

On “Infallible Institutions?” by Udo Schaefer and  
“Dialogue on Infallibility:  
A response to Udo Schaefer's 'Infallible Institutions?’” by Peter Terry

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(The personal views expressed in this commentary are those of this author.)

Regarding the “conferred infallibility” of the Universal House of Justice, I found the late Udo Schaefer’s<sup>1</sup> article, “Infallible Institutions?”<sup>2</sup> and Peter Terry’s thought-provoking comments on this same article, titled, “Dialogue on Infallibility: A response to Udo Schaefer's 'Infallible Institutions?’”<sup>3</sup> to be highly insightful and logical.

Udo Schaefer concludes with a statement which, in his opinion, provides a justifiable stance for the followers of Bahá’u’lláh—“We have a divinely guided body that is infallible in the sphere of legislation.”<sup>i</sup> The broader statement, “We have an infallible body,” according to his research, is not justifiable. Personally, I have no problem with the former statement and it does not detract from my wholehearted obedience to and love for the Universal House of Justice.

Regarding the possibility of unrestricted infallibility, Udo Schaefer states (underlining added for emphasis by this author):

To claim infallibility for virtually everything that has been decided by the Universal House of Justice, without exception, would be, in my opinion, extremely risky and utterly unwise. Such an interpretation of the infallibility of the House of Justice is untenable and indefensible and could easily become its Achilles heel. There are undoubtedly many people zealously searching and taking great pains in order to find one single evident error which would suffice to disprove empirically and for all time the infallibility of the House of Justice. One single error would suffice for a “falsification” of the claim to infallibility. I am sure that an extensive interpretation of this concept would lead to never-ending queries and unresolved discussions, and Bahá’ís would constantly feel obliged to refute the ongoing accusations.<sup>4</sup>

Peter Terry states, “There are no cases of erroneous decisions which have been corrected by the Universal House of Justice, so this is really a moot point.”<sup>5</sup> In my opinion, this is not so. Leading up to the year 2000, there was a very well-known and conspicuous error made and later corrected by the Universal House of Justice in its elucidation of the meaning of the “fifth candle” (or light) of unity set forth by ‘Abdu’l-Bahá:

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<sup>i</sup> This view is set forth by Udo Schaefer in greater detail in Udo Schaefer, Nicola Towfigh, and Ulrich Gollmer *Making the Crooked Straight: A Contribution to Bahá’i Apologetics* (Oxford: George Ronald, 2000 [published in German in 1995]), 166-195,

<https://archive.org/details/makingcrookedstr0000scha/page/166/mode/2up?view=theater>.

The fifth candle is the unity of nations—a unity which in this century will be securely established, causing all the peoples of the world to regard themselves as citizens of one common fatherland.<sup>6</sup>

Before the year 2000, the Universal House of Justice considered that “the unity of nations” referred to “the Lesser Peace” which would be brought about after “catastrophic events” and would lead to a “world government” by the end of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, i.e., by the year 2000. This notion is evident in at least two documents approved by the Universal House of Justice.

In the year 1994 the Universal House of Justice announced the publication of the compilation “Promoting Entry by Troops”<sup>7</sup> which refers to “the Lesser Peace” five times<sup>i 8</sup>:

. . . as the Lesser Peace approaches (Part A, 1.4)

. . . the Lesser Peace, the political unification of the world. (Part A, 4 & Part B. 27)

That there are indications that the Lesser Peace cannot be too far distant, that the local and national institutions of the Administrative Order are growing steadily in experience and influence, that the plans for the construction of the remaining administrative edifices on the arc are in an advanced stage—that these hopeful conditions make more discernible the shaping of the dynamic synchronization envisaged by Shoghi Effendi, no honest observer can deny. (Part B, 45; Ridvan 1990 message written by the Universal House of Justice to the Bahá’ís of the world)

The changed situation within and among nations and the many problems afflicting society amplify this potential. The impression produced by such change is of the near approach of the Lesser Peace. (Part B, 47; Ridvan 1992 message written by the Universal House of Justice to the Bahá’ís of the world)

The attached statement titled “Peace Among the Nations” (see Appendix A) confirms this notion was held by the Universal House of Justice.<sup>ii</sup> It was composed in 1999 and was distributed with a cover memorandum (see Appendix A) to all National Spiritual Assemblies on March 8, 1999.<sup>9</sup>

Earlier, in 1995, this same understanding of the equivalency of “the unity of nations” and “the Lesser Peace” was communicated to Bahá’í communities in Europe and the United States via a series of presentations given by a representative of the Universal House of Justice, Mr. Ali Nakhjavani, who explained that, because the Lesser Peace, according to the Guardian, was to synchronize with the completion of the “Edifices” of the Arc on Mount Carmel and the “the evolution of Bahá’í national and local institutions,”<sup>10</sup> the House of Justice considered that its “hands were tied” and, therefore, they needed to complete the Arc by the year 2000. At the time of Mr. Nakhjavani’s conferences, forty million

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<sup>ii</sup> The current Nine Year Plan makes no mention of the Lesser Peace.

<sup>ii</sup> It is my opinion that the 1985 document “The Promise of World Peace” was also motivated by the notion that the Lesser Peace would be established at some indefinite time after 1985 but definitely by the end of the twentieth century, i.e., by the year 2000.

additional dollars were needed to be raised in order to complete both the Arc on Mount Carmel and the terraces below and above the Shrine of the Báb.<sup>iv v vi</sup>

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<sup>iv</sup> Ali Nakhjavani, “For Love of His Beauty,” YouTube, 1995, educational video, 26:45, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gZG0Zprpgp0&t=1719s>.

<sup>v</sup> For further details about this expectation, see: Jack McLean, “Did Prophecy Fail? The Lesser Peace and the Year 2000,” August, 2003, 1, [https://bahai-library.com/mclean\\_prophecy\\_fail\\_2000](https://bahai-library.com/mclean_prophecy_fail_2000). In this article, Mr. McLean states that “the sources were generally misinterpreted” (p1). Interpretation of the Bahá’í writings is such a delicate matter when undertaken by persons or institutions with authority or influence that I prefer, in this important case, to view the “misinterpretation” of the writings or “sources” as being a “misunderstanding,” “error,” or “mistake” that needs to be explained and corrected. And, in my opinion, when the mistake is major, as in this instance, an explanation needs to be offered. Additionally, Mr. McLean states that “certain segments of the Bahá’í community mistakenly concluded that the Lesser Peace would be established by the year 2000.” My own experience as a Bahá’í since 1971 and as a member of the national spiritual assemblies of Honduras and Colombia prior to the year 2000 and my research on the subject, have led me to understand that the “segments of the Bahá’í community” included the Universal House of Justice, the leadership in both branches of the administration (including myself), and non-fledgling community members. Looking back, the only segment of the Bahá’í community that did not have this same understanding and expectation were the newly-enrolled Bahá’ís.

For example, in addition to Ali Nakhjavani’s presentation referenced above, David S. Ruhe, a former member of the Universal House of Justice, in his 1994 article, “A New Evolution: Religious Bonding for World Unity,” equated “the unity of nations” with “the Lesser Peace,” by referring to “the prophecy of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá, who predicted in 1912 that a Lesser Peace “in this century, will be securely established” . . . (p5), [https://bahai-library.com/ruhe\\_new\\_evolution\\_bonding](https://bahai-library.com/ruhe_new_evolution_bonding). (In this article Dr. Ruhe postulates nine possible scenarios leading to the Lesser Peace, five of which are calamitous in nature: a pandemic disease, an ecosystem crash, World War III, a threat by extraterrestrials, or, a large asteroid or comet striking the earth.)

A friend of mine told me (I forget which friend; hence, this is hearsay) that, apparently, Rúhíyyih Khánúm had this same expectation because she once stated that she hoped to live long enough to witness the calamity just to see what form it would take. (I met Rúhíyyih Khánúm a few times and this sounds typical of her great curiosity and fearlessness. She left this world on January 19, 2000. Personally, I am glad she didn’t have to witness the calamity.)

In 2012 Mr. Nakhjavani, during a question-and-answer period at a summer school session, stated that it was thought “by many friends and so on” that “the unity of nations” to be established in “this century” meant that “the Lesser Peace” would be established by the year 2000. I was surprised and disappointed that he did not clarify that “and so on” included the Universal House of Justice and the Bahá’í leadership in general. (Ali Nakhjavani, “#3 Various Summer Schools Q&A - Priceless Reflections,” YouTube, 2012, educational video, 58:54 [discussion of Lesser Peace begins at 52:43], <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8kv2mouPODU>.)

<sup>vi</sup> In addition to being in a rush to complete the construction of the Arc before the establishment of the Lesser Peace expected by the year 2000, because the writings indicated that the governments would have to be forced to unite via the heat of catastrophes, calamities, and perhaps a World War III, such events would produce “entry by troops” and “mass conversion” on a scale never before seen in Bahá’í history, it is my opinion that the Universal House of Justice felt rushed to have an institute-based deepening program in place for the next large wave of new believers. Hence, it was decided to make an early, universal adoption of the Ruhi Institute courses, courses that were designed for a certain social-economic strata of a certain culture and without any educational theory to guide the design of the curriculum; this rather than a slower, more organic approach guided by the Bahá’í writings on the universal ideals and principles of education and with a diversity of approaches, programs, and courses based on the diversity of cultures, sub-cultures, education levels, and social-economic strata. (See my commentaries: “On the New Developments of the Ruhi Institute and Its Courses,” “On How to Improve Ruhi Institute’s Course Organization and Educational Approach to Deepening New and Young Believers and Human Resource Training,” and “On the Development of Curricular Materials for Bahá’í Learners and those ‘standing at the threshold’,” [currently available only by contacting this author at [kbookwalter@gmail.com](mailto:kbookwalter@gmail.com)].)

It is my personal understanding that this same notion was held by the beloved Guardian, thereby, perhaps, leading the Universal House of Justice to the same conclusion. In 1941, in a message to the Bahá'í world which is now titled *The Promised Day Is Come*, Shoghi Effendi quotes 'Abdu'l-Bahá's description of the seven candles of unity, the fifth of which is "the unity of nations—a unity which, in this century, will be securely established, causing all the peoples of the world to regard themselves as citizens of one common fatherland."<sup>11</sup> In the following paragraph Shoghi Effendi then relates this category of unity to the following explanation given by 'Abdu'l-Bahá in *Some Answered Questions*:

One of the great events which is to occur in the Day of the manifestation of that Incomparable Branch [Bahá'u'lláh] is the hoisting of the Standard of God among all nations. By this is meant that all nations and kindreds will be gathered together under the shadow of this Divine Banner, which is no other than the Lordly Branch itself, and will become a single nation. Religious and sectarian antagonism, the hostility of races and peoples, and differences among nations, will be eliminated. All men will adhere to one religion, will have one common faith, will be blended into one race, and become a single people. All will dwell in one common fatherland, which is the planet itself.<sup>12</sup>

Immediately following this passage, the Guardian states, "This," referring, I presume, to both the fifth candle and the above passage, "is the stage which the world is now approaching, the stage of world unity, which, as 'Abdu'l-Bahá assures us, will, in this century, be securely established."<sup>13</sup>

Based on this vision, in my opinion, it is little wonder that the Universal House of Justice, the Hands of the Cause, and other Bahá'í leaders equated "unity of nations" and "world unity" with "the Lesser Peace." In the glossary of *This Decisive Hour*, the Lesser Peace has been described as:

The first of two major stages in which Bahá'ís believe peace will be established. The Lesser Peace will come about through a binding treaty among the nations for the political unification of the world. It will involve fixing every nation's boundaries, strictly limiting the size of their armaments, laying down the principles underlying the relations among governments, and ascertaining all international agreements and obligations. Its inception will synchronize with two processes operating within the Bahá'í Faith—the maturation of local and national Bahá'í institutions and the completion of specified buildings around the Arc on Mount Carmel—and will portend the coming of the Most Great Peace.<sup>14</sup>

It is my personal understanding that the quotation above from *Some Answered Questions* and referred to in *The Promised Day Is Come*, regarding the gathering together of all nations, because it stipulates that it will occur "under the shadow of this Divine Banner," refers to the Most Great Peace as described in the glossary of *This Decisive Hour* as:

The second of two major stages in which Bahá'ís believe peace will be established. The Most Great Peace will be the practical consequence of the spiritualization of the world and the fusion of all its races, creeds, classes, and nations. It will rest on the foundation of, and be preserved by, the ordinances of God.<sup>15</sup>

Although it is only conjecture, it appears to me that Shoghi Effendi thought that the Lesser Peace would be achieved as a consequence of World War II and that the Most Great Peace would be achieved “in this century,” that is, by the year 2000, “under the shadow of this Divine Banner.”

Perhaps because World War II did not produce the Lesser Peace, the Universal House of Justice thought it would surely be achieved “in this century,” i.e., by the year 2000.

With feelings of disillusion, the Bahá’í community, in the year 2000, faced a world in which there was no “entry by troops” of any significance, no major catastrophes, no “mass conversion” on a large scale, no “peace among the nations,” no “Lesser Peace,” and no “world government.”<sup>vii</sup> Consequently, the Universal House of Justice needed to investigate why it was mistaken in its understanding of the “the unity of nations” as the equivalent of “the Lesser Peace” which they thought would be established by the end of the twentieth century. The House of Justice requested its research department to investigate these concepts. In April of 2001 a ten-page memorandum titled “Attainment of the Unity of Nations and the Lesser Peace” was provided that clarified the misunderstanding and the non-equivalency of “the unity of nations” and “the Lesser Peace.”<sup>16</sup>

To my knowledge there was no announcement by the Universal House of Justice to the Bahá’í world that it had changed its mistaken understanding of these concepts as equivalent.<sup>viii</sup> The decision that resulted from the misunderstanding--to complete the construction of the edifices of the Arc by the year 2000—could not be changed, but, perhaps it would have been, if the misunderstanding of the non-equivalency of “the unity of nations” and “the Lesser Peace” had been realized sooner.<sup>ix</sup> And, unless the Arc is considered incomplete until the International Bahá’í Library is constructed,<sup>17</sup> which would require a new understanding of the sources by the Universal House of Justice, what has been permanently lost is the synchronization of the three events: completion of the Arc, the Lesser Peace, and the evolution of local and national assemblies.

Regarding the Universal House of Justice not being expected to “know everything,” the Department of the Secretariat of the House of Justice wrote:

. . . the Universal House of Justice is not omniscient, and the friends should understand that there is a difference between infallibility and omniscience. Like the Guardian, the House of Justice wants to be provided with facts when called upon to

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<sup>vii</sup> Shoghi Effendi, *Citadel of Faith: Messages to America 1947-1957* (Wilmette, IL: Bahá’í Publishing Trust, 1980), 117. Within the Bahá’í community, there has been an expectation that, based on a 1953 letter from the Guardian, “a chain of events, momentous and possibly catastrophic in nature” would be preceded by the “entry by troops” into the Faith and would be followed by “mass conversion.” Hence, “promoting entry by troops” has been a constant theme in the global plans to this day.

<sup>viii</sup> Also, according to my knowledge, the corrective memorandum sent from the Research Department to the House of Justice was not sent out to Bahá’í worldwide. Rather, it was sent only to an inquiring individual Bahá’í (See the link to the cover letter of the memorandum.) Personally, I found the lack of a pronouncement to the entire Bahá’í world, the absolute silence on such an all-important phenomenon—the Lesser Peace--hard to fathom.

<sup>ix</sup> Personally, I believe that it was divine guidance that led to the completion of the Arc. Even the realities that (1) the world situation was getting worse, (2) construction costs were increasing, and (3) supply chains might be interrupted provided enough justification to complete the Arc by the year 2000.

render a decision, and like him it may well change its decision when new facts emerge, or in light of changed conditions at some point in the future. We have found nothing in the writings of Shoghi Effendi which suggests that the House of Justice would on any occasion reach a “wrong decision.”<sup>18</sup>

In this case, the new “fact” was that, at the end of the century, there was no “Lesser Peace” as described in the writings; a fact that could not have been provided prior to the year 2000. Regarding the reaching of a “wrong decision,” in terms of logic, I don’t see the difference between the Universal House of Justice needing to “change its decision” due to the provision of more facts and a “wrong decision” needing to be changed due to the provision of more facts, i.e., “right” or “correct” decisions do not need to be changed. Perhaps the term should be “mistaken decision.” Logically, if one is not omniscient, one does not know whether or not all of the facts are in hand. If they are not, a decision that is made on partial facts can be mistaken. Later, when more facts emerge, the decision can be “improved,” “corrected,” and/or “made right.”

Concerning our “individual understanding of the Teachings,” the “sphere of action” of the Universal House of Justice, and the “respect” in which it is “free from errors,” the Department of the Secretariat of the House of Justice offered the following guidance in a letter to the friends in Iran regarding Udo Schaefer’s understanding of the limited infallibility of the Universal House of Justice:

In general, the House of Justice wishes to preserve the widest possible latitude for the friends to explore the Revelation of Bahá’u’lláh and to share their individual understanding of the Teachings. . . .

The Universal House of Justice does not intend at this time to elaborate further on previous explanations given of its duties and powers. That the House of Justice itself does not find it necessary to do so should alert the friends as to the unwisdom of their attempting to define so precisely its sphere of action. Nevertheless, it should be mentioned that, while there are explicit passages in the authoritative texts that make reference to the infallibility of the House of Justice in the enactment of legislation, the argument that it is free from error only in this respect is untenable.”<sup>19</sup>

This commentary by this author is an example of an individual sharing his understanding of the Teachings. Its purpose is not to define the “sphere of action” of the Universal House of Justice or to question its authority. All of their guidance and decisions are to be faithfully obeyed. What this commentary attempts to point out is that the infallibility of the House of Justice was not free from error in respect to their understanding and expectation of the establishment of the Lesser Peace by the year 2000. Hence, as pointed out by Mr. Schaefer, logically, and in fact, we cannot say, “We have an infallible body.”

Based on my studies of Bahá’í prophecies, the ability to prophesy the time and place of future events, that is, the capacity to “see” into the future and to place events at a certain point in time, in my understanding, is unlimited for the Manifestations and possible in a limited way for others. Even the Manifestations seldom give precise dates for the

fulfillment of Their prophecies; hence, the common use of “ere long” for a timeframe.<sup>20</sup> In the opinion of Jack McLean, the erroneous expectation of the establishment of the Lesser Peace by the year 2000, was a case in point that “illustrates one of the basic principles of prophecy study; namely, that prophecy can only be fully understood in retrospect, that is, after the fact.”<sup>21</sup>

In addition to the example presented here of the limitations of the House of Justice, Alí Nakhjavání gave an example from the life of the Master. He described how, during the darkest days of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá’s life, in approximately 1907, ‘Abdu’l-Bahá thought that He might be killed and, based on this belief, He wrote a significant addition to His Will and Testament. However, His life was spared and He lived for another fourteen years and was able to write still another addition to this all-important document.<sup>22</sup>

Concerning the concept of infallibility, Alí Nakhjavani, in his *Towards World Order*, states:

I suppose there are many other ways to understand the concept of infallibility in the Cause, but what I have shared with you is my own simple and inadequate understanding of this subject. I suppose that in the future this all-important theme will be explored more fully by the scholars of the Faith and perhaps further elucidated by the Universal House of Justice itself, if it feels it necessary to do so.<sup>x</sup>

And further on in this book, Mr. Nakhjavani answers a question regarding the Universal House of Justice:

Q. How can we explain to non-Bahá’ís the function of our Supreme Body?

A. I suggest we avoid using the term “infallibility” too loosely when we are introducing the Faith to enquirers. We should refer to the Universal House of Justice as the supreme elected council of the Bahá’í community, it being also the Head of the Faith.<sup>xi</sup>

When the Lesser Peace was not established in the year 2000 as predicted by the Universal House of Justice, it was a tremendous test for me (and probably for every deepened Bahá’í alive at that time). It felt like the wind had been taken out of my sail. It awakened me to my need to gain a deeper understanding of the Writings and their authorized interpretations. The following story about Noah from *The Kitáb-Íqán* has helped me to pass this test. I hope it will also help the reader. (The underlining for emphasis is by this author.)

Among the Prophets was Noah. For nine hundred and fifty years He prayerfully exhorted His people and summoned them to the haven of security and peace. None, however, heeded His call. Each day they inflicted on His blessed person such pain and suffering that no one believed He could survive. How frequently they denied

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<sup>x</sup> Alí Nakhjavání, *Towards World Order*, (Bahá’í Publications Australia: Bundara, Vic, 2005), 71.

<sup>xi</sup> *Ibid.* 89

Him, how malevolently they hinted their suspicion against Him! Thus it hath been revealed: “And as often as a company of His people passed by Him, they derided Him. To them He said: ‘Though ye scoff at us now, we will scoff at you hereafter even as ye scoff at us. In the end ye shall know.’” Long afterward, He several times promised victory to His companions and fixed the hour thereof. But when the hour struck, the divine promise was not fulfilled. This caused a few among the small number of His followers to turn away from Him, and to this testify the records of the best-known books. These you must certainly have perused; if not, undoubtedly you will. Finally, as stated in books and traditions, there remained with Him only forty or seventy-two of His followers. At last from the depth of His being He cried aloud: “Lord! Leave not upon the land a single dweller from among the unbelievers.” And now, consider and reflect a moment upon the waywardness of this people. What could have been the reason for such denial and avoidance on their part? What could have induced them to refuse to put off the garment of denial, and to adorn themselves with the robe of acceptance? Moreover, what could have caused the nonfulfillment of the divine promise which led the seekers to reject that which they had accepted? Meditate profoundly, that the secret of things unseen may be revealed unto you, that you may inhale the sweetness of a spiritual and imperishable fragrance, and that you may acknowledge the truth that from time immemorial even unto eternity the Almighty hath tried, and will continue to try, His servants, so that light may be distinguished from darkness, truth from falsehood, right from wrong, guidance from error, happiness from misery, and roses from thorns. Even as He hath revealed: “Do men think when they say ‘We believe’ they shall be let alone and not be put to proof?”<sup>23</sup>

In conclusion, I agree with Peter Terry’s statement, “The House [of Justice] is not infallible in its interpretation of the divine Word, nor in a host of other actions which are not covered by its revealed mandate.”<sup>24</sup> When the Universal House of Justice decides to further clarify the parameters of its infallibility and possible fallibility (based on its own analysis of the sixty years of its functioning), I believe that, psychologically, it would help the friends to avoid the error of believing that the House of Justice has unlimited, unrestricted infallibility in all of its decisions in all spheres of its authority. This, in turn, would help the friends to not be unnecessarily tested, as was my generation after the above-described mistake occurred. And if and when this does happen, I believe that a transparent admission by the House of Justice would be wise.<sup>xii</sup> If God is forgiving, we can be forgiving also. It does not mean that we will not continue to cherish deeply, love sincerely and obey whole-heartedly the “light of guidance” that we receive from this divinely ordained institution.

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<sup>xii</sup> Personally, in relation to the error of “the Lesser Peace by the year 2000,” I made major life decisions regarding family finances (including sacrifices for the Arc Fund) and the future education of my four children. Fortunately, thanks to the grace of God, our lives have mysteriously worked out for the best.



## Appendix A

# BAHÁ'Í INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY

### *Office of Public Information*

Baha'i World Centre, P.O. Box 155, 31 001 Haifa, Israel  
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March 1999

To all National Spiritual Assemblies

Dear Bahá'í Friends,

Recently a newspaper correspondent in the United States of America asked the Bahá'ís for their views concerning the establishment of the Lesser Peace and the occurrence of catastrophic events at the end of the twentieth century. The enclosed statement was prepared, with the approval of the Universal House of Justice, as a basis for response to this and other such questions. We are forwarding it to you as you may find it useful in your public information work.

With loving Bahá'í greetings,

Anne Boyles

For the Office of Public  
Information

Enclosure

cc: The Hands of the  
Cause of God  
International  
Teaching Centre  
Boards of  
Counsellors  
Counsellors

PEACE AMONG  
THE NATIONS

World Peace, a hallmark of the emerging global civilization, will be realized as a tangible expression of the principle of the oneness of humankind. This assurance is given in the teachings of Bahá'u'lláh.

Such a peace will result from the culmination of two distinct but simultaneous and mutually reinforcing processes: one leading to the spiritual unity of the human race, referred to as the "Most Great Peace"; the other to the political unity of nations and known as the "Lesser Peace". The former is a distant goal, requiring a monumental change in human conduct that only religious faith can ensure; the other is more immediate and can already be detected on the political horizon. The one is directly related to the efforts of the Bahá'í community in promoting the pivotal principle of their Faith; the other is dependent on the actions of world political leaders and not on any Bahá'í plan or action.

The political unity of nations implies the achievement of a relationship among them that will enable them to resolve questions of international import through consultation rather than war and that will lead to the establishment of a world government. The attainment of peace in the political realm is discernible through the workings of a process that can be seen as having been definitely established in the twentieth century amid the terror and turmoil that have characterized so much of this period. It is noteworthy that the majority of the nations have come into being during this century and that they have opted for peaceful relations with one another by joining in the membership of the United Nations and through participation in regional organizations that facilitate their working together. Moreover, the process of political unification is gaining acceleration through the awakening of a consciousness of peace among the world's peoples that validates the work of the United Nations, and through advances in science and technology, which have already contracted and transformed the world into a single complex organism.

The horrific experiences of two world wars which gave birth at first to the League of Nations and then to the United Nations; the frequency with which world leaders, particularly in the decade of the nineties, have met and agreed on the resolution of global issues; the call for a global order that issued from the participation of these leaders in the celebration of the fiftieth anniversary of the United Nations; the multiplication of organizations of civil society that focus attention on a variety of international concerns through the operation of an ever-expanding network of activities; the widespread debates on the need for global governance and numerous organized efforts towards world peace; the emergence of international tribunals; the rapid developments in communications technology that have made the planet borderless -- these are among the voluminous evidences of a momentum toward peaceful international relations that has clearly become irreversible.

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<sup>1</sup> See: <http://www.udoschaefer.com/news.html>.

<sup>2</sup> Udo Schaefer, “Infallible Institutions?” in *Reason and Revelation: Studies in the Babi and Bahá’í Religions*, (Los Angeles: Kalimát Press, 2002), 3-37, [http://bahai-library.com/schaefer\\_infallible\\_institutions](http://bahai-library.com/schaefer_infallible_institutions).

<sup>3</sup> Peter Terry, “Dialogue on Infallibility: A response to Udo Schaefer's 'Infallible Institutions?',” [https://bahai-library.com/terry\\_schaefer\\_dialogue\\_infallibility](https://bahai-library.com/terry_schaefer_dialogue_infallibility).

<sup>4</sup> Udo Schaefer, “Infallible Institutions?” in *Reason and Revelation: Studies in the Babi and Bahá’í Religions*, (Los Angeles: Kalimát Press, 2002), 13, [http://bahai-library.com/schaefer\\_infallible\\_institutions](http://bahai-library.com/schaefer_infallible_institutions).

<sup>5</sup> Peter Terry, “Dialogue on Infallibility: A response to Udo Schaefer's 'Infallible Institutions?',” 68, [https://bahai-library.com/terry\\_schaefer\\_dialogue\\_infallibility](https://bahai-library.com/terry_schaefer_dialogue_infallibility).

<sup>6</sup> ‘Abdu’l-Bahá, *Selections from the Writings of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá* (Haifa, Israel: Bahá’í World Centre, 1978), 32.

<sup>7</sup> Shoghi Effendi and the Universal House of Justice, “Promoting Entry by Troops,” in *Compilation of Compilations*, Vol. 3, 154-202, [https://bahai-library.com/compilation\\_compilations\\_3](https://bahai-library.com/compilation_compilations_3).

<sup>8</sup> The Universal House of Justice, *The Nine Year Plan 2022-2031: Messages of the Universal House of Justice*, (West Palm Beach, FL: Palabra Publications, 2022), [https://bahai-library.com/uhj\\_nine-year\\_plan\\_2022](https://bahai-library.com/uhj_nine-year_plan_2022).

<sup>9</sup> Anne Boyles, for the Office of Public Information of the Universal House of Justice, March 8, 1999, to all National Spiritual Assemblies, regarding attached statement “Peace among the Nations.” (As a member of the NSA of Colombia in 1999, I received a copy of this cover memorandum and the statement which I have kept on file.)

<sup>10</sup> Shoghi Effendi, *Messages to the Bahá’í World*, (Wilmette, IL: Bahá’í Publishing Trust, 1971), 73, <https://bahai-library.com/writings/shoghieffendi/mbw/sec-43.html>.

<sup>11</sup> Shoghi Effendi, *The Promised Day Is Come*, (Bahá’í Publishing Trust: Wilmette, IL: 1980), 121.

<sup>12</sup> Ibid.

<sup>13</sup> Ibid.

<sup>14</sup> Shoghi Effendi, *This Decisive Hour: Messages from Shoghi Effendi to the North American Bahá’ís, 1932-1946* (Bahá’í Publishing Trust: Wilmette, IL, 2002), 164.

<sup>15</sup> Ibid. 167.

<sup>16</sup> Department of the Secretariat of The Universal House of Justice, cover letter to an individual, April 19, 2001; Research Department, Memorandum to The Universal House of Justice, “Attainment of the Unity of Nations and the Lesser Peace,” April 19, 2001, [http://bahai-library.com/uhj\\_unity\\_nations\\_peace](http://bahai-library.com/uhj_unity_nations_peace).

<sup>17</sup> See: The Universal House of Justice, *A Wider Horizon: Selected Messages, 1983-1992*, (Riviera Beach, FL: Palabra Publications, 1992), 52.

<sup>18</sup> Department of the Secretariat, The Universal House of Justice, from a letter written to an individual Bahá’í, June 14, 1996, [https://www.bahai.org/library/authoritative-texts/the-universal-house-of-justice/messages/19960614\\_001/1#214578702](https://www.bahai.org/library/authoritative-texts/the-universal-house-of-justice/messages/19960614_001/1#214578702).

<sup>19</sup> Department of the Secretariat of the Universal House of Justice to the Friends in Iran, April 7, 2008, <https://www.payamha-iran.org/sites/payamha-iran.org/files/sites/adeault/files/English%20-%202008-04-07.pdf>.

<sup>20</sup> Elias Zohoori, comp., *Erelong: Bahá’í Prophecies, Predictions and Promises* (University Printers: Jamaica, 1995).

<sup>21</sup> Jack McLean, “Did Prophecy Fail? The Lesser Peace and the Year 2000,” August, 2003, 1, [https://bahai-library.com/mclean\\_prophecy\\_fail\\_2000](https://bahai-library.com/mclean_prophecy_fail_2000).

<sup>22</sup> Alí Nakhjavání, *Towards World Order* (Bahá’í Publications Australia: Bundara, Vic, 2005), 28-9.

<sup>23</sup> Bahá’u’lláh, *The Kitáb-i-Íqán: The Book of Certitude*, (Bahá’í Publishing Trust: Wilmette, IL), 7-9.

<sup>24</sup> Peter Terry, “Dialogue on Infallibility: A response to Udo Schaefer's 'Infallible Institutions?',” 70, [https://bahai-library.com/terry\\_schaefer\\_dialogue\\_infallibility](https://bahai-library.com/terry_schaefer_dialogue_infallibility).