

All the spin in Washington, DC and the nest eggs are still headed in the right direction.




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# Noor: Let's reclaim Mother's Day for peace

By Queen Noor  
Special to CNN

*Editor's note: Her Majesty Queen Noor of Jordan is an international humanitarian activist, a leading voice on issues of world peace and justice, and honorary chair of [Rediscover Mother's Day](#), which celebrates the role of women as peacemakers.*

**AMMAN, Jordan** (CNN) -- In 1982, during a period of dangerous stalemate in the Middle East peace process, I gave a speech at Georgetown University about the critical need for a more engaged and balanced role for the United States in the region.

The newspapers the next day covered my handbag, my rings, and my dress. When asked about the substance of my message, one U.S. Senator said, "It's a great public relations weapon to have an attractive queen."

Twenty-five years later, the geopolitical landscape of the Middle East still reflects some of the most pressing global challenges confronting the contemporary world -- the stagnant Palestinian/Israeli peace process, the increasingly dangerous conflict in Iraq, the escalation of extremism, the debate over emerging democracies -- all point to the need for visionary and transformative leadership. I firmly believe that peace will only come to the region when mothers find their voice and say of the violence, "Enough is enough!"

Mother's Day -- whether it is the U.S. tradition of celebrating mothers on the second Sunday in May, or on the first day of spring, when we observe the holiday in Jordan -- is universally meant to be a tribute to motherhood and the blessings of peace. In fact, in America the holiday was originally called "Mother's Day for Peace." It was proposed over a century ago by Julia Ward Howe, the famous abolitionist and suffragist, after she witnessed first-hand the terrible bloodshed of the Civil War in America and the Franco-Prussian War in Europe. Howe hoped that the powerful maternal desire for security could shape world events, and she called on mothers of the world to unite against war.

Howe's vision and her call to action could not be more relevant today. As a mother, stepmother and grandmother, nothing is more important to me than the safety of my family. I am not alone. Studies show that women's priority, when given either money or opportunity, is the well-being of their families. They invest their time and devote whatever resources they have to reducing poverty and hunger, improving maternal, child and general health and promoting educational opportunity. That is why the position of women is the best marker of a country's development and stability.

Mothers prove every day, all over the world, that peace and security require cooperation and compassion. Having traditionally occupied a paradoxical position at the heart of society but on the fringes of power, women often bring unique strengths, talents, and perspectives to the quest to resolve conflict and establish freedom. They are willing and able to cut across ethnic, religious and tribal barriers, and break through obstacles through peace in order to do what is best for their families.

It is no coincidence, then, that so many of today's leading peacemakers are themselves mothers. All of us must do everything we can to support their efforts. People like Swanee Hunt, who served as the United States Ambassador to Austria and has spent her life advocating for peace and for the inclusion of women in the peace process through her work and by creating Women Waging Peace. Or Trish Malloch Brown, who travels the world advocating for people affected by war and conflict on behalf of Refugees International. Or Lisa Schirch, the director of the nonprofit 3D Security Initiative, who uses development projects like building schools and water wells to disarm conflicts from Lebanon to Ghana.


But the day has come for something more than individual efforts. Millions of mothers from Nablus to New York and from Baghdad to Beersheba must begin to find common cause in peace and work together to give their quiet power a louder voice. We need a movement of what Naila Bolus of Ploughshares Fund calls "global security moms," who can work within their families and communities, and in national and international arenas to temper extremism and to hold their leaders accountable for decisions that escalate the cycle of violence rather than address underlying problems. Such a movement of mothers would be impossible for our leaders to ignore, and would be more powerful than all the tanks and suicide bombers combined.

So from one mother to many others, let us be silent no longer in the face of war and violence. May all mothers and families around the world be blessed with a happy Mother's Day for Peace.

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