To: Peace Studies Department, College of Saint Benedict/Saint John's University

From: Alexander Celeste, Class of 2014 (contact info: alex@clst.org, 651-314-9598[1])

Re: Invitation to Submit Report on Peace Activities Since Commencement

Date: Sunday, May 8th, 2044

Introduction and Goal Statement

Upon your invitation I'm sending this report for consideration for inclusion in the upcoming Annual Peace Studies Conference focused on what graduates have been up to in the last 3 decades. If after reading this you want me to attend the October conference just know that I'd be more than willing to present on this there. I provided my contact information above, as requested, so that you know how to reach me in the event my peace activities are chosen for inclusion in the conference.

In the year 2014 I set a goal that by now there would be a mechanism implemented, likely using social media, that enables any person to report any human rights violation/info regarding a human rights violation directly to relevant officials (UN, nation-state governments, etc.) to improve upon the then-current responses given to such violations, especially where they stand to directly harm the working of society towards a just and positive peace (as any destruction of lives naturally is). Our global society has since implemented something like this, and I was involved in its development. In the following pages I will describe today's society in light of the human rights tracking system, discuss the history of the tracking system, and discuss my personal life the past 3 decades.

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[1] "These are real, and if Google Voice and the clst.org domain survive to 2044 may well be still functional ways of contacting me 30 years from now." – 2014 Alex

Description of Today's Society with Tracking System in Place

As you know, we feel a sense of safety and security here that has come about from the adoption of universal international laws creating similarity among communities. Many of the occupations people have are the same as back in 2014, though manufacturing jobs related to the military have transferred slightly to the civilian sector and the military itself is thinking about diminishing its forces slightly. Also, new jobs surrounding sustainability and attempting to actively reverse climate change are drawing in part away from correctional jobs as violence has been on a steep decline the past few years. Fundamental shifts in legal and ethical expectations have drawn up the ability to have constant surveillance be transparently there all the time when it comes to scraping hints of violence towards individuals from internet sites. Some of this, here in the U.S. at least, was built on the foundation that was the National Security Agency (NSA) back in 2014, but the stigmas against that surveillance have dissipated. People are more aware of atrocities happening around the world (and 10 yards away), so that has led to violence diminishing and some trust in the need of the human rights tracking system. People look to the UN as more of a centralized government for managing certain aspects of sovereign states, especially when it comes to things like peace and the environment that we all need. This centrality is the beating heart of the universality that all member nations feel as the key to sustainable peace.

The education system for children focuses both implicitly and explicitly on peaceful resolutions over violent conflicts. Educators and politicians hope to start to create a world where violence may eradicate itself, and they have their first test of

results going on this year as the first group to have gone all 13 years in such a

national education system (each country has its own that must meet international

criteria) have completed their freshmen year of college. Even in sports programs

these kids are being taught around the importance of community rather than teams

competing against one another. Such education makes just walking through my

neighborhood and the adjacent park where kids are playing feel fundamentally

different as their attitudes are quite different from what my own were as a child.

Games that get played are much more collaborative than competitive, and you begin

to notice that this makes them more unique and imaginative than the games that I

would see the neighborhood kids play as I was growing up. This is a very nice side

effect of the new educational curriculum to see taking root in our society.

Jerry, a 79-year-old neighbor of mine, is especially interesting to converse

with as he has better memories than even I, or at least longer memories than mine,

of the time prior to all these changes. Not all of the older generations enjoy this

almost leaning towards utopian world. He and his circle of friends dislike what they,

unlike even myself, and certainly the aforementioned children, view as trustworthy

tracking systems, instead labeling them as an immense and immersive invasion of

basic privacy. These folks' parents lived through World War II, so the way they view

our world is through the outcomes of that, and they don't have the open minds

anymore to see the human rights tracking system as progress.

The physical environment here is much like it was in 2014, but that is just it,

like it was in 2014 and no worse. People realized that we were effectively

destroying ourselves with the climate change we helped to instigate, and so

everyone here is more conscious of their environmental impact and is working to actively reverse some of the damage. This cannot be done in many areas, but I know of neighbors whose jobs are centered on developing better technologies to that end.

Wars akin to the Iraq War are still largely prevalent, you could even (sadly) trace current conflicts straight back to that war. That being said, the pervasively prevalent human rights violation tracking system has led to a steep decline in these conflicts generating breaches of the human rights of civilians, and has led to a more transparent understanding of the happenings during wars that is beginning to lower the number of such conflicts nations are willing to fall into. Sitting on the grass beside someone else[2] who actively uses the tracking system (not by just looking things up, but also electing to submit information with their contact information every so often) we discuss the importance of the system and just how it has improved the overall lives of people everywhere.

Anything you post to any social media is at a low level screened for hints of any human rights violations being referred to. Users only know this is happening based on terms of service and help documents (though it is common knowledge). Additionally one option for feedback is to send explicit reports/info. An important distinction between these two is that the feedback sends your contact info, but the scraping is further made anonymous by even blurring faces in photos and videos (where only investigators can un-blur them), and not just with disconnecting name and contact info. The collection even strips out/hides names of people mentioned in posts, to only be unhidden by investigators. The entire collection, though

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[2] That person was a lawyer by the name of Escome Eskovich if you want to know.

mandatory, is designed to safeguard the identities of the sources whilst providing quick ways for officials to get crowd-sourced reports on top of the legacy human rights reporting mechanisms. Though most reports are anonymous location information is recorded in order to map where such events occur. The social media companies can access the same public database of reports everyone can, which means that they don't have access to the full reports the UN sees. These reports are collected, encrypted, and sent directly to a database and notification system from which local and UN officials can draw on to hopefully stop any verified abuses. Many of my friends don't think about this data collection and honestly don't care because we all know that it is only used for purposes of creating a safer society, and anyway only posts that meet criteria intended to capture the happenings of human rights violations are even read by such data collection.

Our government is largely the same as it was back in 2014, but in ways it has become more collaborative towards both local levels as well as the overarching UN. We, as our government, are pushing back less on things that will benefit everyone than we did decades ago, as the human rights tracking system is evidence of. This shows how our society truly has become global and interconnected. Corporations no longer have the strong hand they once did, nor do they have the same ignorance for what is right. As violence slowly diminishes the military and correctional budgets have recently began getting partially diverted into more civilian programs. This includes a stronger public education system with the aforementioned peaceful focus, as well as various environmental efforts. Though partisanship itself will not disintegrate many of the idealistic differences have somewhat evened out as the

government has taken on this shared role with governments of every level across the globe.

Having information like what is collected transparently available to everyone has made the news reporting here fundamentally different from what news was back in 2014. Channels cannot fudge the details when their own reporters may be getting some of their information from publicly accessible databases. Such access also lowers the shock capacity of reports on human rights violations and war images. Though some news corporations retain their corporate-mindedness that lends to a lack of objectivity it is now easier for viewers to recognize where the truth lies amidst the various facts given. Since the public databases are accessible via social media sites we also have news that is given on those sites (of any kind) being treated more respectively as authoritative than it was back in 2014 when mainly one's friends were sharing it based on essentially their opinions and research.

So, having described the position we're in now regarding the human rights tracking system (not that you aren't already aware of and using it) let me turn to how we got here starting with the year I was merely a senior in 2014. To do this from here on out the rest of this report will be written from my home rather than the perspective coming from this walk I am now at the conclusion of anyways. Though the technology exists for me to dictate the entire report while out and about I'm somewhat old school in that I'd still rather type the majority of it by hand.

Literature Review

In 2014, the year I graduated, there was not yet any coherent scholarly or practiced work being done on a system close to the one we have today. Therefore I

will frame my literature review around the most scholarly and activist literature on human rights monitoring in general from three decades ago, as well as on the technological side of monitoring events with social media and crowdsourcing that was being done in 2014 and the decade or so before.

To begin with the technological side, work by Earle, et. al. (2011) discussed the results of an experiment that was done in tracking seismic events with Twitter. As a form of event monitoring, this was drawn on when the UN and technology companies were designing the tracking system. Whenever the term "earthquake" showed up in tweets with a rapid increase, with an algorithm to account for false alarms, relevant authorities were shown on a map where a probable seismic event had occurred (Earle, p. 709). As time and geolocation get recorded with tweets the authorities can determine when and where an event occurred. They note that though this system had a trade-off between false alarms and missed events (Earle, p. 711) it could also be augmented with scraping of other data besides text like images of the events.

Simon, et. al. (2012) wrote a piece about the general lifecycle of electronic human rights violation evidence. Collecting evidence at the time of abuses is hard (Simon, p. 2), so most information collected would come from a variety of perspectives and in a variety of formats after the fact (Simon, p. 1). Most evidence collected and stored electronically was used to address immediate concerns. Though such information was being disseminated on social media, it had not been getting originally collected through such channels (Simon, p. 2).

Goodman and Jinks (2003) discussed how to measure the effects of human rights treaties, which are at the heart of any monitoring efforts. One pitfall they found in measuring treaty effectiveness was that only the violations reported got counted into any such study (Goodman and Jinks, p. 173). Their suggestions for further study indicate using a softer empiricism because human rights monitoring is more qualitative than quantitative (Goodman and Jinks, p. 183).

Hammarberg (2001) discussed the need for meaningful organization of qualitative data in human rights fact-finding. Statistics are needed but must augment qualitative data (Hammarberg, p. 132). Since governments may not provide all needed data (Hammarberg, p.134) the UN folded human rights monitoring into most of its programs (Hammarberg, p. 136). He suggests the entire monitoring system have open access to information (Hammarberg, p. 138), with any electronic system being especially careful that it protects the integrity of the individuals reporting information. His concluding remarks state that human rights monitoring is a soft science and we must strive for better data collection methods (Hammarberg, p. 140).

Landman (2004) discussed the importance of measuring human rights and how that measurement could be improved. He comments that quantitative data alone is dehumanizing (Landman, p. 909). The UN's human rights monitoring stands in for governments that don't protect human rights themselves (Landman, p. 916). Data collected in monitoring in 2014 was incomplete because of fear within victims, power of offenders, and lack of comprehensive evidence and/or communication technology. He had three implications for monitoring efforts going forward. First,

information collection relies on constant generation of high quality data at the lowest of levels (Landman, p. 930). Second, the collected information needs to be openly shared (Landman, p. 930). This would require both infrastructure and education overhauls. Third, there must be a constant flow of funding for these collection efforts and measurement (Landman, p. 931). His closing statement was that both international and national actors still had lots to contribute towards human right monitoring practices (Landman, p. 931).

Ramcharan's book (2009) on the protection roles of the UN special procedures discussed the origins of the system. He states that the functions of these mandates are to: analyze an issue for the international community; advise on measures which should be taken by those concerned actors; alert UN and other agencies of need to address situations; advocate on behalf of victims; and activate and mobilize international and national communities to address issues (Ramcharan, p. 66). Mandates are premised on the need for a rapid response (Ramcharan, p. 67). Mandates operate in accordance with recognized international human rights law (Ramcharan, p. 68). A victim-oriented approach and a focus on educating the population about violations, not just eradicating them, are core aspects of mandates (Ramcharan, p. 69). Country mandates focus on violations in a given country, but thematic mandates focus on specific sets of violations transcendent of country borders. These mandates also have an awareness-raising factor (Ramcharan, p. 111). Many thematic mandates are focused on preventative efforts, and therefore deal with the root issues behind human rights violations (Ramcharan, p. 116).

Piccone's book (2012) also discusses the genesis of the UN special mandates. He notes that each thematic mandate develops its own methodology to operate by (Piccone, p. 12). Thematic mandates sometimes lack nation-state cooperation, and in part because of this pioneered the notion of urgent appeals. These mandates are evidence that the UN has an interest in human rights protection across all nations (Piccone, p. 14). Starting in 2006 the UN General Assembly established the Human Rights Council to periodically review and improve all mandates and other human rights functions of the UN (Piccone, p. 16). The UN had trouble modifying the system because nation-states had qualms about relinquishing power.

The UN's professional training manual on human rights monitoring (2001) is a valid source for consideration here as much of it still holds in principle today. Any monitoring should improve human rights without harm being done to locals. Mandate holders must understand the international human rights standards that apply and use their good judgment in exercising their duties. Respect for local authorities is important as it improves their own behavior. Confidentiality must be maintained to protect the individuals that provide information on violations. UN officials must remain objective, consistent, accurate, and precise in the information gathered. There must be a level of transparency so that authorities and locals can know what is being collected and how it is being used.

The Advocates for Human Rights has a guide to human rights monitoring (2011) as well that is worth considering. The third chapter lays out a framework for developing a human rights monitoring and documentation system that can be followed to model any monitoring system off of (Advocates for Human Rights, p.

18). This extensively walks you through the planning and initial operations steps that would render a successful human rights monitoring system. The fourth chapter expands on this by discussing additional tools to help in monitoring. Among these were tools to monitor the media for notes on human rights using things like web alerts, RSS, and the like (Advocates for Human Rights, p. 60).

To conclude this discussion of what we knew about human rights monitoring back in 2014 let me discuss the summary of a workshop that Stanford University did in August 2012 on new technology in human rights monitoring. The workshop was to advance strategic thinking on how to leverage new technologies to strengthen UN human rights monitoring. Some of the examples they came up with of how new technologies could be leveraged are the following: software to help systematize information about human rights abuses; platforms for citizen journalism in post-conflict countries enabling activists to bear witness to abuses and share stories; live-streaming video from anywhere to social media; NGO harnessing power of social media to build social movements at scale not previously possible; online marketplace where dissidents can connect and give one another support; and data visualization to show weaknesses in government as a compliment to text sources (Stanford University, p. 3).

Any technology meant to advance human rights monitoring must be designed with an eye to protecting the victims, and also be aware of language and web access barriers (Stanford University, p. 3). They deemed some basic programs able to get implemented fairly quickly in their current political climate, these were programs like: translation services; greater use of existing platforms; video

authentication; and stream analysis (Stanford University, p. 7). Other programs they

deemed would require buy-in from the UN's human rights committee and special

rapporteurs, but the funding could be cultivated, yet even new technology systems

would not eliminate all the holes in the current monitoring mechanisms (Stanford

University, p. 7).

History of the Human Rights Tracking System

That is the state of knowledge and events that was current when I entered

the Abbey/University Church with my classmates May 18th and received my

diploma while shaking President Michael Hemesath's hand in front of the altar.

Within a year things began to shift. Following the previous year's winter and

continually worsening conditions in 2015 it finally dawned on politicians across the

world[3] that the warnings scientists had been giving for years were real, our climate

was in trouble and with it our continued comfortable existence was indeed being

called into question.

The nations of the world began asking the UN, through the UN

Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change and the United Nations Environment

Programme, to consider creating international laws and programs to support a

unified attempt at reversing these effects. To the extent that almost every member

nation was together on this, and had other nations backing them, this was an

unprecedented show of universality and equality among nations that only a few

decades earlier were at each other's throats. Though each nation would have

[3] Notably few politicians in the U.S. and EU took real heed, it was primarily Asian
nations joined by Canada and Latin American nations that took up the warning.

different objectives they all would work towards global goals that would aim to correct the many mistakes that a few nations made currently dooming us all.

It would be 5 environmentally devastating years before, in 2020, the UN managed to garner truly international support for climate change reversal goals and international law was signed by twice as many nations as are on the Security Council (half, naturally, being all UNSC nations)[4]. In reality this was not an easy task, as most of the industrialized nations kept backing out of promises made at initial meetings in 2015 and 2016. Concessions had to be made in order for the United States to sign that included protections for the very industries that hurt the environment the most. Basically those industries were granted slightly different timelines for fixing their practices to make them more sustainable. Such negotiations very nearly derailed the entire creation of the international laws, with about the only thing keeping them going was the public's urgent support of the proposition of these laws to at least stop further environmental harm.

With further adoption imminent the UN began discussing what else they could accomplish while this universal support was still genuine. The United States, joined by European nations, made the suggestion to the OHCHR[5] of a human rights tracking system layered into social media and other online as well as mobile technologies to streamline grassroots data collection and make what data is collected and how it is used transparent to all who go looking for that information. This proposal was accepted and passed down to the Human Rights Council for

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[4] This group of 10 would later become a formalized expansion of two groups making up the UNSC, much like how John Lango theorized (Lango, 223).
[5] The high commissioner for human rights was Heinz Zerch at this time.

fleshing out into draft treaties, laws, and procedures. The immediate response from the council was that this would require not just a new mandate, but an entirely new form of mandate branched from the thematic mandate's template.

The next 5 years saw some climate improvements as programs were put into place. By 2025 the UN had finalized a treaty to define the human rights tracking system. The tracking system would be done as a thematic mandate (in the end the council could do it without a third form of mandate) focusing on a victim-oriented approach that also educates the population, so it would have an awareness-raising element that may give rise to preventative efforts from the grassroots. Some nations opposed the attached conditions, but in the end this treaty was initially ratified by 80% of member nations at the same session it was finalized in. The conditions are the following: 1. Signatories must be as prerequisite signatories of the 1948 Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights. After all, there need to be universal standards for an international system like this to work, otherwise you can't sustainably and reliably track violations if what is a human right isn't defined. 2. The educational systems of the signatories had to be overhauled so as to socialize the next generation into being more peaceful, so that perhaps a few generations from now systems like this one would become a moot point. This curriculum would do things such as placing less emphasis on competition in sports and use teaching styles and resources that emphasize the sides of history not regularly taught before.

By 2030 the Human Rights Council had worked out all the nitty-gritty details of how, technologically and otherwise, the international law for this human rights

tracking could be implemented. This was done in consultation with leading

technology experts (some of whom were at the conference at Stanford in 2012)

including Brad Celbirtes[6], Winton Eskovich[7], and John Cashwood[8] among many

others, as well as many who had specialized expertise in elements of how the UN

saw the program, which included myself (much more on my role will be discussed

later in this report). They even consulted with current rapporteurs and other human

rights experts (this included leaders of Human Rights Watch and other similar

organizations around the world).

An important thing decided on in these discussions was the focus on

qualitative data using softer empiricism rather than a quantitative scientific model

of data collection. Once the U.S. passed laws supporting the newly ratified treaty in

2028 (as full implementation would require infrastructure and, given the treaty

conditions, education overhauls) the Department of Education had worked up initial

changes to the education system, really an entirely new curriculum. They put this

into action with the incoming Kindergarten class of 2030 planning to add to it for

each grade as the class grew up, while similar measures were taking effect in the

other signatories. Even with the UN not yet settled on specifics for the system the

governments alerted social media companies that they'll need to include this near-

invisible tracking layer and could start working on development. Some of the

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[6] At the time Brad was employed at Apple, Inc. as a cloud services developer. He was
brought on by the UN to help conceptualize the human rights tracking system.
[7] Winton remains today one of the foremost experts at mapping and related
technologies. The UN brought him on since they knew that mapping mentions of
human rights violations would be a part of the human rights tracking system.
[8] John was on the Google Maps team at the time and studied human rights in college,
so became part of the UN team of experts for both reasons.

companies pushed back on this, but eventually they all settled down and began considering what they had to do.

It was 2035 when the UN had further solidified the picky details regarding the tracking system and communicated them with signatories and social media companies. Across the previous 5 years nations and localities had worked out the requisite regulation changes in law given the different privacy expectations that the tracking system required. You may remember that before 2035 there were strict regulations holding back what companies could track of your data and what ways they could use this information. The deep angst levied towards the NSA stemmed from this. But for the UN's human rights tracking system to function there needed to be ubiquitous and universal access to all that gets posted to social media, which is a very different view of privacy.

The initial proposals were quickly stamped out because they were to collect every aspect of the information and screen it later when already stored. Proponents of this were from what in 2014 was the U.S. NSA's central command. The issue of privacy was first brought up, that following established understanding of collecting information on human rights abuses the integrity of sources had to be maintained, so if live screening were to happen they had to set it up such that personal identifiers were not captured. Though your name would not be attached, they still had to record your physical location (as recorded by the social media site for that post) so they could track exactly where abuses occurred. It was then discussed how to maintain further privacy they should only retain posts that mentioned violations, drawing on a long series of studies that used social media to track natural disasters

as a wealth of knowledge on how to design this. To compromise all of this they

allowed social media sites to include an explicit feedback form to report abuses with

your contact information attached.

Beyond privacy in collection the legislative committee had to determine what

privacy concerns needed addressing regarding the reading of this information. They

determined, after much deliberation, that full details would only be made available

to the investigating officials to protect the integrity of everyone involved. But, to

maximize the transparency of such a system there would be a publicly accessible

database of collected information. You would not see any details pointing to people

beyond location, faces in photos and videos would be blurred, etc. in order to make

sure that privacy and safety were maintained.

In this same timeframe, during congressional deliberations and once

requirements had been set by the U.S. government for U.S.-based social media

companies, social media companies began to adapt the tracking layers they'd started

developing after 2030 into what was directly required of them. In order to maintain

universal standards of this the UN and signatory governments collaborated to build

whole chunks of the tracking system hosted within government systems accessible

as application programming interfaces[9] for social media companies to just tap into.

This made it certain that there wouldn't be any illicit peeking by the social media

companies on the data collection done for the UN's newly authorized special

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[9] APIs allow programmers to use predefined functions across multiple pieces of
software, in this case to standardize the entire body of code that scrapes and stores
social media posts and make it so the websites themselves cannot directly interact
with the collected data.

procedure thematic mandate, and it also allowed the governments to assure the public that their information was not going to fall into the wrong hands.

Due to all of the regulatory and programmatic advancements in 2035, along with the education system maintaining its peaceful slant, this year was the year that showed everyone that this tracking system was indeed going to happen, and hence would be what I label as a decisive turning point year. As much as has changed over the decades, the uncertainty of politics when it comes to challenges and repeals after initial agreement has stayed steady and so left the public wary of the promises the UN and signatory governments had made until they saw tangible evidence. The privacy concerns being addressed and put into law, as well as social media companies openly discussing their progress, was this evidence. Still, there were those people that had concerns over the whole notion, be it centered on privacy or elsewhere. These are what were worked out over the next few years.

2040 brought with it solutions to people's concerns. Various levels of government worked out precise detailed legislation that laid out how information was going to be collected, stored, and used, which settled many people's concerns. Local officials developed and began running workshops to educate the older generations (anyone not in the cohorts of kids under the new curriculum plans) on the importance of this system and the encapsulated transition to a more peaceful global society. These workshops were used to both educate and to gauge initial feedback on the whole theory and practice of the system.

In mid-April of 2040 the entire human rights tracking system went from internal testing to, as unannounced as any website change is (but not invisible as

there were informational alerts about the system the first time someone logged in to their social media accounts after the launch), being a live public part of every social media website. This included integration to leading blog platforms with both optional submission of post text and constant scanning of comments, as an option for bloggers to enable on their sites. Initial reactions were positive, and people's worries quickly dropped away. After all, it really doesn't affect people negatively at all, unless you happen to be violating the human rights of your employee or neighbor.

This was also the year that the first cohort of kids growing up with the new peaceful education curriculum reached high school. As such the final components of the curriculum, as had been developed over the past few years, were put in place. The high school administrators noted noticeable differences in students' behavior, and it was in November of 2040 that the full curriculum was set in stone nationally (though all schools were already using it, they weren't sure if how they did it first would work out).

This brings us up to this past year, 2043. Shortly after the bell struck midnight on January 1st the UN received word, in mid-January, that the remaining member nations were going to sign the human rights tracking treaty. This made the tracking system truly a global element to the safety and peacekeeping of every nation. Within days of the ratifications the social media companies enabled the tracking for users accessing the sites from those country's IP ranges.

April brought about the conclusion of the workshops. By now everyone was taught about the importance and reasoning behind the UN's human rights tracking

system. People would look back on when the treaty was first signed and wonder why they decided to push back on the program so much. You cannot redo the socialization of people, but running these workshops alongside the last years of the education changes taking effect meant that, for most parents, they were getting these messages reinforced at home by their own kids as well. Perhaps it is not as severe as when immigrant families move to a new country, but some of the same effects may be occurring, even today we have yet to really recognize and study things like that with the whole program as it is still so new.

June, being high school commencement season, was the graduation of the inaugural cohort for the new educational curriculum. We now had the first generation of students fully socialized with not only the tracking system but peaceful means as taught since their early years. In September we saw how this interacted with a higher education system largely unchanged yet fully aware of the kinds of students they would be receiving as freshmen for the 2043-44 academic year. I imagine it has been an interesting year at CSB/SJU in the Peace Studies department given how the students that would be considering joining it have been taught all along, and that perhaps the very program whose backlash started the major may proportionately be diminishing thanks to the new curriculum.

So now, in May 2044, we have the first year of the students who grew up with this new education curriculum having completed their first year of undergraduate studies or real-world jobs. We've also just passed the 4-year anniversary of the launch of the tracking layer in social media. Everything has so far gone as well as the governments thought it would, and as discussed above, the tracking system and

educational changes have led to a decrease in violence that has had effects of its own elsewhere in our society. Next year the UN plans on doing a study of the system 5 years out of launch and may well change it a little bit based on the findings.

My Personal History Over The Past 3 Decades

At this point I have given you a short history lesson in the human rights tracking system. In some areas this brushed over where more details could have been included, and in other areas I went into as much detail as I thought necessary. The next step is for me to go into immense detail of what my role personally was in the above history, wherein I will discuss further details of some of what was discussed in the above paragraphs from my own personal perspective. For that let me return you to the year I began at Saint John's University, 2010, and bring you up through the decades tracing my own life to this very day.

The first part of 2010 was before coming to Saint John's University. While the first notable thing was my 18th birthday, you could say that formally accepting admission to Saint John's University was also quite significant. Mere days after those two my dad and I left for Vienna, Austria (one of the few places alongside CSB/SJU, and only outside of the U.S., that is a second home of mine) to help care for my great-grandmother who was in poor health after falling and in her old age. She died with my dad and I at her side on April 28th and we remained there until a week after her funeral.

Due to that, for the last quarter of my senior year of high school I was only in the country for 2 weeks. On my first day back I presented and finalized my iPhone Application Development senior project (of note, back in October 2009 this began

with my dad and I setting up Tenseg as a sole-proprietorship software development company), and with that had basically finished high school. On the 9th of June 2010 I graduated from Avalon Charter School as part of the 39-stiudent graduating senior class. The ceremony took place at Sundin Music Hall at Hamline University.

Throughout the summer, aside from having a paid remote summer internship to work further on my senior project, I was immersed in preparing to begin my life at CSB/SJU. That culminated on August 22nd when I moved in to Mary Hall to begin a new phase of my life. That naturally had a somewhat bumpy start, but I quickly fell into the daily routine of being a college student. I got my first glimpses of what Peace Studies is through both he Intro course taught by Kelly Rae Kraemer and being in Jeffrey Anderson's FYS. Across this first semester I found myself both working on developing a sturdy web-based API-like system for many internal components of Tenseg software, and somehow also had the time to spend every Sunday afternoon just reading for pleasure, something I only recently have started doing again.

2011 brought my decision to work on an FYS research paper focusing on the then-current revolutions in Tunisia and Egypt, what only later would become known as the Arab Spring. I found myself designing an iPad trivia game app as a way to study for the exams in the Theory and Practice of Nonviolence course, only remotely mentioning it to Kelly on the final day I was on campus in my freshmen year. Somewhere in between the spring of my freshmen year and fall of my sophomore year I chose to be become a Peace Studies major, and began drafting my

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focus statement, that in ways has been since connected to the past few decades'

work of mine, for submission in the early part of 2012.

2012 brought me the chance to apply and get accepted into the Peace Studies

major. Through the Mediation/Conflict Resolution class I spent a large amount of

time that spring co-authoring a research paper on peer mediation in U.S. high

schools with my friend Patrick Buller. A large part of that research paper was

original research I did through interviews with teachers and students at Avalon,

including founding advisors who weren't there anymore even during my time at the

school.

Over that summer I traveled around Europe a bit with my dad and

grandmother, centering around three important tasks: The 10-year anniversary of

the Danube 7 ordination, of which my grandmother was one of the 7 women

ordained; Some remaining bank-related business work in Vienna following my

great-grandmother's death; and taking a road trip to Lourdes, France, as it was

something my great-grandmother had always wanted to do (since I had been born)

but never got around to actually doing.

That fall at SJU I did a second part of my peer mediation research project in

the form of a research policy memo to the commissioner of education for MN. This

was looking into the future for an actual program implementation whereas the

research I did for Ronald Pagnucco was more of a historical look. The other neat

aspect of actually my entire junior year was through classes and other activities

having befriended many of the Japanese exchange students that were at CSB/SJU

that academic year. In early December I spent part of a weekend in Saint John's

Abbey, participating in one of the Johnnie Live-ins. This was an amazing experience in many ways, and one that certainly has had a deep effect on my life.

A notable thing that happened in 2013 was my 21st birthday; though it was also the first birthday of many that followed I didn't really celebrate. At Scholarship and Creativity Day Patrick and I presented our peer mediation research, and subsequently got the paper included in CSB/SJU's DigitalCommons repository. As the semester drew to a close it was a bittersweet time recognizing just how many of my friends, who were seniors, were on the brink of graduation. Of course, such a feeling was exponentially more the case a year later starting after the Grad Finale, when I myself was on the brink of commencement.

That summer I did my (required for the Peace Studies major) internship at the Saint Paul Area Council of Churches. My primary project was to build a blog for them that would be part of their newly redesigned website. This was a very fun and successful internship, which also had the benefits of being in walking distance from home and at an organization whose executive director, Patricia Lull, already knew me well through personal connections she had with my mom, Mary Hess.

That fall I started working for the SJU Office of Sustainability, which was entirely made up of students, all of whom were (with me) pretty good friends with one another. My primary responsibility was to manage the website, but I had full input on every aspect of the office. That November I co-led a workshop for high school students on conflict resolution with Sophia May. Upon registering for courses for my final semester it became clear to me that technically I needed only to pass the capstone course and one other to meet all the graduation requirements.

Across two of my courses in spring 2014 I was predicting the future as components of a capstone project tied to both the capstone course and a human rights course I took. One such paper was on the importance of rhetoric of human rights moving forward looking at its history and using that to make educated assumptions regarding future decades, this work would reappear as vastly important later on. In another class I both took over, for a week, CSB/SJU's Vine account and gave suggestions to CSB/SJU's CMS personnel about improving their social media usage. March 20th was the Grad Finale, after which my academic attire was hanging in my closet alongside perfectly ordinary clothing as a constant tangible reminder that I was on the brink of graduating, something that made me feel both excited, sad, joyful, bittersweet, depressed, etc. all at the same time.

In the final week of my entire undergraduate career, a bittersweet time indeed, I also uploaded to my blog numerous papers from the past two semesters that would now just be out there for people to possibly stumble upon or be directed to. That week passed with me spending 10-30% of my time working on making final edits to two papers as well as one short self-assessment reflection and spending the rest of my time just existing on campus preparing for commencement and moving out. Commencement weekend was nothing but bittersweet (if not depressing), and the various rituals and traditions went off more or less without incident.

Not a week after moving out I began to wonder what the heck I would be doing with my life. One thing I considered, and did do some things with, was wider real use of Tenseg as at least something to do. Over the next few months I was a constant assistant to my mom with her upcoming sabbatical project while on the

constant lookout for internship, or better, job opportunities. In October I returned to CSB with my mom for Dr. Hinton's presidential inauguration, as she is someone my mom knew personally through the Religious Education Association.

2015 brought a continuation of the Tenseg and sabbatical help work as I increased my search for jobs and internships. I was also actively looking for graduate programs, hoping to get that done over the next few years. I did various bits of work within both the technology and peace fields that began to draw some attention to even my undergraduate written work. I finally got around to, once he was ready and back from serving in the Benedictine Volunteer Corps (which I'd also applied to, but wasn't accepted), helping a friend of mine[10] from SJU with an iPhone app idea he'd discussed with me in our final semester at SJU.

As mid-2020 rolled around I completed the graduate program I had chosen to attend (one in conflict resolution at Georgetown University) and was still looking, now more fervently, for a decent job to augment the Tenseg work that I never stopped doing even throughout school. I was still very much in search of what I wanted my life to be like, and kept trying certain ideas out. The same year my eldest cousin, Eleanor Celeste, took a leap from being back to work in Washington D.C. to the UN in an appointed U.S. government position. This carried into a new height, once again, the history and legacy that our family had coming from our grandfather's successful public service life. This also made it clear that indeed our generation was finally taking many of the reigns that our parents once held in the various levels of government and society, our generation was coming of age.

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[10] Brandon Dorsey, who was a fellow 3rd Mary alum and SJU Office of Sustainability staff member.

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2025 was the equivalent of the final weeks of CSB/SJU but on steroids. The very day that news traveled across the world that the UN had gotten many nations to sign a human rights tracking system treaty my paternal grandfather took his last breath. Being who he was, and given my cousin's public position, the funeral was attended by not just family and friends but also by former and current high political and government leaders. It was a sight to be seen, but being my grandfather I understandably couldn't quite see it like that.

It was in the midst of the time with family that Eleanor told us of her minimal role in the recent treaty signings. Basically, she helped edit the amendments to the international law that another U.S. delegation member, Olivia Popov[11], was drafting. But, further, she took me aside and told me that her colleagues had seen some of my work, including that from my last semester at CSB/SJU, and partly based on that (partly based on various recommendations, hers included) asked her to tell me they wanted me involved in the deliberations of the nitty-gritty details of the treaty's implementation. Yikes, talk about the offer that has defined my career coming at one of the lowest points of my family's time that year. Within a few months I was on my way to the UN headquarters in Vienna, Austria (still what was, and still is, functionally a second home of mine) where the deliberations were to take place.

For the next few years, and across 2030, I was immersed in the long process of hashing out the details of the tracking system as the planet's nations were working off of the little we were releasing in the middle of all this to draft necessary legislation to support the treaty. It really was a wonderful group of people to work

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[11] Her ancestors came through Ellis Island in the early 1900s fleeing Russia.

with, all of whom had such varied experiences that we could learn from each other,

and provide the UN Human Rights Council with valuable input that almost all of

which became part of the treaty as it is implemented today. One of my strengths was

the bigger picture I could see and my skilled knowledge of the technological

components. My time was ultimately split between Vienna and the U.S., but there

was no real chunk of freedom from the work except for holidays.

Around March 2035 the deliberations had since been completed and all

details processed through the UN into the final version of the treaty. I was one of a

few people they asked to stay on and join a team they were forming to actually

develop the code for what we'd decided would be a UN-governmentally managed

system for social media to just tap into. We started out by looking at time-tested

methods of gathering data by scraping Twitter for record of events. This was basic

text filtering that we knew wouldn't be sufficient. We expanded on their models to

build something that would capture posts of any variety and file them with full

location and contact information (though in the end contact information was only

retained from explicit feedbacks).

Further than just collect all types of data we designed the tracking system to

collect and organize data qualitatively rather than quantitatively. All of us knew, as

some of us had been a part of scouring records and papers had decided, that this

was crucial to human rights abuse data collection, but no one had tried automating

such a thing in software before. We basically had to design something very near to

artificial intelligence. Designing the data collection system like this also helped to

eliminate the prevalence that false alarms and missed events had in the decades-old Twitter experiments.

All along we designed the tracking system to be something that would enable data collection right at the time of human rights abuses and not always after the fact. Our thoughts were that someone could easily tweet notes and/or photos of an abuse as a bystander and that would be more beneficial than a formal report days or weeks after the fact. This was the whole idea behind folding human rights monitoring into social media, much as it is why human rights monitoring already existed in all UN programs.

Though what we were building enforced nations to enact new privacy laws, we designed the whole system around protecting the integrity of reporters, yet also allowing open read-only access to the data that was collected. Open access is a strongly known factor of importance for human rights monitoring reports, so it was a central tenet that we were designing around. The real privacy changes had to do with an automated and government managed system freely reading anything you post, regardless of privacy settings, and storing it in an encrypted format at a secured government facility.

Lots of the work was done in person within Uno City in Vienna, Austria as a team but we still had lots of freedom to work remotely from anywhere. It was a fabulous work environment in that I could fairly freely work whatever hours we agreed made sense, and could spend at least as much time in the U.S. working from places like Martha's Vineyard and Kelley's Island as I could spend working locally in Vienna, I almost worked even more from other places actually. More shifts in my

family took place throughout this time, but given the work schedule openness these never completely interfered with my position on the team that is now known for developing the human rights tracking system. Overall my main work on the development was on some of the backend management of the collected data, which all is stored within UN-governmental servers and only accessible through its local interface and the API we were making.

We had finished our main development work in late 2038 so that by 2040 we were deep within having supported social media companies as they implemented the human rights tracking system. In this support role we understandably found numerous bugs in the code that we worked to exterminate as quickly as we could. Over this 2-year period we were running localized beta testing of the system internally with social media companies. We chosen to give ourselves a May deadline to publicly launch the system and were operating under that assumption.

Only just about two weeks after I celebrated my 48th birthday we officially launched the human rights tracking system to the public at noon on April 14th. The days leading up to the launch were surprisingly uneventful and not nearly as chaotic as everyone involved expected them to be. We were working closely with social media companies to smooth out the system and especially also to make sure they all had appropriate welcome messages to show their users once the system was activated. With consultation from the social media companies and government officials we chose not to publicize the specific launch beyond saying earlier that it would be coming in Spring 2040.

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After the launch we were quite impressed with ourselves for being a month ahead of our internal schedule. This was cause for celebration, but a minimal one since we still expected the unexpected. Working on that team was a defining part of my career, and an experience that let me play a downplayed yet crucial role in an important program of the UN's human rights monitoring agenda. I would rather not think of the level of fame we have all found ourselves with because of our involvement, especially when I trace my involvement back to a funeral, but it is a worthy asset moving forward regarding future career and job prospects.

After completing that project I helped coordinate workshops that taught older people (those not in the new curriculum) of the importance of this system and the new privacy expectations that come along with it. I ran some of these, but by 2043 was less formally involved and more of a general advocate of the system when related to the few constituent groups that still opposed aspects of it. Now that the development work for the system is over, or at least my direct involvement is, I've spent all my time in various places across the U.S. to help work the system we've built work its way into being a societal norm. This has, in part, involved communicating with people doing similar things elsewhere, but it also has just involved context-driven strategies specific to the physical locations where the work is done that don't always translate well to other locations.

This brings us up to today, May 6th, 2044 when I'm making final edits to this report I'll submit over the weekend. I'm sitting along a lakeshore that would be at the bottom of the lake if it were not for the climate change programs the UN put in place those decades ago. The waves crashing along the rocks just yards away from

me, and the birds flying overhead, is a relaxing environment for me to retreat to
when not in the heat of my daily life, which has been largely a mix of fun jobs here
and there (with Tenseg software development being the spine) anyway. The future
prospects for my journey through life have forever been defined by the events I
have chronicled on the above pages. I'm not just talking about the development
work for the UN human rights tracking system. No, rather, my time in Collegeville
played an equally important role in molding the prospects I have ahead of me, as did
the unique experiences I had at Avalon and even Crosswinds before it.

In my experiences I wouldn't say that I exactly made history, rather I helped
an international organization make history. I was not the one who proposed the
international treaty in the first place, and indeed, I wasn't even directly involved
with the UN until a few months after the treaty was signed. My role was that of a cog
in the gears of the development team that was put together by the Human Rights
Council to actually create what the treaty established. The only fame that has come
to me is that which is similar to the fame given back in my senior year at Saint John's
University to those who fixed the early version of the Healthcare.gov website. Even
that I feel is undeserved when operating as part of an international organization
that is doing its best to maintain and extend positive peace.

Summary and Conclusions

The above pages have laid out for you both the history anyone can research
of the UN human rights tracking system that uses social media as well as indulged
you in my personal experiences since commencement that include my role in

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making this system a reality. In the final months of my senior year I'd set myself the

goal that by now we would have such a system, and that goal came true 4 years ago.

In summary, the human rights tracking system was designed as international

law creating a thematic mandate for the human rights tracking, but which mandated

signatories both sign existing international human rights documents and implement

a peaceful (versus the former competitive) education curriculum. It was made

possible with the universal cooperation of member nations formed around the act of

attempting to stop climate change in its tracks. After initially passing the UN took

over a decade to fully implement the tracking system. In this time not only were

technical components developed but also national privacy laws all over the world

were modified to support such a system. Since being in operation the tracking

system has been enough cause of violence diminishing for correctional jobs to

already be slowly shifting to more beneficial civilian sectors.

There are a number of conclusions that can be drawn from how the current

human rights tracking system came to be. One conclusion is the depth of change that

can be made when the variables align. This happened initially regarding climate

change, but we saw it throughout the privacy debates and the changes to the

education system as well. This history is testament to how, when governments want

such change (alongside their citizens), it will happen.

Another conclusion can be drawn about the cause and effect surrounding this

international law. We see here in 2044 how overall violence has diminished, in turn

drawing down correctional jobs that are moving to more beneficial/peaceful civilian

positions. This is an effect of both the human rights tracking and educational

changes that no one directly thought would happen, or certainly that no one thought

would happen as quickly as it has. That creating a web-based, automated, system for

tracking human rights violations could result in such positive and tangible changes

to our society is a valuable lesson. The applications of this in other sectors are

limitless. The basic principle it exposes has even greater potential to be harnessed

into positive changes in our society that we have yet to even imagine.

A final conclusion to note here (of many more that are out there) has to do

with the universality that enabled all of this positive change. Nation-state

sovereignty hasn't been stripped away, but greater cooperation between states to

generate a global society focused more on humanity than nationality has still

emerged. While decades ago human needs weren't at the forefront they now are.

There is much work still to be done with this cooperation, so we can here conclude

that to fully recognize what this history has begun we must all work to eradicate

poverty worldwide, finish abolishing war, and so on.

With that I close my report on my peace activities since commencement in

2014 and allow you to move on to the next report in your pile. Should you deem my

experience worthy of current Bennies and Johnnies (as well as Stearns County

locals) to learn about I am more than willing to attend the October conference. Until

then I just hope that this report has given more strength to the importance of Peace

Studies at the College of Saint Benedict/Saint John's University and given you more

hope for our species going forward. For the moment I simply bid you Namaste.

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