

# **I Remain Optimistic**

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America has always had a unique relationship with war since it was born out of a violent revolution against its king. There have been plenty of brutal, often entirely unnecessary wars since then, as well as anti-war movements to go with them. With a short history and many lessons learned, I believe America has the potential to swear off war for good.

Sentiment against war or for a smaller and less aggressive military have unfortunately been long regarded as sentiment against America and unpatriotic. However, I believe just the opposite. Is it unpatriotic to fight for an America where sons and daughters need not kiss their mothers and fathers one last time before they are deployed to a country, ready to make the ultimate sacrifice? I don't think so, and I believe that many young people agree. We've grown up in a world saturated with big talk about big guns while at the same time fed cautionary tales about the wars of years past. We are living in a country where guns go unchecked with reckless abandon and we've seen so many terrorist attacks and school shootings that it has become less of a shell shock to read about a mass shooting and more of a sad barrage of reality. We are fed up and we are ready to make a change. Whatever the media chooses to label our generation, they should know that with us come the winds of change. We have seen it in the protests after Parkland. This generation is tired of the violence and grandstanding and is prepared to take matters into our own hands.

Despite the potential of our young people, the things we see today in the media are not inspiring or optimistic of a future without war. We see images of the violence in the Middle East, reports of terrorism around the world, and our president spewing inflammatory and violent rhetoric at an equally violent, unstable, and unpredictable regime. We've seen this same attitude in the past, time and time again, most recently with our disastrous military involvement in the Middle East, leading now to the formation of ISIL. Many in the U.S. are oblivious to the atrocities that happen every single day in war-stricken places, so they are detached enough to be for war without knowing the true cost. They are content to support war without considering the true human consequences. Hope seems futile in such an aggressive political climate. But as this generation gains its right to vote and thereby its voice, I believe we will see an influx of politicians with respect and level-headedness. A world in which every major power has their finger on the nuclear button is not sustainable and will produce nothing more than a second Cold War with far more devastating consequences this around. We must elect politicians who realize this reality and are willing to lead us there.

I remain optimistic for a future in which war is never the answer, but I realize that it will take lots of hard work and lots of time. I am ready to up the wheel with the rest of my generation and right this burly, unruly ship that is America and sail to more peaceful seas.