier values (as we will see).

There are two basic points to keep in mind about any future world governance system. The first is that laws, to be laws, are enacted from the highest average expectable level of development in the governance system. In today's world, for example, most of the laws in Western democracies stem from the **orange** level, which is worldcentric, postconventional, and

modern (or, as our French friends first expressed the orange meme 300 years ago: equality, fraternity, liberty). Many countries continue to operate basically at a **blue** level: conformist, non-democratic (dictatorial or totalitarian), grounded not in evidence but in dogma (Marxist, Muslim, or otherwise), and ethnocentric (believe the Book or burn). Some terrorist cells (not to mention street gangs) remain at **red**: hierarchies of raw power and physical strength, implemented often by torture, rape, or any means necessary to keep a particular warlord in power. Although structures such as red and blue might sound rather brutal, and often are, they have to be seen in context: they are usually the best that can be arranged under the given circumstances and conditions.

So we are asking, what would a world governance system—a World Federation—look like if it operated from second tier, and implemented its basic laws from a yellow (or higher) center of gravity? But before we address that, there is the second basic item to keep in mind, namely: no matter how highly developed a society might be—including one whose center of gravity is yellow—nonetheless everybody in that (or any) society is still born at square one. Just because a society is "yellow" does not mean everybody in that society will be yellow; on the contrary, very few will be, at least at first, just as today in our "orange" societies, not everybody is at orange; in fact, at least half of the adult population pre-orange (purple, red, blue). It is simply that our *laws* stem mostly from orange.

That means that, even in an "integral society" (yellow or higher), there will still be pockets or subcultures of individuals at purple, red, blue, orange, and green. This is not only unavoidable, it is healthy, normal, desirable. What is not desirable, however, is that any of those waves dominate the governance system and therefore attempt to force their values on others—whether those are red values, blue values, or green values. A yellow society, in short, would have laws that basically stem from that second-tier level of consciousness. And the basic defining characteristic of yellow is that it accepts all previous values without letting any of them repress or dominate others.

A second-tier, integral, World Federation—in my Utopian view—would therefore prevent any first-tier memes from dominating, attacking, or exploiting any other populations. If necessary, a World Federation would do so by using force, just as all democracies today have an internal police force to curtail murder, rape, robbery, extortion, and so on. Somebody whose center of gravity is green will not commit murder, rape, or robbery. However, somebody whose center of gravity is red will do any or all of those, sometimes happily. And because everybody is born at square one, and must progress through purple, red, blue, and so on, some sort of police will always be necessary to protect others from those who do not evolve to a worldcentric level of care and compassion.

So any World Federation would have some sort of police force, of necessity. Call them the World Cops. Needless to say, the World Cops would be regulated by the World Federation, not by any country (and certainly not by America, Britain, France, Germany, etc.).

This police force is NOT allowed to tell people what level of consciousness they should be at; it is NOT allowed to govern what individuals do in the privacy of their own homes or dwellings; it is NOT allowed to coerce or intimidate people who are not at the average level of social development. It is, however, allowed to prevent (or punish) those whose *public behavior* stems from a less-than-worldcentric stance. For example, in the privacy of my own home, if I wish to *think* about burning at the stake all people who do not accept Jesus as their personal savior, that is my right. However, if I actually shoot you because you do not believe in Jesus, then the State—in this case, the World Federation—can arrest and incarcerate me.

The simple rule, which is *already* implicitly used by *all* worldcentric governance systems (i.e., at orange or higher, including Germany, France, America, Britain, Japan, etc.), is this: in the Left-Hand domain, *think* what you like; but in the Right-Hand domain, physically *behave* according to worldcentric law or you can be removed from the public sphere.

As we were saying, in Western democracies, the "law of the land" is largely orange; in the last 30 years, this has been supplemented with an increasing number of laws drawn from the

green wave, including equality-in-the-workplace laws, healthcare freedom laws, and (anti)hate laws. Those mean, for example, that you are allowed to hate homosexuals (in the privacy of your own Left-Hand mind), but if you publicly (Right-Hand) express that hatred (e.g., through hate speech), there are penalties for doing so. Thus, in many Western democracies, free speech (a classic orange value, and, in this country, a First Amendment freedom) has often been supplemented with *limitations* on free speech (a classic green value: green wishes to limit speech not in accord with its values). My only point is that both of those express the implicit rule I stated in the previous paragraph.

An Integral World Federation would therefore, in that regard, be no different: one could think whatever one wanted; but one must behave according to laws stemming from the center of gravity of the governance system, in this case, yellow. Thus, the values embedded in the "law of the land" would not be orange or green but yellow or integral; not first tier, but second tier. Accordingly, although individuals are again allowed to think or believe whatever they want (Left-Hand), their public behavior (Right-Hand) would be regulated according to yellow (or higher) standards. Because the major stance of yellow is integrative, this means all first-tier value systems would have a respected place, but no first-tier values would be allowed to colonize others.

This would mean, for example, that America is allowed to despise Iraq (in the privacy of its own Left-Hand, national, cultural space). America is not, however, allowed to attack Iraq (in the Right-Hand, public, international commons).

But that is only half the story of what would not be allowed by an Integral World Federation. Saddam Hussein, by conservative and uncontested estimates, has murdered approximately 200,000 Kurds and another 200,000 of his own people, often after torturing, raping, or gassing them. Any Integral World Federation would, through use of force if necessary, prevent *both* of those actions. Neither of those actions meet yellow standards and therefore neither would be allowed under yellow world law. America's invasion of Iraq meets certain

blue-to-orange standards; and the action of Saddam Hussein meets certain **red** standards. *Neither* of them would be allowed by an Integral World Federation.

Moreover, it goes without saying that the World Federation would itself invade and police Iraq if incontrovertible evidence of mass homicide was presented at a World Federation hearing. Mass homicide *anywhere* violates worldcentric values. Saddam Hussein is allowed to hate the Kurds (in the privacy of his own red-meme mind); he is not allowed to gas 200,000 of them. If he did so, the World Federation police would use military action to prevent Saddam Hussein from continuing to do so, if he did not voluntarily cease and desist immediately.

For the same reasons, I personally believe that any protest movement that does not *equally* protest *both* America's invasion *and* Saddam's murder of 400,000 people is a protest movement that does not truly represent peace or non-aggression or worldcentric values.

I am aware of no major protest movement that has protested both forms of violence equally, and that has insisted upon an immediate end to both aggressions, and offered a believable way that both aggressions could actually be halted immediately so that neither side can continue its homicidal actions.

That is, I am aware of no integral protest movement anywhere in the world, unfortunately.

There are instead mainly pockets of blue, orange, and green values, all at each others' throats. There is no mistaking Mr. Bush's values: they are essentially **blue**-to-orange. It is the deeply fundamentalistic, absolutistic values of Bush that alarm many other governments (particularly those of France, Germany, and Russia), and understandably so. The blue wave typically divides the world into good vs. evil, and has an unshakable (if ethnocentric) sense of right and wrong. Bush's "axis of evil" is classic blue. The worst that can be said of Bush's essentially blue approach is that, indeed, it is deeply ethnocentric and imperialistic. The best that can be said is that it takes blue to curtail red, and Bush's actions are serving the larger Spiral by rooting out pockets of red terrorism.

The other major faction in the debate is essentially representing green-meme values. The green wave—what Clare Graves called "the sensitive self"—wishes to end all war, and thus must see itself as anti-war under virtually any circumstances. However, because it often takes war to end war (e.g., it takes WWII to end Auschwitz), green is often paralyzed in the face of real world aggression, insisting on lying down in front of Nazi tanks, as if that would actually stop them. But as long as green can see itself protesting aggression, it is relatively content. The worst that can be said of these protesters is that they are essentially "Saddam enablers" (in exactly the same way that Neville Chamberlain was a Hitler enabler). The best that can be said is that these individuals serve the larger Spiral by sensitizing more people to the horrors of aggression.

As for world leaders—are any taking something resembling an integral view? The only world leader who comes close, in my opinion, is Tony Blair. Blair—virtually alone, it seems to me—holds the multifarious sides fairly in awareness and draws conclusions (and courses of action) based on a bigger picture. He has insisted that the entire Iraqi situation be set in the context of a "two nation" policy with regard to Palestine and Israel, thus "giving" the Arab nations something in return, so to speak (but something they should be given in any event: a Palestinian state as an intrinsic part of the Mid-East package, starting now). Blair, almost single-handedly, is sitting between America and Europe and screaming at both of them: you *cannot* start competing and fighting with each other—that road leads to more nightmares than you can imagine. Like a pan-Atlantic colossus at Rhodes, Blair has one foot in America and one foot in Europe, and heroically seems the only world leader attempting to keep that integration in existence. Further, he alone is keeping Bush oriented to the UN (which the American blue meme despises). Nor can he be charged with "trying to protect his oil interests," because Britain is a net exporter of oil. His own vision has been consistent, disciplined, passionate but even-handed. In my opinion, he is the only person of a world-leader stature; one can only imagine the dimensions of the disaster Bush's international politics would create without Blair to hold the world together. (As an aside—and I truly do not mean to be unkind here—but one can't help but imagine what on

earth goes through Blair's yellow-meme mind when he is sitting in a room alone with blue-meme Bush….) That Blair has also been an authentic pioneer in "third way" politics (cf. *A Theory of Everything*), which is one of the first serious moves toward an integral politics that unites the best of liberal and conservative, is perhaps no surprise. Given the *actual* world situation as it is now, Blair's general position seems to be the best that can pragmatically be offered.

(In my opinion, the major item missing in the stance of Blair, not to mention the other major political leaders, is some sort of sophisticated developmental perspective, which, to put it briefly, is one of five major dimensions in an integral approach; i.e., it is the "levels" aspect of "quadrants, levels, lines, states, and types." One of the saddest of the non-integral effects of the present world leadership is the continuing turmoil caused by Western democracies imagining that they can drop an orange-meme democracy with green-meme sensitivity smack in the middle of a red-meme desert and somehow it will grow. This is not world policy; this is Jack and the Bean Stalk. Everybody is born at square one. Unless there is a healthy blue infrastructure—whether in inner city ghettos or Mid-East tribes—there is no place for red youth to go, and thus they end up trapped in warlord city. Forcing "democracy" on such a culture simply results, as it consistently has elsewhere, in the free election of military dictators. This, needless to say, is a complex topic; readers are again referred to *A Theory of Everything* for an overview, as well as to integralinstitute.org.)

What has struck me the most in the highly emotional debates about the war in Iraq is how deeply the entire discussion is sunk in first-tier value fights. Both the blue-to-orange Bush supporters, and the orange-to-green media (and protesters) give wildly skewed, biased, and prejudiced accounts of the events. I am constantly taken aback by how brutally narrow a given perspective is, even (and sometimes especially) those claiming to be caring and inclusive and compassionate. There is plenty of truth on each side of the debate, just not the whole truth, which both sides vociferously claim to possess.

I long for a discussion where integral openness can flourish. I long for a group of world leaders who can see a bigger picture, a bigger picture that really does allow all value systems to arise, but only worldcentric behavior to be tolerated. I long for this silly Utopian view of a World Federation, where "everybody is right" but only if some are more right than others (e.g., worldcentric is more right than ethnocentric; see excerpt B, "Three Principles Helpful for Any Integrative Approach" [posted on wilber.shambhala.com]). I long for the freedom and fullness of integral awareness shared by as many sentient beings as possible. I long for a time when an integral approach is not vehemently hated by green and blue alike. But, alas, I am doomed to long largely in isolation, it seems.

Still, the world has to do what the world has to do. My own belief is that, in the coming century, we will see the present United Nations peacefully replaced by the first move toward a genuine World Federation, driven particularly by threats to the global commons that cannot be handled on a national level (such as terrorism, global monetary and economic policy, and environmental threats to the global commons).

I believe that the first World Federation will likely be orange-to-green. My hope is that it will be healthy green, but who knows? I believe that any such green World Federation will make substantial strides toward world harmony, but it will eventually face the inherent limitations and contradictions of all first-tier perspectives. The equivalent of worldwide, politically-correct thought-police will surface—a green Inquisition, if you will—whose subtle brutalities, accompanied by a series of extremely unpleasant economic events brought about by green's hobbling of orange business, will force a second-tier, yellow, World Federation to move haltingly into place. (Orange business cripples ecology; ecological green cripples orange business; both are forms of first-tier violence, neither of which is countenanced by yellow, and thus the first World Federation will likely be characterized, among numerous other forms of wholeness in practice, by a reconciliation between capitalism and ecology.) But that, I believe, will be at least a century or so away.

Until that time, I harbor the pain of vision unrequited. Until that time, the loneliness of integral heavily weighs on any who yearn for wholeness in action. Until that time, the bright promise of a tomorrow that coheres is no consolation but source of torment, for those of you who are so cursed.

Until that time—and given that today no government, no protest movement, and no national or international policy is yet integral—one is forced to ask: what can I personally do in the face of today's dire circumstances? Here I can only repeat what I said in my earlier comment, and I do mean this with deep conviction:

unfortunately, the world needs integral action. unfortunately, it will not get it, whether we go to war or not. still, better to light one candle than curse the darkness. so we work on ourselves and attempt to increase our own integral consciousness to some degree each day, so that in the end we leave the world just a little bit more whole than we found it.............

kw

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