



Episode 658: War and Peace: The Key Libertarian Issue

Guest: Marc Guttman

WOODS: The book is *Why Peace*. I just got done telling people about it. It turns out your previous book was *Why Liberty*. You'd think I would have started with that, but I came across *Why* – I think somebody sent me an email about it and said look at this great book, what kind of idiot are you not having – well, I'm embellishing the story a little bit – what kind of idiot are you not having this guy on?

And then I looked at the – I didn't know about your other book, or I didn't remember it, I didn't associate it with your name, and I started looking through the table of contents, because I thought, okay, if the person is on the Left, which, most people writing a book called "Why Peace" would be, I just want to know that so that I'm prepared and I ask the right questions. And I started looking through the table of contents, and there were some people I'd never heard of. And then I saw Karen Kwiatkowski, Phil Giraldi. I saw David Henderson; I saw Christopher Coyne – and these are all people, by the way, I've had on the show. Every one of those I've had on the show. I thought, now, hold on just a cotton-picking minute. I've had some experience with people on the Left, and generally they wouldn't have these people in their book, even though they agree with them.

So I thought, okay, hold on a minute. This guy's a libertarian. How about that? So my sense is that you drew – actually, even though I recognize some libertarian names – you drew from a variety of perspectives. Is that right?

GUTTMAN: Absolutely. There are plenty of people without any kind of political leanings, or not actionable, but there are plenty of people from the Right, the Left, libertarian, who all talk about the common things, just the anti-state aggression philosophy.

WOODS: How is it that you came to do a project like this? You are a practicing physician. Are you in Florida?

GUTTMAN: No, actually, I'm in Connecticut now.

WOODS: Oh, you're in Connecticut now. Okay, so that's old information, okay. Oh, okay, well, I actually have a lot of friends in Connecticut. All right, anyway, so you're doing that for a living, but you're just – you're somebody who's a libertarian, and on

the side you wanted to do this project. So you figured out — so you went to a — where do you even start? And then did you solicit these pieces? Some of them I know are reprints, but some look original.

GUTTMAN: Yeah, most of them are original. There are some reprints that have been updated. So I started, like you said, with the first book, *Why Liberty*, because I kind of wanted to shine a light on the liberty movement and different people around the world that were endeavoring towards peace and freedom. But then, you know, after 9/11, the way things shook out, I thought it was the most important — you know, I really wanted to shine light on state aggression, particularly the military interventions and police state abuses, because they really to me have always seemed to have been the largest threats to human wellness, prosperity, and happiness throughout the world, and I wanted the book to be an education, because unfortunately I think many people are misinformed; they're uninformed and will often tacitly consent or even promote these policies.

And so I thought the best way to do it was to ask the knowledgeable people. Not myself, I'm not writing the book. I'm contacting these people who've been victims, witnesses, even oftentimes in the book perpetrators of these interventions, from around the world and from several generations to tell their stories. And they came together — I mean, the stories in the book are very compelling and eye-opening; it came together tremendously, I think, and the response I've had from people, I've been pretty excited.

WOODS: Let me ask you about some specific — I mean, this is a huge book. This thing is huge, and if you could just look at the table of contents, I'm telling you, if you just look at the table of contents of *Why Peace* you would be totally sold on this book, because it's got all kinds of different angles on the question. It's got, we might call, victim stories, people who actually suffered during these wars; it's got soldier stories; it's got stories from intelligence officials; it's got pieces by economists talking about the economic ramifications of war, that war is not actually stimulus. It is so comprehensive. It would be — even if you didn't read every single entry, which I think you'd probably want to, what a resource this thing is to have. Instead of having to, you know, yeah, you can try and track everything down on Google the rest of your life and drive yourself crazy, or you can have this nice collection with everything you'd want to know in it.

Let's start talking about Phil Giraldi. I've had Phil on the show before. He's ex-CIA, counterterrorism expert, and he's basically taken a Ron Paulian, noninterventionist position, certainly since 9/11, but possibly before then. And he has a very, very moving piece in your book. Tell us about that.

GUTTMAN: He does. So you're right; he did start — well, he started from a perspective where he was a counterterrorism specialist in the U.S. government and discusses in the book how he started from the standpoint of believing in U.S. government hegemony around the world as a vehicle for peace. But then I think it was really post-9/11, he talks about how he was watching the Iraq War unfold, and he discusses the

moment where he's at his kitchen table and his grandson is eating a bowl of cereal next to him – he develops it really nicely – and he's reading the paper and he sees an image in the newspaper of an Iraqi boy who has been killed by a U.S. government bomb, a bombed out building, and you know, he, again, is looking at his grandson and realizes that this war was a big mistake, and you know, compounding it to other thoughts he's been having and, looking forward, how U.S. military intervention around the world has not been a positive force always and not in the net, and that we're creating a lot of enemies and a lot of blowback.

And then he also talks about how people responded to the newspaper complaining about this photo, saying that it's going to increase anti-Americanism and prevent people from supporting the war. And he says, what kind of monsters have we become that we're not going to report on the horrible ramifications of our actions. You know, be responsible for them.

WOODS: And you know, of course I've had the same kind of experiences myself back in the '90s. In the early '90s there was the Persian Gulf War, and I was a college undergraduate at the time, and I don't recall – because I wasn't really looking for them, frankly. I was a rah, rah, rah, flag-waving cheerleader for the whole thing, so I wasn't going out of my way to look for casualties, civilian casualties or anything.

But I did hear stories of people who were soldiers who were retreating and who were being mowed down anyway, and I thought, well, even though they're soldiers and that means that technically according to the rules of war, their lives don't count; they don't really matter, because they're fair game. I thought, but, you know, probably their families were depending on those people. There are a lot of widows now; there are a lot of orphans now. And I just found it hard to celebrate that. I thought I just can't wrap my head around the fact that I'm supposed to put up yellow ribbons, and I'm supposed to cheer and be excited about this. I thought, this is just a terrible tragedy, that the less said about it, the better. And at that time, I was a total GOP cheerleader, but even I started – now, of course I cauterized the wound and I moved on. I didn't let this change my mind for another few years.

But I did have something somewhat analogous to this Phil Giraldi experience, and that more than any talk about U.S. interests and maybe this is or is not in U.S. interests, it's the human consequences of this and the callousness that it creates in the invading party that is the really, really significant thing to me. Now, you yourself – were you always a libertarian?

GUTTMAN: No. Well, pretty early on, when I was just starting to vote, I voted for Bill Clinton in '92, but only the first time. By the time the second time rolled around, I was pretty firmly in the libertarian camp. I had started traveling overseas around then. I spent six months hitchhiking through Africa and was really for the – because I had graduated college; I was outside the rigors of school and study, and I was free, just hitchhiking, living in my tent and feeling pretty liberated. But at the same time, the backdrop of that were the Africans I was around, who would talk to me about trying to start businesses or some kind of entrepreneurial thing, and all the regulations and red

tape and bribery they had to go through, and just all the restrictions on them and all the fear of government they had in Africa. And then I came back to the states, and that's when they started doing – you know, I was visiting California, and they had the smoking ban in bars, and I thought, this is so strange; this is private property, and they're saying that people can't smoke in bars and they want us to go outside to the public spaces and smoke. And I wasn't a smoker, but I just thought it was strange. So then I started having these budding ideas, and my brother said, well, you should read some Harry Browne; you sound a lot like –

WOODS: Oh, yeah, you're a goner once you read Harry Browne.

GUTTMAN: Yeah, and he totally reoriented me. Like, I had this whole kind of idea like you were saying earlier and what we were saying about Phil, about how we thought that the U.S. Constitution and the U.S. government was this beacon of liberty and freedom for the world, and it just took me time to kind of break down some of the veils of U.S. government and military actions throughout a couple centuries and how it wasn't always largely for good and oftentimes it was for self interests or corporate interests or who knows what sometimes. And he really kind of made me understand some of the other ways to see these policy decisions.

WOODS: Let's talk about, I was reading a testimony – I'm sorry, I don't remember the name – in your book about, it was somebody who had roots both in the U.S., had family both in the U.S. and in Iraq, and this was talking about the Persian Gulf War, I believe, of 1990-91, which is the war that everybody supported, like, all the respectable people. You know, like it's fashionable not to support the Iraq War of 2003, but everybody, all respectable people supported that earlier war. And she talked about the consequences that her family faced during that time.

GUTTMAN: Yeah, that's Dahlia Wasfi's chapter, and that is one of my favorite stories in the book. She's an Iraqi American; she was born in Iraq but grew up in the States, became a physician in the United States, but talks about her trips back to Iraq to visit family. And the story she tells about how they suffer from the economic sanctions, the occupation, and the wars, it's just so disheartening. I mean, her poor family. And she really comes across – her despair for them really comes across in the story. And there are lots of stories like that.

And on the other side of that, to harken back a little bit to what you were saying about the soldiers, there are several soldiers in the book, U.S. and soldiers from other armies, who discuss their experiences. Ross Caputi talks about being at Fallujah in Iraq and just seeing the horrors there. And Alex Petersen talks about having detained Iraqis in custody and talking to them and learning that they weren't, you know, Islamists who were hoping for jihadists against the U.S.; that they were engineers and other professionals who had their neighborhoods destroyed and their families killed and were trying to get the occupiers out. And it totally realigned his whole idea, this war, and he was trying to put himself in their shoes and what would it be like if an occupying army came to his neighborhood and killed his wife. So yeah, I love in the

book the first account stories of the victims and the people who were assisting them and helping them.

WOODS: And in particular because, again, I'm just speaking from my own experience, but I know that as a young, ugh, college Republican, I was not taught to think about that. I mean, It's not that anybody came out and said to me, "These people aren't even human. They're just garbage." No one said that to me. But we all acted as if that was the case, because no one ever cared in the way that you would care if, let's say – or you'd pretend to care if there'd been an earthquake in Iraq. Well, everybody would be all tears and pity about that. Or if there had been some kind of terrible act of nature that occurred, everybody, oh, terrible, let's send international aid. But when people are having their limbs blown off in a war, you're just not allowed to care.

Nobody raises money to send and to help them, and in fact, one of the first voices to demand that some type of humanitarian relief be sent to Iraq was Pat Buchanan, which goes to show that the cartoon version of reality that we get in the media is so far from the truth. We're taught that the Hillary Clintons of the world are the real humanitarians, and somebody like Pat, he hates people. He's a big hater. He's probably a Nazi. But yet, he's the one saying these people should be fed and clothed and should get medicine. And the Clintons and the Bushes of the world just, honest to goodness, just could not care less.

GUTTMAN: Yeah, I always wonder, when you mention people like that, you know, whether they toss and turn at night. I don't know their motivations or how they deal with these decisions they make.

WOODS: What surprised you among all the contributions? Was there any one that came in that you just gasped when you read it?

GUTTMAN: Yeah, certainly. I learned – you know, it's my book, but I've learned so much from the contributors of this book. And like you said, it's a big book. There's – how many contributors are there? I forgot now. 70-something contributors? I just figured, keep all the good stories in. It's more bang for your buck. But there was the stuff from before my time. Fred Branfman talks about Laos and how he was in Laos doing some humanitarian work back in the '60s, and the bombs started coming. There was nine years of bombing of these villages in Cambodia, and these people had no idea who's attacking them, why they were dropping bombs. They were hiding in caves for nine years, losing family members on a daily basis.

And Branfman actually testified to Robert Kennedy in the U.S. Senate about all the – what he did was he interviewed 1,000 people in Cambodia – I mean Laos, sorry – and the U.S. ambassador was testifying at the same time, saying that there was no bombing campaign going on in Laos, and Robert Kennedy said, well, Fred, can you report? And he tells everything he witnessed and everything that the people he interviewed witnessed, and then the U.S. ambassador, Sullivan, then says, you know, that's not true, none of this happened. And then Robert Kennedy turns to him and says, I think you're lying. But what Branfman says is that it didn't change anything, that

the federal government – or really the executive branch of the federal government was calling the shots and that Congress had no say. I mean, you have this famous U.S. senator saying, I think you're lying, but can do nothing about it. This continued for nine more years, and the bombs are still there. They're still in the ground. There are still people who will step on these bombs 50 years later and lose limbs or die. So not that that's history from so long ago, but you know, I was born in the '70s, so a lot of the earlier generation stuff was more interesting to me.

WOODS: Well, I note that there are pieces on war in general. There's a piece on counterinsurgency doctrine. There's stuff, as I say, on economics. I like the piece by David R. Henderson, who has also been a guest on this show, as it turns out, who, it's called something like "George W. Bush Changed My Life," and what he means by that is that up to that time he'd been an economist doing domestic policy, and that was how he spent his time. But after 9/11, particularly after the Iraq War, he felt like, wait a minute. Wait a minute, there are more important things than this. I have to speak out about this. I have to talk about this, and I'm going to take my talents and my insights as an economist, transfer them over to the study of international affairs. And he found that there had been not nearly as much economic analysis of political economy of war as there really should have been, as we ought to have expected.

And so he began to pioneer in that, and he wrote a good piece for *The Independent Review*, for example, about why you don't actually need to go to war for oil. It does not make economic sense. He did a whole piece on that. And he did a whole piece on why you would expect countries to be this destructive in their foreign policy. I mean, he took economic insights and he ran with them. And then eventually he got a column at AntiWar.com, even though he wasn't a specialist in this area. He got a column dedicated to foreign policy. And the one time I had him on my show was to talk about nonintervention in foreign policy. So he said that's how George W. Bush changed my life: he was so rotten that I had to pretty much drop what I was doing and adopt a whole new line of research because I felt morally compelled to do it. So that really impressed me.

Then you've got pieces in here covering North Korea, Sudan, Afghanistan, Iraq, all kinds of specific places. There's a piece on Yugoslavia and the dissolution of Yugoslavia and what happened after that. As I say, it is absolutely comprehensive. I'm really glad to see that you got a piece from Charles Goyette, who was that great radio host out of Phoenix, who was nationally syndicated. He was, I believe, on – no, he wasn't on satellite radio. He was on Clear Channel, and he was not going to be a cheerleader for the Iraq War. What you have in here are remarks he gave the very night the bombs started dropping in 2003, and everybody was beating the war drums, and he was expected to beat the war drums because he's a right-wing radio host, and he refused to do it, and he wound up losing his radio gig because of it. That's incredible, and it's great to read that.

GUTTMAN: Yeah, it's great. He stood on principle. And you're right, he talks about how he lost his position because of it.

WOODS: Yeah, there just are so few people who do stuff like that. Just the other day, I just made a new friend over the past couple of months, and he wound up getting a new job recently. And this job required him to do things that he just felt morally he could not bring himself to do. And even though he had no immediate prospects, he simply quit the job. He had no other prospects, but he couldn't bring himself to do these things morally. And I think most of us, we can rationalize anything. Well, look, hey, I've got to put food on the table, and I've got to do something or whatever. And somebody who just puts it all on the line and says, you know, I've got to stand for something. I have to be able to sleep at night. One way or another, I'll be okay, but I'm not going to be okay if I'm doing something that won't let me sleep at night, basically. All right, so did you self-publish this? How did this come out?

GUTTMAN: Yeah, I self-published it. So what I did was I'd read an article or hear an interview or read a story about someone, and I'd search the web and find them and contact them and ask if they wanted to contribute. And I got all the contributions, edited it, got someone to do the copy art and cover art and published it.

WOODS: Yeah, there's a good piece in here that I liked about the relationship between Lockheed Martin and the Pentagon, and it's called "Lockheed Stock and Two Smoking Barrels." So again, one of the things that you'll get in here is, these are the sorts of things that we might say and speak in broad generalities, but here you've got the real nitty-gritty specifics, the facts to back up the – I don't want to say prejudices that we have, but the strong intuitions that we have about the way the world works are backed up very effectively in this book. So how many chapters – how many entries are there in here, would you estimate?

GUTTMAN: But on that chapter, Richard Cummings, he originally published that, "Lockheed Stock and Two Smoking Barrels," and then updated it for the book. But you're right, that chapter is incredible, because it thoroughly details all the cronyism of the military industrial complex. It's amazing how much he exposes the inner workings and the open door policies – how these guys go in between department positions to these positions in these corporations. So that's a fascinating chapter. I knew the solid number at one point, but there's about 70 contributors.

WOODS: All right, well, that's crazy.

GUTTMAN: 78. There's 78 contributors from 34 countries from 5 continents.

WOODS: All right, come on now, people. Come on. I mean, how can you not want this thing? All right, look. I think it's – the trouble with it is I would need to almost have all these people on, because I can't expect you to be able to speak for all these different people. But I wanted to highlight this book, because it does – I think it'll help a lot of people. I think it can change minds, but it's also good for people who are already with you to really be able to fill in the gaps in their knowledge and to have a really, really comprehensive overview of the war and peace issue, which is really central to the libertarian message. I mean, I know there've been a lot of people who've wanted to downplay that, but I think it really is, as Rothbard said, it really is the key question

ultimately that we have to be concerned with, is war and peace, and it's just handled so comprehensively and beautifully by so many contributors of different points of view from different places in the world. So how can people get this thing?

GUTTMAN: Well, I was going to say I can definitely put you in touch with any of these contributors that you'd like and have them on your show –

WOODS: Yeah, I was going to say, I've got, like, over 70 episodes right here.

GUTTMAN: Right, exactly. Well, again, you've had a lot of them on already. But one other you mentioned kind of at the beginning that I wanted to mention is that it's not – there are libertarians in this book and there are conservatives in the book, there's liberals in the book. But there are definitely common grounds.

WOODS: Yeah.

GUTTMAN: I mean, most people will be against any government wars, and they'll be for ending domestic unwarranted surveillance, and they'll be against suspension of habeas corpus, and similar themes and topics that we can meet and we can all work together from, despite any differences we might have on other policies. And so I think this book does that. I have just as much appreciation for this book from left liberals as I do from libertarians and other people who are not politically affiliated. But this book's available in print and also in eBook through the iMac iBooks, Kindle. It has pictures and links and videos on the eBook, and also there's the paperback copy you can get through Amazon and Barnes & Noble and other sites like that.

WOODS: All right, Marc, I appreciate your time today talking to us about it. It's really great. It's so well done. My audience will love it. There are so many pieces you can't get into to much detail in any one of them, but the idea is that I want people to know that it exists, because I just love it, and I'm so glad that you did it. I'm going to link to it so people can get it. I'll link to it at TomWoods.com/658, which is the show notes page for today. Marc, thank you so much for your time.

GUTTMAN: Thank you. Yeah, the website's Why-Peace.com. Thanks a lot, Tom.

WOODS: Oh, that's right. Why-Peace.com. I'm also going to link to that too. Yeah, yeah. That'll be up there too. Why-Peace.com. Definitely check that out as well. Okay, now for sure I'll say thanks for your time. I appreciate it.

GUTTMAN: Thank you so much.