

Building a world community

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Building a world community



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An earlier version of this issue contained an article regarding the International Criminal Court (ICC). After further editorial review, the content has been removed.

The views expressed by our contributing authors do not necessarily reflect the official position of Citizens for Global Solutions.

War Crimes Are a Feature of the War System

By Byron Belitsos

The Ukraine conflict has been a grim reminder that barbaric warfare is too often the result of our flawed international security system—or, what world federalists often call the “war system” for short. While Russia’s wanton targeting of civilians may [justifiably be called a war crime](#), [Wikipedia’s list of ongoing conflicts](#) reminds us that *numerous other brutal wars* are also under way, and, sad to say, additional mass atrocities on the scale of war crimes are being committed across the planet. Painful as it is to face, alleged crimes of war took place in Yemen with U.S. complicity and funding, and colossal violations were recently committed because of U.S. aggression in Afghanistan and Iraq. One must add to this list alleged war crimes and mass atrocities by Israel against Palestinians, plus the actual cases now being investigated by the International Criminal Court in Sudan, the Congo, Myanmar, Libya, and a half-dozen others countries around the globe. And thus, while war-crimes accusations against Russia now make headlines, it is our solemn task to point to a larger pattern of crimes of violence generated by the war system.

War-making, international aggression, and war profiteering have never been an anomaly in human history, according to scholars. “The historical record,” writes Professor Marc Pilisuk, author of the masterwork [The Hidden](#)

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[Structure of Violence](#) (2015), “indicates that a war is occurring somewhere in the world far more often than periods of peace.” In other words, the war system is inexorable in all places and times, and this includes our own era. In recent centuries, the need to brandish ever more lethal weaponry in order to win wars of annihilation in the name of “self-defense” is a given for national leaders on all continents. The astonishing extent of warfare deaths, even in recent decades, is illustrated in this [startling map of war fatalities](#) spread out across the world since 1975, yielding a tally of over 2,700,000 war deaths. All of this slaughter has occurred in the lifetimes of many of us.

The upshot should be clear. Wars that end in terrible destruction are not just happenstance. They don’t just occur because of a few ambitious or mentally deranged leaders. *War is systemic, and war crimes are a central feature of the system.* War is the court of last resort in a world

of international anarchy, where the law of force eclipses the force of law. Nations must be prepared to defend themselves against armed aggression at any time or risk perishing. And this condition persists because we don't yet have a legal system that *compels* nations to resolve their disputes non-violently.

Because of the perverse inner logic of the war system, the ability to destroy the enemy's war machine and the willingness to incur massive civilian deaths on their side in the process, is the very basis of protecting one's own population. Possessing overwhelming firepower,

including nuclear weapons, is key to maintaining a credible deterrent to attack. And let's not forget that such expenditures cost nearly \$2 trillion a year worldwide, wasting resources that could go very far toward solving other pressing problems. And in a real sense this grim situation is nobody's fault, for the logic of the system drives nation-states, or military alliances of nations, toward immoral and criminal behavior. And, in the absence of the enforceable global law that CGS has stood for since 1947, warmongers everywhere will continue to get away with their crimes.

The Birth of Citizens for Global Solutions: Recalling Our Beginnings on the Occasion of Our 75th Anniversary

By Bob Flax

In the immediate aftermath of World War II, the most destructive war in human history, a mass movement developed among people in the United States and other lands who were determined to create the kind of united world that could avert future human catastrophe. Among their leaders were the acclaimed physicist Albert Einstein, Nuremberg war crimes prosecutor Benjamin Ferencz, presidential advisor Grenville Clark, and feminist Rosika Schwimmer.

In February 1947, during the final hours of one of the greatest snowstorms on the East Coast, 327 delegates representing several world federalist organizations from across the country gathered in Asheville, North Carolina, to launch one of the most significant peace

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efforts of the 20th century. Among those present were Norman Cousins, later World Federalist Association president and editor of the *Saturday Review*; Thomas K. Finletter, later President Truman's secretary of the Air Force; Florence Harriman, former U.S. ambassador to Norway; Cord Meyer, Jr., later United World Federalist president and CIA official; and Harris Wofford, civil rights activist and later U.S. senator from Pennsylvania.



Each of the organizations was created by individuals who recognized that the growing horror and destruction of modern warfare could only be halted by a world organization with the power to deal with aggressors and the buildup of armaments. The urgency was intensified by the dropping of the atomic bomb, and thousands responded in recognition of the need to prevent future devastation.

Their declaration of purpose, adopted on November 2, 1947, stated that peace “is not merely the absence of war, but the presence of justice, of law, of order — insured, of the government and the institutions of government; that world peace can be created and maintained only under a world federal government, universal and strong enough to prevent armed conflict between nations, and having direct jurisdiction over the individual in those matters within its authority.”

They concluded that “while endorsing the efforts of the United Nations to bring about a world community favorable to peace, we will

work to create a world federal government with authority to enact, interpret and enforce world law adequate to maintain peace.”

With those words, the United World Federalists was born. In the 75 years that followed, the organization changed its name several times (it is now Citizens for Global Solutions) and served as the main U.S. branch of a global body, the World Federalist Movement. It worked on such campaigns as the Partial Test Ban treaty which prohibited the testing of nuclear weapons except those conducted underground (1963), the nuclear non-proliferation treaty (1968), the anti-ballistic missile treaty (1972), the establishment of the International Criminal Court (1998), and the acceptance by all UN member nations of the Responsibility to Protect (2005) — a commitment to protect all populations from mass atrocities and human rights violations.

Although these were steps in the right direction, today’s crises necessitate further action toward global governance. The lethality of warfare has become unimaginable, dwarfing the destructiveness of the bombs dropped on Hiroshima and Nagasaki; the triple planetary crises of climate change, biodiversity loss, and pollution are now an existential threat, as we move toward irreversible planetary tipping points; and we are two years into a pandemic that has claimed over five million lives worldwide and nearly one million in the United States.

Our current system of 195 sovereign nations, each pursuing its own self-interest while bound together in a confederation through the United Nations, has demonstrated its

inability to solve the greatest problems of our time. As our organization's founders clearly stated 75 years ago, humanity needs a democratically elected, global federal government with enforceable world law. More of the same just won't do. Through our outreach efforts and public education programs, Citizens for

Global Solutions continues to work toward this goal. At the same time, we advocate for our more immediate objectives of strengthening and democratizing the United Nations, global institutions, and our current system of international law.

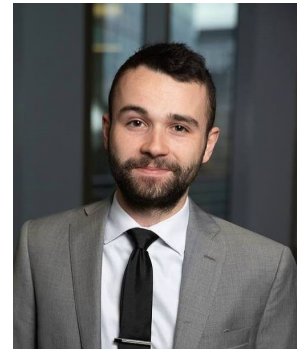
An Unusual Relationship: World Federalism and National Populism

By Alex MacIsaac

In an era marked by the rise of nationalist populists around the world, it is only fair to see the possibility of achieving world federalist objectives through a more pessimistic lens. Worldwide efforts by organizations like World Federalist Movement – Canada to establish a United Nations Parliamentary Assembly, for example, seems all but impossible because of the need for its establishment by consensus or a strong majority across the international community. Other efforts to strengthen global governance too, seem very unlikely in these times – as soon as we achieve any progress in one nation-state such as a commitment to a greener economy or improving adherence to human rights commitments domestically, another state winds the gears of hope back by dismantling the progress of its previous governments under the helm of a nationalist populist figure.

With early shadows emerging in the 1970s and a visible gain in momentum around the 1990s, we've seen nationalist populist movements

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attack international (and, particularly in Europe, supranational) institutions under the guise of taking back a democracy which had been subverted by a “global elite”. These populists view the sovereignty of the nation-state as sacred and absolute, rejecting the possibility that any other political unit can provide any representation or democratic channel for its citizens. This familiar characteristic we attribute to populists takes many different shapes and forms, such as Donald Trump's attacks on NAFTA in the United States or Viktor Orbán's opposition to EU policy on refugees and asylum seekers in Hungary. The formation of the European Union has indeed been cited as a leading reason for the rise of

populism in the continent. Although the Brexit movement took the spotlight in the last decade, the United Kingdom was not alone in its convictions to leave the EU. These movements spread across Europe with great force and very close calls, such as the efforts of the Danish People's Party or the Swedish Democrats. In this way, the creation and gradual expansion of zones for the free movement of goods and services was also seen as the creation of a "global elite". They become a target for populists to point to as being responsible for the woes and turbulence of the national economy in times of crises.

Despite being on polar opposites of the scale in terms of the solution prescribed, both world federalist and nationalist populist movements also share the same criticism of current international and supranational institutions: they aren't democratic (or efficient) enough! Various elements of the administration of EU policy on the economy and immigration is indeed distanced from the average citizen of the EU because of the membership of the European Commission being determined by appointment. This appointed body is responsible for submitting the budget proposals, limiting the power of the directly elected European Parliament to merely approve or disapprove them. While the democratic mechanisms embedded in the EU are far more advanced than those leading to the formation of international policy at the UN, they still have their notable weaknesses in terms of giving European citizens a voice. The body of the UN General Assembly is also determined by appointment rather than direct election, with

very low standards for recognizing the representative legitimacy of appointed UN ambassadors. Since the appointment comes from the national political unit, some members of the body may have a more direct democratic link than others – clearly, any North Korean ambassador's voice at the UN is far less legitimate than the voice of any Canadian ambassador. But even then, Canadian representation at the UN suffers from the chain of appointments between various political actors domestically, distorting the original interests of voters on global governance topics by throwing in various bureaucratic and national interests along the way. This democratic legitimacy component is a severe blow to aspirations of a General Assembly capable of forming international (or world) law that would be binding for nation-states!

Ideally, we would have some sort of UN Parliamentary Assembly to replace the General Assembly. This would involve creating a direct link between world citizens' voices and global interests without going through, but in areas that don't conflict with the global public good still respecting the sovereignty of, the national political unit. In other words, it would in many ways be a universalized version of the EU. World federalists have long advocated for such an endeavour, with minor differences in terms of how the voting groups would be arranged and what types of policy would fall under the global political unit. Most proposals, however, tend to draw voting groups beyond nation-states, grouping different regions and taking population considerations into account. For Canada, we would most likely either be

grouped with the US (and maybe Mexico) as a North American voting group, or cut in half so that groupings of Eastern US states and Canadian provinces/territories and groupings of Western states and provinces/territories would each form separate electoral districts.

The problem is that establishing such a system would require near-unanimous consensus across the international community. So how can we optimistically assert that strengthening global governance is possible as world federalists when populism is on the rise around us (not to mention the possibility of a second Trump administration looms on the horizon of 2024)? For one, each movement fuels the other, so any rise in nationalist populism provides world federalists with argumentative ammunition and proof of the fallacies of absolute national sovereignty. And yet neither will disappear because of the other's rise, no matter how disproportionate the ratio gets. Moreover, note that populists tend to fail in achieving their objectives in the long-run, laying the groundwork for world federalist prescriptions for the same ills identified with international institutions in other areas (and

over the long-run, in the same state that elected the populist figure).

The most important point of this article, however, is that we must acknowledge that world federalist proposals follow a similar logic at their basis as those emerging from nationalist populist movements. It is critical for us, as world federalists, to be able to realistically engage with supporters of nationalist populist figures and bring them to understand how we share similar concerns. Only then can we make progress as world federalists without fueling nationalist populist sentiments among the general public, and ultimately tip the balance in our favour! Next time you engage with a "Trump supporter" or any right-wing populist movement supporter on the topic of foreign affairs, just think to yourself: we have the same concern in mind, and while they may hold different notions in certain areas of political theory, they will better understand that neither of us accept that the international system is sufficiently either efficient or democratic as it stands, and that we have to do something about it together!



The Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons and the World's Future

By Lawrence S. Wittner

This past January marked the first anniversary of the entry into force of the UN Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons. This momentous international agreement — the result of a lengthy struggle by the International Campaign to Abolish Nuclear Weapons (ICAN) and by many non-nuclear nations — bans developing, testing, producing, acquiring, possessing, stockpiling, and threatening to use nuclear weapons. Adopted by an overwhelming vote of the official representatives of the world's nations at a UN conference in July 2017, the treaty was subsequently signed by 86 nations and on January 22, 2021 became international law.

Right from the start, the world's nine nuclear powers — the United States, Russia, China, Britain, France, Israel, India, Pakistan, and North Korea — expressed their opposition to such a treaty. They pressed other nations to boycott the crucial 2017 UN conference and refused to attend it. Indeed, three of them — the United States, Britain, and France — issued a statement declaring that they would never ratify the treaty. Not surprisingly, none of the nuclear powers has signed the agreement or indicated any sympathy for it.

Even so, the Treaty has acquired considerable momentum over the past year. During that time, an additional nine nations ratified it, thus becoming parties to the treaty. And dozens more, having signed it, are expected to ratify it

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in the near future. Furthermore, the governments of two NATO nations, Norway and Germany, have broken free from the U.S. government's oppositional stance to the treaty and agreed to attend the first meeting of the countries that are parties to it.

In nations where public opinion on the treaty has been examined, the international agreement enjoys considerable support. YouGov opinion polls in five NATO countries in Europe show overwhelming backing and very little opposition, with the same true in Iceland, another NATO participant. Polling has also revealed large majorities in favor of the treaty in Japan, Canada, and Australia.

In the United States, where most of the mainstream communications media have not deigned to mention the treaty, it remains a well-kept secret. Even so, although a 2019 YouGov poll about it drew a large “Don't Know” response, treaty support still outweighed opposition by 49 to 32 percent. Moreover, when the U.S. Conference of Mayors, representing 1,400 U.S. cities, met in

August 2021, the gathering unanimously approved a resolution praising the Treaty.

Meanwhile, a variety of institutions, recognizing that nuclear weapons are now illegal under international law, have begun to change their investment policies. In September 2021, Lansforsakringar, a Swedish insurance company with assets of over \$46 billion, cited the treaty as a major reason to avoid investing in companies producing nuclear weapons. In December, the New York City Council adopted a resolution telling the city comptroller to remove investments from the city's \$250 billion pension fund from companies producing or maintaining these weapons of mass destruction. According to ICAN, 127 financial institutions stopped investing in nuclear weapons companies during 2021.

Despite this impressive display of respect for the landmark agreement, the nine nuclear powers have not only continued to oppose it, but have accelerated their nuclear arms race. Having cast off the constraints of most nuclear arms control and disarmament agreements of the past, they are all busy either developing or deploying new nuclear weapons systems or have announced their intention to do so.

In this process of nuclear “modernization,” as it is politely termed, they are building newly designed nuclear weapons of increasing accuracy and efficiency. These include hypersonic missiles, which travel at five times the speed of sound and are better able than their predecessors to evade missile defenses. Reportedly, hypersonic missiles have already been developed by Russia and China. The United States



is currently scrambling to build them, as well, with the usual corporate weapons contractors eager to oblige.

When it comes to “modernization” of its entire nuclear weapons complex, the U.S. government probably has the lead. During the Obama administration, it embarked on a massive project designed to refurbish U.S. nuclear production facilities, enhance existing nuclear weapons, and build new ones. This enormous nuclear venture accelerated during the Trump administration and continues today, with a total cost estimated to ultimately top \$1.5 trillion.

The current build-up of their nuclear arsenals is particularly dangerous at this time of rising conflict among them. The U.S. and Russian governments almost certainly don’t want a

nuclear war over Ukraine, but they could easily slip into one. The same is true in the case of the heightening confrontation between the Chinese and U.S. governments over Taiwan and the islands in the South China Sea. And what will happen when nuclear-armed India and nuclear-armed Pakistan fight yet another war, or when nuclear-armed national leaders like Kim Jong-un and a possibly reelected Donald Trump start trading insults again about their countries’ nuclear might?

The most promising course of action for people interested in human survival might well lie in a popular mobilization to compel the nuclear nations to accept the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons and, more broadly, to accept a restrained role in a cooperatively-governed world.

It’s Time to End the Suffering

By Sovaida Ma’ani Ewing

Our world is being crushed under a torrent of cascading crises. In the past two years alone, we have been buffeted by the twin crises of a global pandemic and worldwide economic recession, and on top of this we face the increasing ravages of climate change. Just as we thought things couldn’t get worse, we find ourselves in the grip of the war in Ukraine.

It beggars belief that our 21st century world allows one leader to hold the entire world hostage, given that humanity’s unprecedented interconnectedness and interdependence has made it a single body with its multiple nations serving as its limbs and organs. Just as it

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makes no sense for us to stand back and allow malignancy in one part of the body to magically heal itself, so too it makes no sense for the community of nations to abdicate responsibility by standing by as one nation is ravaged by war. For, in the end, the well-being of the

world is dependent on the well-being of its constituent nations and vice versa. The Ukraine war provides us with ample evidence of this principle. In addition to a massive refugee crisis, it has triggered a global shortage of energy resulting in a spike in the price of oil and gas. Inflation is running rampant, decimating economies in its wake, and the UN estimates that between 7.6 and 13.1 million will go hungry as we enter the grips of a global food crisis caused by shortages of wheat, barley, corn and fertilizer, products that in normal times are supplied in very large quantities from Ukraine and Russia. Last but not least, it is increasingly evident that the risks of miscalculation in this war could lead to a global war that could well include the use of nuclear weapons.

Any use of nuclear weapons will be catastrophic. Experts tell us that even a limited nuclear war (confined by geography and duration) would be likely to result in 10 years of no summer, destroying crops and resulting in one billion people starving. The stakes are unacceptably high, and the time for apathy is over. The international community can no longer abdicate its responsibility. We the world's citizens must do our part and urge our leaders to act with ceaseless energy to build a system of global governance fit to serve humanity's needs at this stage in its collective growth that is founded on two insights: firstly, the fundamental interests of all nations are fused, and it is therefore futile to continue attempting to maintain an equilibrium of competing interests; secondly the moral obligation enshrined in globally-accepted princi-

ples like the Responsibility to Protect are meaningless if there is no institution to embody and apply them.

Our first step should be to press our leaders to enter into a global agreement creating a viable system of collective security. This agreement would limit the amount of arms each nation can possess to what is necessary to maintain order within its borders. All other weapons must be destroyed under a system of international supervision to be devised. Similarly, all nuclear weapons must be eliminated in phases over a set period of time. Nations must agree to forego war as a tool of international relations. Most importantly, they must agree that if any one nation breaches any of the provisions of this agreement thereby threatening the world's peace, all would arise against it and bring it to heel. Ultimately, this is the only untried yet effective way to stand up to a bully on the international playground.

It should immediately be apparent that such a rule-based system of collective security is useless unless backed by a robust system of enforcement, which is why the second action step has to be the establishment of an international standing force made up of troops and equipment contributed by all the nations of the world. This force would function at the behest of a global legislature directly elected by the peoples of the world and in accordance with predetermined rules laying out the conditions for its use. Its primary aim should be to maintain or restore peace for example in cases of proven genocide, or unlawful territorial aggression, or illicit nuclear weapons programs. It could also be used to assist



populations in times of natural disaster like earthquakes, tsunamis, or pandemics.

By taking the steps proposed here we will ensure that the suffering of the people of Ukraine and many others like them, whether in Yemen, Tigray, Sudan, Syria, or Myanmar, to name a few, will not have been for naught. We will have responded to the observation and call of President Volodymyr Zelenskyy in his address to the U.S. Congress: “We need to

create tools to respond quickly and stop the war. Today, the world does not have such tools.” He went on to say the institutions we created in the past don’t work and “so we need new ones, new institutions.” Let us heed his words and build a viable system of collective security and a standing international force to ensure that the world will never again experience such horror.

Mondial Interviews Amy Oloo

Incoming Executive Director of WFM-IGP

Mondial: What are your first thoughts and impressions upon entering into your new position as the executive director of WFM-IGP?

Amy: I'm incredibly honored by the opportunity to take on this role, but I'm also hyper-aware of the enormous responsibility that comes with the position. My mind is also racing with all the different ideas I'd like to implement at the WFM-IGP, but I'm also very cognizant of the need to prioritize. Ultimately, I believe the WFM-IGP has tremendous potential to make a positive impact and I'm incredibly grateful for the opportunity to tap into this potential.

Mondial: Share with us what challenges you see ahead for WFM-IGP. What are its most important needs and issues? What are its greatest opportunities?

Amy: WFM-IGP has been navigating a period of transition for the last year or so. We've had to go back to the drawing board to re-establish our programs, focus, policies, and operations. This effort has been made more difficult because we do not have extensive resources to apply to this process. Our current organizational needs include working toward a clear and unified vision and mission, developing programs that reflect these decisions, and obtaining the necessary financial and human resources. The organization's challenges are also its greatest opportunity, since returning to the drawing board gives the WFM an opportunity to build back better and stronger.

Mondial: As you see it, what are the key priorities right now for the global movement for world federation? What are its main issues and needs at this time?

Amy: I believe our key priority is unity and inclusivity whereby young federalists, federalists from the global south, and other marginalized voices who support our vision would be invited to participate in federalist platforms and engage in discourse on various global governance issues. A challenge to our vision of world federation is, of course, the growing support for the populist-right in the West and subsequent nationalism, as well as the North-South divide on issues such as climate change.



Mondial: Do you envision that the WFM is the spearhead of the world movement? Or is it more important to build a broad coalition with other NGOs focused on global governance?

Amy: I envision the WFM as the spearhead of the federalist movement. However, there may be NGOs focused on various global governance issues that do not necessarily subscribe to the ideals of federalism as outlined in the Montreaux Declaration (i.e. the WFM's founding document); in such an instance the idea of joining with them in a separate broad coalition of NGOs focused on global governance makes sense. The WFM and members of such a coalition would ultimately share many of the same goals, and thus the pursuit of pragmatic partnerships (where appropriate) would be the best course of action.

Mondial: What is your current view of role the United Nations and its agencies? Do you envision focusing on UN reform as your priority, or do you feel it is more important to aim for building a new global governance organization from the ground up?

Amy: The UN and its agencies have a key role in maintaining peace and security, as well as promoting international cooperation in solving economic, social, and humanitarian issues. The organization has been successful in achieving these things to an extent, but its structure has weaknesses, particularly in regard to the rules governing the Security Council. This has meant that the world has been at the mercy of the P5 countries, who selectively apply the veto power to safeguard their interests ahead of any social or humanitarian implications. There is also insufficient representation of civil society voices in decision-making, which limits the organization's vision and effectiveness. With this in mind, I would say that UN reform is way overdue and can perhaps help the organization better achieve the purposes outlined in its charter. Even so, it's difficult to envision a situation in which the permanent Security Council members would yield their veto power that has given them immense privilege in shaping the current international order to their benefit. Improving on current global governance institutions, and perhaps building new ones, seems like the best way forward because such efforts can draw lessons from the UN's own structural inequalities and failures, and at the same time seek to promote more inclusive and effective platforms for global governance.

Mondial: You are a rising leader of a new generation. What is your vision for the world we need to create during your lifetime?

Amy: As I indicated above, my ideal world is one where youth, women, representatives from the global south, and other marginalized voices are given an equal seat at the table in finding solutions to the world's challenges. I envision a world in which our common good is prioritized ahead of any nationalist or capitalist goals, and where people who actively work against this common good, for instance as it pertains to environmental protection, are held to account.

Mondial: If you like, share something additional about yourself and your new role in the movement for democratic world federation, or about the current world situation.

Amy: As a feminist and as a Pan-African that is a champion for inclusivity, I am really grateful to be taking on the executive director role. I believe that a seat at the table for every interest group is what a democratic federation requires and what the world at large needs.

Building a world community



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Make Peace Possible With a United Nations Emergency Peace Service

By Peter Langille

President Dwight Eisenhower's farewell address in 1961 warned us about the existence of a [military-industrial complex](#) that exerts "unwarranted influence" and displays "the potential for the disastrous rise of misplaced power." Shortly after that famous speech we learned for the first time about a viable alternative: In a landmark document called "[Freedom From War](#)," President John F. Kennedy and officials in the State Department determined that preventing war and encouraging wider disarmament "can only be achieved" by a more effective UN and a "UN Peace Force" to safeguard legitimate interests. This approach is still available to us today. Kennedy's declaration has evolved to become a proposal for a United Nations Emergency Peace Service (UNEPS) —a more sophisticated option than Kennedy's early idea of a UN standing force. Our dysfunctional, war-prone system no longer needs to be so anarchic and destructive, nor does it have to be ruled and selectively enforced by the strongest military powers or by the Western military alliance, NATO.

The UNEPS concept is effectively a "UN 911 first-responder" for complex emergencies. If it were to come into being, the UN would finally have the capacity to address four of its tougher assigned tasks: (1) to help prevent armed conflict and genocide, (2) protect civilians at extreme risk, (2) ensure prompt start-

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up of demanding peace operations, and (4) provide for pressing human needs where others either cannot or will not.

What's distinctly different in this idea? The UNEPS proposal calls for *a permanent, standing, and integrated UN formation*. The force would be highly trained and well-equipped, and ready for immediate deployment upon authorization of the UN Security Council. This service would be *multidimensional* (including civilians, police, and military) and *multifunctional*—that is, capable of diverse assignments and equipped with specialized skills for handling security, humanitarian, health, and environmental crises.

As an integrated first-responder, a UNEPS is not limited to simply stopping direct violence; its work also extends from quick-impact to long-term projects of various kinds. A UNEPS would include specialists in conflict resolution and mediation, human rights monitors and educators, peace-building advisory units, and medical teams, giving it a far better prospect of addressing and solving any

unfolding crisis.

A UNEPS need not be overly large. I have proposed that it be composed of 13,500 dedicated professionals who are recruited, selected, trained, and employed by the UN, and chosen so as to ensure regional and gender-equitable representation. Ideally, the force would be located at a designated UN base under an operational headquarters and should also include two mobile-mission headquarters at sufficient strength to operate in high-threat environments. Yet, unlike previous proposals, I believe that a UNEPS should complement existing UN arrangements.

Three further advantages of the UNEPS concept stand out.

1. First, overall UN peace operations would improve with such a standing first-responder. Instead of taking six months-to-a year or more to deploy contingents from participating nations, the UN would have its own rapid and reliable standing peace service able to quickly address a wide array of emergencies. That is, rather than the current UN focus on “post-conflict stabilization” that deploys after the fighting stops—much like a police force that intervenes after a killing or rape has concluded—a UNEPS is designed to provide an immediate preventive response within days.

Prevention and protection are far more manageable tasks when a force arrives promptly before conflicts escalate and spread into worse violence. In turn, there should be less need for later, larger, longer, and far more costly operations. In other words, an ounce of prevention might be well worth a ton of cure.

Any preventive system works best as a deterrent; that is, when it seldom has to intervene to stem a crisis. As with any policing or defense effort, it's best to be *known* to have the credible means to stop aggressors. In other words, a standing UNEPS would always convey a legitimate presence while still being ready 24/7 to discourage violence. Its deployable elements should be sufficient to deter most if not all belligerents and at the same time be fully able to operate in high-risk environments.

Because a UNEPS will be limited in size and composition, its optimum application is that of getting into action *before* a wider, unmanageable situation arises. In this respect, it may be seen as roughly analogous to the sort of fire extinguisher one keeps in the kitchen; it is useless once the entire house is ablaze, but usually very effective when the first flames begin to spread; and, it may be very helpful in protecting people, even in providing a safe area until additional help arrives.

2. Second, as a new model, a UNEPS is designed to encourage a wider shift toward providing prompt care to populations in need, and featuring a diverse array of useful services. We are now a “global neighborhood” with a greater need than ever for universal emergency services. Having gender-equitable composition would also give it better prospects for peacemaking and peacebuilding. Standards of service would also improve system-wide.

The need for more far-reaching system shifts in global peacemaking is already evident. Understandably, many governments will not stop

preparing for more war until they see a universal commitment to ensure security that is backed up by a UN capacity that's rapid and reliable. Increasingly, it is understood that progress in wider disarmament and even the implementation of the UN Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons depends on a coherent alternative to nuclear and conventional deterrence. This new alternative to the old system need not be similar to what now exists, i.e., large or powerfully destructive. It only needs to be credible, respected, and widely valued.

3. The third advantage of the UNEPS option is in its potential to serve as a UN “emergency security provider”— a [crucial step toward ‘freedom from war’](#). As an emergency security service, the likely roles of a UNEPS would be similar to that of a first-responder; that is, a trip-wire, a vanguard and a standing presence to dissuade, deter and, respond rapidly, if necessary.

As stated above, a UNEPS does not require heavy military elements nor a capacity for mid-to-high-intensity war-fighting. Because it represents the prestige of the international community, it is unlikely to encounter violent resistance from any national armed force. If back-up support is needed, the five permanent members of the UN Security Council (France, China, Russia, the United States and the United Kingdom) will continue to have ample capacity in the near term. But they may not be needed so much in the long-term.

Contrary to [official claims](#) of a UN standing capacity's “immense expense,” a UNEPS would also be a cost-saver. Its development

will entail approximately \$3.5 billion in start-up costs, with annual recurring costs of \$1.5 billion, shared proportionally among the 193 member states of the UN. Because UNEPS will be a credible deterrent, it will cut the size, length, cost, and frequency of UN operations. Success in just one of these areas would provide a real return on the investment.

Clearly, the even bigger bonus in developing a UNEPS is that it initiates an overdue cooperative process. It offers a large step toward a global peace system, one that encourages military build-down and disarmament and freeing up vast resources to help with the climate emergency, pandemic recovery, and a looming social crisis. As a result, it might save *trillions*. There is truth to the slogan, “Planet or War, You Choose.” Our heavily-militarized world is unsustainable and now a serious threat to human survival. Our future, if there is to be one, urgently depends on far deeper cooperation, not confrontation.

Last September a “**Global Census Poll**” found “widespread skepticism that the United Nations is well-prepared for the challenges of the next decade.” Skepticism spreads when there is too little to inspire a constituency and further support.

It's an unlikely coincidence that UN Secretary-General, Antonio Guterre recently announced that another [Agenda for Peace](#) will be forthcoming, an event that presents a unique opportunity to boost the UNEPS idea.

In elaborating on his priorities, UN Secretary-General, Antonio Guterres emphasizes prevention and protection, reducing violence

and placing women at the center of security policies. In addition, the [People's Declaration of June 2020](#) explicitly called for more standing capacities available on short-notice for UN peace operations.

We now have encouraging precedents calling for a UNEPS in the U.S. House of Representatives ([H-Res 180](#) and [H-Res 213](#)), and efforts are underway for a third.

Thankfully, millions are now active in the struggle to save the planet and succeeding generations. Many have also mobilized in resistance to more war and higher military spending. But it seems unlikely that peace will prevail or that war and armed conflict will be

prevented simply from popular resistance or calls for cuts.

Buckminster Fuller once stated, “you never change things by fighting the existing reality. To change something, build a new model that makes the existing model obsolete.” The proposed UNEPS is such a new model to solve multiple problems. A UN Emergency Peace Service is no panacea or cure-all, but a powerful new approach to help solve real problems. And, it might be a game-changer if “we the people” step up, pull together, and give the idea a boost. With so many shared global emergencies, it’s time to give peace another chance.



Democracy in Decline?

By Joseph Preston Baratta

Democracies throughout the world have been giving way to autocracies and nationalist movements in the last 15 years, as many people think. President Biden has announced a global struggle between democracy and autocracy. The United States and its allies (including Canada) are pitted against Russia and China and a few other revanchists. Freedom House, which tracks such trends, finds that the growth of freedom (not of democracies) after the end of the Cold War and the dissolution of the U.S.S.R. in 1991 began to reverse in 2006.

In an alarming report of *Freedom in the World in 2021*, Sarah Repucci and Amy Slipowitz cite such signs of widening autocracy as expansion of authoritarian rule, increased resort to military force, heavy jail sentences, torture, and murder of beleaguered activists, human rights abuses in mainland China, demolition of Hong Kong's liberties and legal autonomy, wars in Ethiopia and Azerbaijan, Hindu nationalism in India, malfeasance of former President Trump, insurrection in Washington, and racial injustice in the U.S.A. They see a growing threat to institutional safeguards, civic norms, and the promise of democracy's core principles.

However, a longer-term historical view of the actual growth since 1900 of democracies (republican states with elected legislatures), as opposed to monarchies and tyrannical states, shows that the story is not nearly so grim. According to *Our World in Data*, in 1900 there

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was one democracy (presumably the U.S.A.) and 112 autocracies. Democracies grew in numbers comparatively as the 20th century wore on — 17 versus 132 at the start of World War II in 1939, and 99 democracies vs. 80 autocracies in 2018, after the breakup of the U.S.S.R. The crossover point was about 1995, when democracies began to outnumber autocracies. Data from the Pew Research Center after 1946 confirms this pattern. Pew finds that mixed systems (democracies perverted by authoritarian leaders) crossed over the line with autocracies about 1995. By 2017, the number of democracies was 57, that of autocracies 13, and mixed polities 28.

We should remember that, historically, democracy has been a slow growth. England took over 600 years to establish democracy, reckoning from the first caucus of knights and burgesses outside the Great Council in the reign of Edward I (1295) to the Parliament Act ending the power of the House of Lords to veto legislation (1911) and the Representation of the People Act (1918). Canada took 140 years, judging from the British Constitutional

Act (1791), which gave the colony a government with an appointed governor, executive council, legislative council, and popularly elected assembly. Independence as a Dominion was granted by the British North American Act (1867), and all dependence on the British Parliament ended with the Act of Westminster (Commonwealth, 1931). The United States of America took 200 years, dating from the Mayflower Compact (1620), through the Revolution and drafting of the U.S. Constitution, to full democracy (ending of property requirements for voting) at the election of Andrew Jackson (1828).

A historical perspective helps us to appreciate the Theory of Change of Democracy Without Borders (2021), which was partly inspired by the ideal of world federalism. DWB predicts the democratization of Russia and China after about 2030. In order to come to grips with our immense global problems, there has to be even a tentative timetable, and Citizens for Global Solutions and Democracy Without Borders deserve respect for daring to do so.

But last year, the military and diplomatic maneuvers of Vladimir Putin to end the threat of NATO expansion into Ukraine were not so evident, and one of these years China may attempt by force to bring Taiwan back into the Empire under the Mandate of Heaven. Then there may be some other upset of foreign relations like North Korea's testing of ICBMs that can reach California, or demonstrated acquisition of nuclear weapons by Iran in the troubled Middle East.

I do not think democratization of Russia, situated on a vast plain open to enemies west and east, will ever be possible without some truly fair and reliable regional security system. And democratization of China seems inconceivable without a long period of adjustment by the masses to norms of individual freedom. We should not be in a hurry. Such changes, even in Western civilization, were a slow growth. We should remember the Cold War and not let "democracy" become a weapon against great powers that are adjusting to the forces of globalization.





Ending the Race to the Bottom on Corporate Taxation

While globalization has brought many benefits — such as economic efficiency, international collaboration, and cross-cultural exchange — it has also come with a number of costs. One is a race to the bottom on corporate taxation. If a multinational corporation doesn't like its tax rate in a country, it can simply move its money somewhere else, depriving the first country of any taxes at all. This creates an incentive to push taxes lower and lower: Average corporate taxes have declined from about 40% in the 1980s to about 20% in recent years, depriving governments of funds needed to tackle social and environmental problems.

An important step has been taken toward ending this dynamic. The 136 countries in the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), who are responsible for 94% of global economic activity, have agreed to a “global minimum tax.” According to this concept, all corporations with at least 750 million euros in global sales would be taxed at a rate of at least 15%. Income will be taxed where it is earned, so if a company like Microsoft has customers in, say, France, its revenue from those customers will be taxed by France. Moreover, if a country where the

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corporation does business doesn't tax it at a rate of at least 15%, its home country can add “top-up tax” to make up the difference. This clever arrangement removes the incentive for lowering taxes.

The (almost) global minimum tax agreement is not without its weaknesses. Certain sectors, including finance and resource extraction, are for some reason exempt. Moreover, actually implementing the agreement will require countries to change their tax laws. Multinationals will undoubtedly lobby against such changes in the United States and elsewhere. It's worth keeping an eye on and supporting the ratification of this agreement, which is a step toward reigning in global economic anarchy.



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