AN INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL OF WORLD FEDERALISTS

MONDIAL

SUMMER 2026 | VOLUME 9, ISSUE 1

U.S. EDITION

GLOBAL SOLUTIONS FOR A DIVIDED WORLD

Citizens for Global Solutions

WORLD FEDERALIST MOVEMENT – CANADA | MOUVEMENT FÉDÉRALISTE MONDIAL – CANADA

LETTER FROM THE EDITORIAL BOARD

There is a temptation, in the UN's eightieth year, to read its troubles as the decline of a single institution. We think that misses the deeper story. A divided world is not a new predicament. Problems have never respected borders: plague, war, financial panic, and empire were crossing them long before anyone drew the current map. When the American world federalist movement organized as the United World Federalists in 1947, two years into the UN's life, it argued that the postwar settlement was already too weak for the forces it was built to govern. Eighty years on, that warning has only sharpened. Nuclear risk, climate collapse, mass displacement, and unaccountable capital move at a scale the UN was never designed to match, and no one has yet built what should follow it. That gap, between the scale of our problems and the reach of our institutions, is the subject of this issue.

Start with the institution itself. David Woollcombe counts what the UN has quietly made possible over eight decades, the mail that crosses borders, the hundred thousand planes that share the sky each day without colliding, and asks what has to change for the UN to reach a hundred. Lawrence Wittner puts the same question in the shadow of the atomic bomb, tracing how ordinary people forced disarmament before, in 1958 and again in the 1980s, and argues they can again. Douglas Roche, a diplomat who spent decades working hon this, adds a spare refusal to accept the lies told on behalf of these weapons. Read together, they make the case that decline is a choice, not a diagnosis.

If there is a single villain in these pages, it is the veto. Five governments can stop the world from acting, and lately one has been enough to block the Security Council on Gaza and on Sudan. Jacopo DeMarinis shows how that power works and what rebalancing it would take. Bill Pearce turns the mirror back on the movement, arguing Canada cannot credibly seek to curb the veto while breaching its own treaty obligations. We put those two side by side on purpose.

The rest of the issue is dedicated world federalists doing the harder work of proposing what comes next. Isabella Grace Smith, winner of the 2025 CGS New Voices 4 Global Solutions essay contest, proposes citizens ratify treaties directly. Eoin Jackson coordinates the scattered response to climate, pollution, and biodiversity loss. Mario Schejtman and Ahmad L. offer a federal route through the worn-out two-state debate. David Gallup argues world citizenship could end statelessness for the 120 million now displaced. Larry Kazdan shows how developing nations can use their own currencies to escape the austerity their lenders impose. Karen Hamilton and Joseph Preston Baratta close with reviews of books that assess the past and future of our global institutions.

The division is old, older than the UN, older than the borders we now take for granted. What runs through these pages is the harder, less familiar half: the solutions. Global solutions for a divided world are not a slogan here but a working assignment, and it is one world federalists have been at longer than almost anyone. Welcome to MONDIAL

Photo by NASA

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REFLECTIONS ON THE UN'S 80TH ANNIVERSARY

CELEBRATE! INNOVATE! DREAM!

David R. Woollcombe

A common refrain from UN officers and diplomats on the UN's 80th Anniversary has been: "There's nothing to celebrate here." Challenging as the UN's circumstances are, that attitude is wrong. I am about the same age as the UN and, 80 years in, I see much to celebrate.

Start with the very fact that the UN has survived for 80 years! The League of Nations only managed 17! While it is right to worry about the state of the UN, and the international system more broadly, any sober reflection on the role the UN plays in our lives would remind us that we, the peoples of the human family, could not function without it. The fact that you can post a letter in Birmingham, UK and it gets to Bangkok, Thailand is a function of the UN's Universal Postal Union. The fact that one hundred thousand planes fill our skies every day and don't bump into each other is thanks to the UN's collaboration with the International Civil Aviation Organization. The fact that ships don't either is thanks to the International Maritime Organization. For the rarity of nuclear incidents, thank the International Atomic Energy Agency. For the concepts of Sustainable Development and Peace-keeping, thank the UN Secretariat's thought leadership. For calling out genocides and government failures in tackling the climate emergency, thank the International Court of Justice. And for supporting countless millions of people just to survive, thank the thousands of selfless UN servants who work for the World Food Programme, UNDP, UNICEF, UNHCR and many other UN programs. Just to rehearse the numbers—the millions of lives saved, the millions of refugees housed, the millions of hungry fed—is to understand the jaw-dropping scale of the UN's service to our human family.

We must also remember that this service is not just bought with dollars and cents. It has cost the lives of some 4,400 UN servants and soldiers who have died in the service of the UN since 1945. In the last two years alone, 376 UNRWA staff have died in Gaza, bringing essential services to the people caught up in that appalling conflict. It is shameful for UN member governments not to honor those lives, that sacrifice. In its 80th Anniversary year, all of us should pay homage to them—and the work of all those UN servants who devote their lives to the service of humanity.

The brickbats of the current US administration and the ease with which senior UN Member States breach the UN Charter or fail to pay their assessed contributions on time, or at all, is—of course– a terrible slap in the face to the UN. The slashing of aid budgets by many of its richest members and the accompanying increase in military expenditure are a huge threat to the UN's values and its core mandates to stop wars and end poverty. But, rather than cowing us into defeat and resignation, these reverses should spur "We the Peoples," in whose name the UN was founded, to re-double our efforts to support

We have to re-invent the UN so that it does more than provide a convenient conference center for governments to meet and shoot the breeze.

and celebrate those values for which the UN stands, and give greater urgency to our efforts to support it to implement its core mandates.

Lest we forget, many of the aid and climate investment cuts are economically illiterate and are being ignored by clear-headed business and philanthropic leaders. American sustainability consultant, Andrew Winston, reports that there were over 1,000 business and civil society events during Climate Week in New York this year with over 100,000 people attending, many more than last year. He commented: "Down the street [at the UN], the U.S. president was calling [the] climate [emergency] a hoax. But maybe the right reaction is, 'so what? '" The U.S. is roughly 15% of global trade and emissions; the other 85% are pressing ahead with Climate Action. $2 trillion a year flows into clean tech vs $1 trillion into old energy as renewables are cheaper and much faster to build.

At the 2025 World Health Summit in Berlin, the head of the Global Fund to Fight Aids, Tuberculosis and Malaria, Peter Sands, told delegates that the $10 billion a year required to reach the UN agreed target of cutting malaria cases by 90% by 2030 would save 1.86 million lives and add $231 billion to the GDP. The severe cuts proposed by some governments would add a million more deaths to the global total and cause an $86 billion drop in the GDP. Malaria prevention thus offers a huge return on investment.

One would think that UN Member State governments would see the economic sense in that, but apparently they do not. Instead they are doing their best impression of a rabbit trapped in the headlights of a climate-denying, aid-eviscerating, military-industrial, fossil-fuel-funded complex. Given UN member governments' silence and paralysis, we the peoples need to think cunningly about innovative ways to give the UN and its agencies the adulation its achievements deserve.

It has become a truism to say that the climate emergency is not so much an environmental problem but a global governance problem. Almost every national government has countless environmental regulations that protect its national parks, individual species of animals, forests, sites of special scientific interest, UNESCO World Heritage sites etc. etc. The world has no such protections. Oceans, outer space, the atmosphere, river systems—the entire biosphere—is a wild west! As Sir Partha Dasgupta wrote in the introduction to his Biodiversity Review: "Our planet lacks the institutional arrangements to protect the global commons." But, though some imperially-minded nation states like it this way and are not about to allow any global organization like the UN to tell them what to do, research by Focaldata for the Rockefeller Foundation shows that, globally, 75% of us support global action to deal with global problems, like the climate crisis and pandemic prevention and also effective humanitarian aid.

Sadly that research also shows falling trust in the UN's ability to lead those global initiatives. We have to admit, current leadership at the UN has been feeble—and it is likely to continue to be so unless we can find a way to prevent the imperially-minded nations from appointing another Secretary-General that is compliant to their diktats. So we must all support the 1 for 8 Billion Campaign, which seeks to ensure that an effective Secretary-General is appointed next year. But—whoever s/he is—that will not

be enough to restore the UN's effectiveness. We must also support the Article 109 Coalition for UN Charter review. For the fact is, we have to re-invent the UN so that it does more than save lives and provide a convenient conference center for governments to meet and shoot the breeze. We require a UN that works, not only to "save succeeding generations from the scourge of war," but to save humanity from the very real threat of extinction.

One of the UN's greatest successes was to relieve the world from the scourge of imperialism. Between 1945 and 1995, it oversaw the dismantling of the British, French, Belgian, Portuguese and Soviet empires. As a result, its membership grew from 51 to 193 member states. Now, as some member states re-discover their imperial instincts with Russia's invasion of Ukraine, US claims on Canada and Greenland, Israel's imperial project in the Middle East, and China's repeated claims on Taiwan, the UN should fight back by welcoming more nations—not just Taiwan and Palestine, but first nations like the Cherokees and Navajos, Sami Peoples and Inuits, Maoris and Aborigines, and the many other unrepresented peoples and nations from whom the human family can learn so much.

This year has seen UN leaders inundated by ideas for innovation and reform. The Secretariat has formalized this into its own UN80 Reform process, which focuses on three pillars: efficiency and effectiveness improvements; structural changes and program realignment; and review of the UN's 4,000 active mandates, to reduce costs and avoid duplication.

Two more radical innovations should be added into the mix to ensure that "We the Peoples" have a UN that can deliver those "institutional arrangements to protect the global commons" for our own—and future generations'—survival.

First, we should look to reorganize the taxation system of our planet to ensure that our treasure ends up helping those most in need on our planet. A Study by the London School of Economics and Carbon Tracker found that fossil fuel companies and petro-states have made $2.8 billion a day in profits since 1970 from their products that threaten to asphyxiate the entire human family! Oxfam's Global Wealth Report goes further, revealing the shocking statistic that global billionaire wealth increased by $2 trillion in 2024—almost 70 times the annual amount required to end extreme poverty as calculated by UN University researchers. It also reports that $30 million per hour is transferred from

A system of world wealth taxation must be inaugurated to tackle the global challenges we face.

the Global South to the Global North through debt service payments and other financial system obligations. Consequently, so much of the world's money ends up lining the pockets of those who already have more than they need. That is both immoral and inexcusable. A system of world wealth taxation must be inaugurated to tackle the litany of global challenges we face and pay for a UN System capable of delivering those solutions.

Second: we should seek to replace "imperial thinking" with what Martin Luther King called "World House thinking." In his Nobel Prize acceptance speech, and in the final chapter of his last book, Where do we go from here?—Chaos or Community, King imagines "a great 'world house' in which, because we can never again live without each other, we must learn, somehow, to live with each other." Pursuing King's metaphor, try to imagine the UN serving a big family, living together in one big World House, where everyone cares for each other, cooks and feeds each other, ensures that everyone's kids are educated, that the sick and the elderly are cared for, that the trash is emptied regularly, and that the plumbing, ventilation and fabric of the house is carefully maintained for future residents. The Residents' Association of such a house ("We the Peoples") would never give the rich residents in the penthouse apartments the power to veto the agreements of all the other residents, would it? Neither would it allow any residents to pack the basement with nuclear weapons and threaten to blow the whole place up if they didn't get their way! In the World House of King's imagination, the other residents would throw such rowdy, rule breaking residents out, and only let them back in when they learned to behave like good, caring World House citizens.

Could the UN do that to its rowdy, Charter-breaking, nuclear-armed Security Council members? In your dreams! But King famously had a dream! And as we reflect on the 80th anniversary of our indispensable UN, it is right to imagine what the UN might look like 80 years hence. King also said: "We must learn to live together as friends, or we shall die together as fools." The young people passing through our schools today require a UN to save them from the scourge of extinction. So our governments, and the UN itself, must encourage more young people, especially from the P5 and other nuclear states, to meet and craft new stories of how their generation will achieve the collaboration that our world desperately needs if life on earth is to survive another 80 years.

The UN was born as a result of bloody conquest by nations with perverse imperial instincts. As we watch the re-emergence of those imperial instincts, let all of us who work to support the UN, locally, nationally, and globally, re-double our efforts to resurrect a vision of a UN system capable of creating a world that works for everyone.

AUTHOR

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Photo by Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament

EIGHTY YEARS OF NUCLEAR TERROR

Lawrence S. Wittner

Photo: Demonstrators carry Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament in Trafalgar Square in 1959.

Ever since the atomic bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki in August 1945, the world has been living on borrowed time.

The indications, then and since, were clear enough: the development of nuclear weapons did not bode well for human survival. The two atomic bombs, small by today's standards for nuclear weapons, killed between 110,000 and 210,000 people and wounded many others, almost all of them civilians. In subsequent years, hundreds of thousands more people around the world lost their lives thanks to the radioactive fallout from nuclear weapons testing, and substantial numbers died from the mining of uranium for the building of nuclear weapons.

Most startling, the construction of nuclear weapons armadas against the backdrop of thousands of years of international conflict portended human extinction. Amid the escalating nuclear terror, Einstein declared: "General annihilation beckons."

Despite the enormity of the nuclear danger in the decades after 1945, the governments of powerful nations were too committed to traditional thinking about international relations to resist the temptation to build nuclear weapons to safeguard what they considered their national security. Whatever the dangers, their leaders concluded, military power still counted in an anarchic world. Consequently, these nations plunged headlong into a nuclear arms race and, on occasion, threatened one another with nuclear war. At times, they came perilously close to it — not only during the 1963 Cuban missile crisis, but during the October 1973 Arab-Israeli war and on numerous other occasions.

By contrast, much of the general public found nuclear weapons and the prospect of nuclear war very unappealing. Appalled by the nuclear menace, they rallied behind organizations like the National Committee for a Sane Nuclear Policy in the United States, the Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament in Britain, and comparable groups elsewhere that pressed for nuclear arms control and disarmament

Every nuclear country is improving its weapons systems, while some are growing their arsenals. Others are doing both.

measures. This popular uprising secured its first clear triumph when, in the fall of 1958, the governments of the United States, the Soviet Union, and Britain agreed to halt nuclear weapons testing as they negotiated a test ban treaty. As the nuclear disarmament movement crested, it played an important role in securing the Partial Test Ban Treaty of 1963 and a cascade of nuclear arms control measures that followed.

Even when U.S. and Soviet officials revived the nuclear arms race in the late 1970s and early 1980s, a massive public uprising halted and reversed the situation, leading to the advent of major nuclear disarmament measures. As a result, the number of nuclear weapons in the world's arsenals plummeted from about 70,000 to about 12,240 between 1986 and 2025. At a special meeting of the UN Security Council in 2009, the leaders of the major nuclear powers called for the building of a nuclear weapons-free world.

In recent decades, however, the dwindling of the popular movement and the heightening of international conflict have led to a revival of the nuclear arms race, now well underway. As three nuclear experts from the Federation of American Scientists reported in June 2025: "Every nuclear country is improving its weapons systems, while some are growing their arsenals. Others are doing both." The new nuclear weaponry currently being tested includes "cruise missiles that can fly for days before hitting their targets; underwater unmanned nuclear torpedoes; fast-flying maneuverable glide vehicles that can evade defenses; and nuclear weapons in space that can attack satellites or targets on Earth without warning." The financial costs of the nuclear buildup by the nine nuclear powers (the United States, Russia, China, Britain, France, Israel, India, Pakistan, and North Korea) will be immense. The U.S. government will reportedly spend over $1.7 trillion on its nuclear "modernization."

To facilitate these nuclear war preparations, the major nuclear powers have withdrawn from key nuclear arms control and disarmament treaties. The New START Treaty, the last of the major U.S.-Russian nuclear agreements, ended in February 2026.

Furthermore, over the past decade, the governments of North Korea, the United States, and Russia have issued public threats of nuclear war. In line with its own threats, the Russian government announced in late 2024 that it had lowered its threshold for using nuclear weapons.

In response to these developments, the Doomsday Clock of the Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists has been set at 89 seconds to midnight, the most dangerous level in its 79-year history.

As the record of the years since 1945 indicates, the catastrophe of nuclear war can be averted. To accomplish this, however, a revival of public pressure for nuclear disarmament is essential, for, without a countering popular influence, governments easily slip into the traditional trap of enhancing military "strength" to cope with a conflict-ridden world—a practice that, in the nuclear age, is a recipe for disaster.

This public pressure could begin, as the Nuclear Freeze movement of the 1980s did, with a call to halt the nuclear arms race, and could continue with the demand for specific nuclear arms control and disarmament measures.

Simultaneously, the movement needs to champion the strengthening of global institutions — institutions that can provide greater international security than presently exists. The existence of these strengthened institutions — for example, a stronger United Nations — would help resolve the violent conflicts among nations that spawn arms races and would undermine lingering public and official beliefs that nuclear weapons are essential to safeguard national security.

Once the world is back on track toward nuclear disarmament, the movement could focus on its campaign for the signing and ratification of the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons. This treaty, providing the framework for a nuclear weapons-free world, was adopted in 2017 by most of the world's nations and went into force in 2021. Thus far, it has been signed by 99 nations and ratified by 74 of them.

Given recent international circumstances, none of the nuclear powers have signed it. But with widespread popular pressure and enhanced international security, they could ultimately be brought on board.

They certainly *should* be, for human survival depends upon ending the nuclear terror.

A revival of public pressure for nuclear disarmament is essential.

AUTHOR

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UNTITLED

I dissent from the
wild disproportion
of what the world
spends on arms
and what it spends
on development.
I dissent from the
anti-humanitarian
policies of war for
peace. I dissent from
the perpetuation of
poverty through the
greed of the rich.
I dissent from the
despoliation of the
planet by short-
sighted industrialism.
Most of all, I dissent
from the fabric of
lies spun by the
proponents of nuclear
weapons who would
have us believe
that these heinous
instruments of mass
murder make us safer.

AUTHOR

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THE DANGERS OF BIG POWER DOMINATION OF GLOBAL AFFAIRS

Jacopo DeMarinis

On September 18, 2025, the United Nations Security Council, the principal organ of the United Nations entrusted with maintaining international peace and security, introduced a resolution demanding an immediate and permanent ceasefire in Gaza, including the immediate release of all hostages and the lifting of restrictions on humanitarian aid to prevent the growing famine. Fourteen members of the fifteen-member council voted in favor. One member, the United States, voted against it. The resolution was thereby defeated.

This is par for the course at the UN Security Council. Five permanent members (P5)—China, the United Kingdom, the United States, Russia, and France—can veto any resolution, immediately discarding it. The significance of this is heightened by the fact that the Security Council's resolutions are binding, unlike the more representative General Assembly, whose resolutions are merely recommendations. In the past, the Security Council has passed binding resolutions authorizing dozens of peacekeeping operations to address conflicts in the Balkans, Angola, Somalia, Haiti, and other countries.

Unfortunately, history has shown that the P5 will leverage their position in the Council to block a resolution that threatens their interests. For instance, Russia vetoed a February 2022 Security Council resolution demanding an end to the Ukraine war and blocked a UN Security Council resolution calling an end to the civil war in Sudan. Since the inception of the Security Council in 1945, a veto has been cast 327 times: Russia has wielded the veto 161 times, the United States, 95 times, China, 21 times; and the United Kingdom and France, 32 and 18 times, respectively.

To enhance the P5's accountability to other UN countries, the UN General Assembly recently passed a resolution urging the veto-casting member to provide an explanation for their decision. This resolution harks back to the 1950 UN General Assembly's "Uniting for Peace" resolution, which provided the General Assembly with the opportunity to address any matter pertaining to international peace that has paralyzed the UN Security Council.

"Great power" capture of the global landscape is also apparent when it comes to nuclear

It's necessary to treat not just the symptoms but the underlying disease: gross global power imbalances.

disarmament issues. The Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), which entered into force in 1970, requires nuclear weapons states, including the P5, to negotiate toward the complete abolition of their nuclear weapons. Despite this mandate, nine countries now have nuclear weapons, and they continue to modernize their nuclear forces, in defiance of the NPT. Unsurprisingly, these same countries unanimously oppose the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons (TPNW). The TPNW was born out of non-nuclear weapons states' frustration with noncompliance with the NPT and prohibits any country party to the treaty from possessing nuclear weapons.

The same pattern prevails with respect to climate change. Despite their strengthened embrace of green energy, the world's top polluters, including the United States and China, are still burning carbon dioxide at an unsustainable rate which threatens to raise global temperature increase to above the 1.5 degree Celsius limit set by the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change. This means that the worst effects of the climate crisis will not be averted. Furthermore, the fact that powerful countries like the United States have openly defied international climate treaties like the Paris Accords- which the United States withdrew from in 2020, rejoined in 2021, and then withdrew from again with the re-election of Donald Trump- weakens international climate coordination and fosters a culture of unaccountability and skepticism about global climate governance.

Furthermore, the COP29 conference in Baku is seen by many climate activists and governments in the Global South as a failure, albeit a step in the right direction. Wealthy countries agreed to commit $300 billion a year by 2035 to aid developing countries in reducing carbon dioxide emissions and transitioning to clean energy, which is far from the $1.3 trillion annually for climate financing that developing countries were pushing for. It's also extremely unjust that the burden will be felt mainly by small island states and developing countries in the Global South that have least contributed to the crisis.

To address this climate injustice, the Pacific Island nation of Vanuatu initiated proceedings with the International Court of Justice (ICJ) in 2023, requesting an advisory opinion regarding the legal obligations of states with respect to climate change. Vanuatu's decision to present a UN General Assembly resolution initiating climate proceedings with the ICJ was due mainly to the determined climate justice efforts of youth activists from Pacific Island states, including civil society organizations like World's Youth for Climate Justice. Although the ICJ's advisory opinions are not legally binding on countries, the ICJ's ruling will hopefully set a precedent regarding international action to address climate change. Updates regarding the ICJ's climate case can be viewed here.

It's clear that the big power-dominated international order is unsustainable. The Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists' decision to move the Doomsday Clock to 89 seconds to midnight, the closest to complete catastrophe we've ever been, has highlighted the importance of constructing an international system characterized by political equality and social and economic justice. Creating the TPNW, involving the ICJ in climate matters, holding the P5 accountable to the General

Assembly, and fostering comprehensive Security Council reform are definite starting points.

However, it's necessary to treat not just the symptoms but the underlying disease: gross global power imbalances. This requires strengthening international law and modifying and/or establishing global institutions. Civil society organizations like Democracy Without Borders and Citizens for Global Solutions advocate for establishing a UN Parliamentary Assembly, which would allow the citizens of the world to directly elect their UN representatives. This Parliamentary Assembly would eventually be empowered, in conjunction with the UN General Assembly, to pass universally binding resolutions regarding global issues. Such an assembly in the UN system would accord currently overlooked countries, concentrated in the Global South, much more decision-making power than they currently have, building a United Nations that truly serves all of humanity.

Other possible adjustments to the structure of global politics to ensure greater political equality include ensuring the universal jurisdiction of the International Criminal Court, which the United States, Russia, China, and about sixty other countries are currently not party to. In addition, strengthening the jurisdiction of the International Court of Justice, which the LAW not War campaign is focused on, and establishing an International Court for the Environment to settle cases pertaining to the environment and climate change, would help rectify the current power imbalance.

Big power domination of our global politics is not merely an international relations issue. It is a matter of social justice, economic justice, and political equality on a global scale. It's about whether we are to live on a livable planet and build a sustainable future for future generations. It all starts with constructing a more just, multilateral international order that answers to all nations and people. The time to start building it is now.

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A GLOBAL MANDATE, DIRECT DEMOCRACY, & COOPERATIVE FUNDING

A NEW MODEL FOR MULTILATERALISM

Isabella Grace Smith

Imagine the next global climate treaty being finalized not in a closed-door meeting of diplomats, but through a global ballot. Within 90 days of its completion, the treaty is digitally distributed to citizens in participating countries. Through a secure voting platform managed by a reformed UN Electoral Commission, citizens cast their votes to ratify or reject the agreement. Countries whose populations approve the treaty gain access to critical climate adaptation and recovery funds, while those that opt out forgo this material support. In this model, public engagement is not symbolic; it carries tangible weight, pressuring even isolationist governments to respond to the public will when international cooperation is on the line.

In an era dominated by nationalism and isolationism, the world requires more than traditional diplomatic resolutions. Gridlock in multilateral institutions has repeatedly delayed necessary responses to borderless threats like climate change, forced migration, and pandemics. Traditional global governance models, defined by executive-level decision-making and bureaucratic inertia, simply aren't equipped for today's urgent challenges.

To revitalize multilateralism, we must decentralize power and embed cooperation directly within democratic participation. A dual framework of digital direct democracy for international treaty ratification and the creation of a Global Resilience Fund to financially support nations that uphold these agreements would offer a modern, enforceable, and inclusive model for global governance.

Isolationist trends have already weakened crucial bodies like the United Nations, the World Health Organization (WHO), and regional unions. During the COVID-19 pandemic, national stockpiling and travel bans overrode coordinated public health responses. Similarly, climate agreements like the Kyoto Protocol and the Paris Agreement have faced limited enforcement and withdrawal by major polluters. These actions have exacerbated global inequality and eroded trust. Unless democratic legitimacy and conditional enforcement are built into these agreements, global efforts risk remaining aspirational documents rather than instruments of real change.

Digital direct democracy offers the legal and civic innovation necessary to bridge this legitimacy gap. By allowing citizens to directly vote on international treaties — from climate frameworks to refugee compacts — we embed public consent into the very foundation of global governance.

These digital referendums, hosted on encrypted, accessible platforms and verified by a restructured UN Electoral Commission, would ensure both security and transparency. Citizens become active participants in multilateral decisions, rather than passive observers of elite diplomacy. This not only revitalizes international cooperation but makes it more responsive to diverse voices, particularly those of youth and marginalized communities often excluded from foreign policy discussions.

Real-world models lend credibility to this approach. European referendums on EU treaties (in Denmark, France, and Ireland, for

example) show that citizens can meaningfully engage with complex international agreements. The difference in this new model is that participation is framed around cooperation, not secession.

The Global Resilience Fund introduces an institutional innovation grounded in accountability and justice. This fund would operate like a global insurance pool, providing financial assistance for climate recovery, disaster relief, and post-conflict rebuilding.

However, access would be strictly conditional: only nations that ratify international treaties through public referendums and, crucially, follow through on their commitments would be eligible. This framework incentivizes participation and action while deterring symbolic or performative diplomacy. Critically, the fund would have strict prohibitions against its use for military or security expenditures. All resources would be allocated to peaceful and constructive uses such as emergency shelters, medical relief, infrastructure repair, and environmental research.

Similar to conditional lending from the International Monetary Fund (IMF), the Global Resilience Fund would apply performance-based criteria, but with a crucial democratic difference: unlike IMF structural adjustment policies, which are often criticized for infringing on national sovereignty, this fund would be democratically accountable. Citizens approve the commitments, and states earn support by honoring them. Furthermore, participatory budgeting models, such as those used in Porto Alegre, Brazil, show that people can engage in collective financial decision-making. Adopting this model globally would allow contributors and recipients to vote on allocation priorities, ensuring transparency, equity, and shared ownership.

The fund's financing would be both sustainable and just, drawn from two sources: carbon emission taxes and progressive wealth-based contributions. High-emitting nations would pay more through a global carbon tax model based on verified emissions data submitted to international bodies. Wealthier nations would make supplementary contributions determined by metrics like GDP per capita and national income.

These funds would be collected annually and deposited into a transparent, independently managed trust overseen by an international council. Crucially, funding would only be accessible to countries that demonstrate compliance with democratically ratified multilateral agreements.

The lack of internet access in developing nations is a valid concern. To address this, an implementation phase is necessary, providing technical and financial assistance to develop secure digital voting capabilities. This could include solar-powered voting kiosks, mobile platforms for remote regions, and civic education initiatives in native languages. The goal is not merely digitalization, but democratization, ensuring every citizen has a fair and secure opportunity to participate, including those in rural areas, people with disabilities, and displaced individuals.

Critics may also worry that direct democracy could lead to the rejection of important treaties due to populist backlash or misinformation. While possible, this is not insurmountable.

Just as domestic elections have procedures to ensure informed decision-making, global referenda can include public forums, fact-checking partnerships, and media literacy initiatives. Treaties must be presented in accessible language, and countries would be encouraged to host televised debates. Furthermore, the requirement for a treaty to pass in a majority of participating countries creates a buffer against isolated rejection while preserving democratic principles.

This model respects cultural and political differences by allowing referendums to be designed and distributed within each country's own democratic context. This soft enforcement strategy — rooted in incentives rather than sanctions — offers a balanced approach that accommodates diverse political systems while promoting shared responsibility.

In a world increasingly shaped by fragmentation and distrust, bold, inclusive, and enforceable mechanisms are not just ideal but essential. This proposal is rooted in democratic principles, innovative funding, and civic participation, offering a clear path forward.

Digital referendums give citizens a direct voice in shaping the international policies that affect their lives, while the Global Resilience Fund transforms moral commitments into material support. Together, they form a new model of multilateralism that responds to isolationism not with force, but with legitimacy, cooperation, and equity.

The global crises we face — rising temperatures, displaced populations, and failing international systems — will not be solved by 20th-century diplomacy. They demand an approach that bridges the gap between global leadership and local voices. The future of multilateralism lies in this simple yet transformative idea: let the people decide and let cooperation be the reward.

AUTHOR

Isabella Smith is a Sophomore at James Madison University. In 2025, Isabella won the New Voices 4 Global Solutions essay contest. This article is based on her winning essay.

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ENHANCING THE GLOBAL RESPONSE TO EARTH SYSTEM RISKS

A PROPOSAL FOR AN EARTH SYSTEM CRISIS RESPONSE MECHANISM

Eoin Jackson

The world is facing a triple planetary crisis of climate change, pollution, and biodiversity loss. Climate change continues to pose an existential threat to humanity, with the latest science estimating that global warming projections remain well above the Paris Agreement's temperature guardrail. Pollution is crippling air and water quality—while also worsening climate change—and biodiversity loss has the potential to collapse our food and water supply chains, putting further pressure on some of the most vulnerable countries to manage the ever-growing and interlinked risks of poverty, hunger, and harm to human health. With scientific evidence that seven of the nine Planetary Boundaries have been crossed, we are now at risk of crossing catastrophic, potentially irreversible Earth system "tipping points," posing major threats to the Earth system and further exacerbating harm to vulnerable communities and nature.

With this in mind, the Climate Governance Commission (CGC), supported by the Earth system governance coalition Mobilizing an Earth Governance Alliance (MEGA), seeks to support global governance reform to implement an equitable and effective "whole-of-system" approach to addressing Earth system risks. A "whole-of-system" approach entails recognizing the holistic and interconnectedness of these crises, including with key socio-economic drivers like poverty and inequality, to ensure we can adequately and fairly govern the response to these issues.

THE PROBLEM: FRAGMENTED GLOBAL GOVERNANCE IN RESPONSE TO INTERLINKED POLYCENTRIC CRISES

The need for a whole-of-system planetary approach stems from a history of a fragmented multilateral system that lacks a coordinated and ambitious response at the speed and scale required to effectively address Earth system risks. For example, climate change is currently treated as a siloed issue, with major areas of concern addressed primarily at annual climate Conference of the Parties (COPs) Given the interdependencies between climate change and other Earth system risks, there is insufficient cooperation between different aspects of the multilateral system and its regional and domestic counterparts, as well as concerns about the fairness and inclusivity of these conferences, given the profound and inequitable implications of climate harm for vulnerable populations everywhere. This siloed approach to handling the climate crisis, rather than treating it as an interlinked and existential threat to human and planetary wellbeing, illustrates how unequipped current governance structures are to handle the all-encompassing nature of the Earth system. Consequently, global governance at present lacks the preparation, and resilience—with attention to fairness—necessary to address the current and future global shocks caused by Earth system risks (e.g. extreme weather events, potential collapse of food supply chains, and major economic crises).

THE PROPOSAL: AN EARTH SYSTEM RISK COORDINATION RESPONSE MECHANISM

Together, the CGC and MEGA have identified several critical global governance enhancement proposals that can help overcome fragmentation while also advancing nature and humanity toward a fair and holistic model of global governance. A key near-term proposal

Seven of the nine Planetary Boundaries have been crossed.

is the establishment of an Earth system risk response coordination mechanism. In his *Our Common Agenda* report, UN Secretary-General António Guterres recognized the need for stronger emergency response mechanisms to defragment and better coordinate the multilateral approach to complex global shocks. Guterres proposed the establishment of "emergency platforms" which would coordinate across the multilateral sector to accelerate and improve the response to global shocks. Building on this proposal, an Earth system response mechanism could bring together relevant national and international authorities, scientists, financing bodies, private-sector members, civil society, and other appropriate stakeholders to collectively coordinate responses to accelerating Earth system risks.

The mechanism could connect with and leverage existing mechanisms and institutions to serve as a central coordination platform, harmonizing and significantly accelerating action across the international system. For example, representatives from the secretariats of the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), the Convention on Biodiversity (CBD), the Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD), as well as relevant UN bodies like UNEP and UNDP, could come together with representatives from international financial institutions, civil society, the private sector and other vulnerable groups to advance the implementation of key goals like a just transition away from fossil fuels. Coordination of this kind would support links between actors working to reduce pollution and those supporting the just transition (e.g., highlighting the linkages between reducing methane emissions and the agricultural, air quality, and health benefits), build on existing biodiversity protection efforts that also reduce emissions (e.g., the prevention of deforestation) and ensure local and indigenous voices are represented and integrated.

An Earth system risk response coordination mechanism can also be linked to other efforts to develop enhanced Earth system risk monitoring units, such as the CGC's proposal to establish an enhanced Earth system risk monitoring and reporting facility and the proposal of the Global Tipping Points Report to establish Tipping Element Monitoring and Response Facilities (TEMRFs), which would share information and coordinate action on major tipping points in a regionally grounded but globally networked manner. The mechanism could therefore provide the forum through which the "globally networked" aspect of the latter proposal could be facilitated. This would, in turn, ensure that the mechanism can help advance a global response to these Earth system risks informed by the best available science. Further, the mechanism can act as a hub for an Earth system "policy clearinghouse," which would identify, collate, and disseminate best practices across efforts to address Earth system risks and provide guidance on scaling up and applying these successful policies to different

local, national, and regional contexts. This would build on existing efforts like the "Climate Change Laws of the World" initiative and the "NDC Align Tool," established by the Grantham Research Institute, while scaling them up and expanding them to encompass the full range of Earth system risks.

SUPPORT FOR AN EARTH SYSTEM RISK COORDINATION RESPONSE MECHANISM

Interest in an Earth system risk response coordination mechanism is gaining traction. Brazil has proposed the establishment of a Climate Council to help drive forward the implementation of agreed outcomes from the climate COP process and to complement the UNFCCC's norm-building efforts. Separately, leading climate policy expert Simon Sharpe has proposed that the Council "serve as a forum for strategic discussion among countries regarding the most significant challenges faced in low carbon transitions and adaptation, identifying where international cooperation is most needed, and giving a mandate and legitimacy to the institutions best placed to facilitate it, whether they are already existing or newly created." Additionally, the emphasis of COP30 on the implementation of already agreed climate initiatives highlights States' renewed interest in finding ways to pool resources and work together to turn ambitions into reality. The CGC and MEGA's proposal for an Earth system risk response coordination mechanism builds on the climate focus of these proposals and expand it to encompass the necessary range of Earth system risks, including pollution, biodiversity loss, tipping points, Planetary Boundaries, and the interlinks between these risks and poverty and inequality.

Together with its key partners, MEGA and the CGC are building collaborations with interested UN Member States and key stakeholders to explore the value and design of an Earth system coordination response mechanism. This will include convening high-level dialogues and expert roundtables to better understand local, regional, and national perspectives, identify common priorities, and explore the potential design of a mechanism as a strong action-coordination tool. A priority will be to shape an approach that reflects diverse needs and concerns—and a design that does not supersede national sovereignty, but rather strengthens the international system's ability to respond more rapidly, fairly, and coherently to complex global shocks. MEGA and the CGC plan to scale up their already accelerating efforts to drive forward support for the mechanism and invite all interested parties to support these efforts.

AUTHOR

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ISRAELI-PALESTINIAN FEDERALISM

CONCEPT AND FEASIBILITY

By Mario Schejtman and Ahmad L.

The Israeli-Palestinian conflict has persisted intractably for some 150 years. Over the conflict's course, only two means of ending it have garnered widespread support: campaigns for victory of one side over the other, or a Two-State Solution territorial compromise to establish two nation-states side-by-side. Neither of these paths has proven conducive to solving the conflict.

Largely forgotten is an alternative solution which was considered in 1947 by the UN Special Committee on Palestine: a federal state of Jewish and Arab cantons. Federal systems have been successfully employed in many countries to embrace diversity within unity, including the USA, the EU, and India. Other examples such as Switzerland and Belgium can be meaningfully compared to the land of Israel-Palestine in terms of physical size, population, complexity, and linguistic diversity.

It is time to consider the possibility of a federal solution for the Holy Land. As members of the Federal Forum, a program launched by Challenge, an Israeli NGO, we are part of a community of local activists, scholars, professionals, and practitioners interested in developing proposals for federal solutions to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. The following is our analysis on what Israeli-Palestinian Federalism could look like, and how it could be achieved.

ADAPTING FEDERALISM TO ISRAEL-PALESTINE

The first challenge in crafting an Israeli-Palestinian federal solution to suit the 21st century is to define its core goals – what would it improve, and what should it look like?

We imagine its goals to be quite similar to that of other federal movements in history – an attempt to solve an issue of distinct national, cultural, and religious communities that share common resources, land, economy, or are otherwise interdependent. The Israeli-Palestinian context does, however, possess unique elements, including history, religion, geography, and international interests, which require any solution to be extensively tailored.

One is that the Israeli Jewish and Palestinian Arab peoples have very little common history or connection prior to the last century of conflict – before the advent of Zionism. This makes forging a common culture, history, or vision highly difficult. In fact, the struggle for self-determination plays a strong role in the defining identities of both Israeli Jews and Palestinian Arabs. For this reason, a one-state unitary solution, or any solution that requires national aspirations to be put aside, is both doomed to failure and harmful to both peoples.

Another distinction is the role of religion in our conflict, and its intersection with nationalism. While we acknowledge that religion plays a large role in many other conflicts and nation-building challenges (Belgium, Ireland, Congo, etc), the special influences of religion in Israel-Palestine should be noted and adopted into any potential solution. One significant aspect of religion is its effect on national identity and vision, therefore the narrative for any solution must be expressed not only in pragmatic or secular-national terms, but also in the language of Judaism, Islam, Christianity, and other local faiths. Solutions must address the particular interests and needs of their believers, and how these religions influence concepts of

nationhood, peoplehood, sovereignty, and international relations. Another significant aspect of religion is the critical role of sovereignty over, and access to, holy sites in Palestine-Israel. Key examples include the Haram Al-Sharif Holy Esplanade/Temple Mount in Jerusalem and the Cave of the Patriarchs/Ibrahimi Mosque in Hebron, among others. A third relevant aspect is the role religion plays in defining national subgroups (e.g. ultra-Orthodox and Religious Zionist Jews, Arab Christians), and third groups (such as Samaritans and Druze).

A third distinction is the region's unique geographic and environmental context. Access to water, arable land, and the coast are large considerations and sources of conflict. Movement and security are also considerations – many Israeli communities strongly prefer territorial and transportation connection to other communities of their national group, and would refuse the possibility of enclave status, opting instead to oppose the solution. This is further complicated by the varied geography of the region - the hilly west bank, populated by fort-like villages; the flat coastal plains with high population density; the southern desert, etc. Any division of territory, whether through federation or confederation, will have to take these various considerations into account to create coherent and viable internal regions.

A final distinction is international interest in the parties of the conflict. Both Israeli and Palestinian causes have garnered international sympathy and support. The regional conflict has prompted involvement from various nations, including local powers such as Egypt, Turkey, Saudi Arabia, and Iran, as well as global superpowers such as the United States of America. Any solution would have to take all stakeholders into account.

How do we make sense of these various considerations? We began our analysis by deciding on our core principles – our criteria for what a successful federal solution would look like. We feel reassured by a growing realization among activists and academic scholars in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict resolution field that an innovative, alternative solution must be developed, and that many of them have reached the same conclusions that we have. Our constitutive principles are:

1. The whole land, between the Jordan river and the Mediterranean Sea, is inhabited by diverse cultural communities, including two main national groups, the Israeli Jewish and Palestinian Arab peoples.
2. Both nations hold a deep and unbreakable connection to the whole land. Both see it as their ancestral historical, cultural, religious, and national homeland.
3. Both national groups should be able to implement their right of self-determination within one shared historical, religious, and cultural homeland.
4. Both nations are increasingly interconnected and intertwined economically, in terms of infrastructure and ecosystems.
5. A federal solution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict would enable both national groups to enjoy self-determination, autonomy, and cooperation, with the benefit of interdependent economies.
6. Both nations include diverse ethnic, cultural and religious communities. In a federal framework, these diverse communities throughout the land can enrich each other and can benefit from cooperation, while preserving their distinct identities.
7. Federalism will recognize and protect minority cultures and minority rights, providing equal opportunities and security for all.
8. We are searching for a creative paradigm to design a win-win solution for the benefit of all, that finds a balance between our needs for autonomy, cooperation, connection, and shared responsibility for the land.
9. In order to sustain the resulting Federal framework, we seek to acknowledge both peoples' struggles and build a shared future founded on trust, justice, and reconciliation.
10. Federalism is the optimal system of government for a just, sustainable, equitable and democratic resolution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

ASSESSING A MODEL FEDERALISM

Our next challenge towards a viable, appropriate federal solution involves identifying role models: what existing paradigms of federalism can best fit our unique needs? And perhaps more importantly, what paradigms should we avoid? We engaged this question by examining the two primary federalist models: confederations and federations.

Confederations hold particular appeal to those in the political debate who equate the fulfillment of the right of national self-determination with the establishment of mostly homogeneous nation-states. They propose two distinct states that have some sort of power-sharing or united mechanism for decisions on issues which concern both states. The most prominent successful confederation is the European Union, which transformed a war-torn continent into a prosperous and peaceful über-state.

This replaces the zero-sum dynamics which have prevailed in mainstream solutions.

Confederations are appealing to us for a number of reasons. They preserve the nation-state model (in the classical understanding), making them dovetail nicely with the aspirations of Zionism and the Palestinian national movement. Also, they decouple the concepts of citizenship and residency, offering a means to accommodate groups that would be harmed, ideologically or physically, through a land partition. Some of these groups are key stakeholders and are likely to resist a solution that strictly divides the land by borders.

However, the confederation model has some potential weaknesses. Confederations throughout history have often proven to be fragile (e.g. the "Brexit" decision of the UK to leave the European Union, the short-lived United Arab Republic, and Serbia-Montenegro). Critics of a confederate solution argue that this model keeps in place most of the shortcomings of the two-state solution which alienate certain sectors of both societies. For example, Israeli settlers in the West Bank may fear for their safety when the Israeli army is no longer there.

Finally, a confederation of two sovereign states maintains a competitive dynamic, which might lead to it falling prey to the same Achilles' heel that has plagued the unitary state and the two independent state models. In fact, having "rival" two-states while requiring joint decision-making could potentially exacerbate the mutual mistrust and grievance that degenerates nation-to-nation cooperation into a political or military struggle or at least lead to paralysis and stalemate and mutual recrimination and blaming.

As members of the Federal Forum, we value exploring all models. We see federation models as more fitting for our region, and a confederation as a steppingstone to arrive at a federation. By federations, we mean systems of small, semi-autonomous districts (states/provinces/cantons) united by an overarching federal government. According to our analysis, Switzerland and Belgium are highly successful, though not perfect, models of a federalist solution applied to multicultural, multi-lingual areas. We also view federal countries such as Canada and India as largely able to manage internal identity, culture, and language tensions. Although the United States is the most recognized federal state, it offers a less relevant case-study for the Israeli-Palestinian context. This is because the

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original 13 colonies shared a strong national and cultural similarity, and the US generally experiences division along ideological and socioeconomic lines rather than deeply entrenched national or religious identities.

Federations appeal to our regional context because they offer the flexibility to engineer a tailor-made, unique model for the region's particular challenges. Such a solution would account for security, respect for identities and holy/cultural sites, reduction of economic and political inequalities, migration policies, and other key issues. It would also need to provide a grassroots effort to reduce fear, mistrust, and resentment.

Furthermore, the federation model is the best suited thus far to simultaneously provide for both people's pursuit of national character and attachment to the "whole, undivided land," since it could support the establishment of small, semi-autonomous districts (states/provinces) that can have distinct national or cultural characteristics, demarcated on population clusters. This replaces the zero-sum dynamics which have prevailed in mainstream solutions and opens up new possibilities through negotiation of levels of devolution between federal and regional governments, providing more robust self-determination to a wider variety of groups.

Moreover, adding a regional level of government provides an additional level for expression of national identities and their internal sub-groups: one can imagine a secular-Zionist province of Tel Aviv, Haredi enclaves, and Bedouin, Druze, or Christian polities. However, the overarching federal state would provide the land and its citizens with geographic continuity, cooperation,

freedom of movement, and democratic representation in an entity that can arbitrate authoritatively between the states and decide on universal laws.

A final advantage of the federation model is its incentivization of each sub-state or region to improve the socio-economic status of its residents by establishing its own unique character and added value. Many initiatives in this mold already exist in Israel-Palestine, such as industrial parks created as shared enterprises between Israeli regional councils and neighboring Palestinian or Israeli-Bedouin cities. Decentralization is already on the mind of local governments - Israel's Ministry of Interior published an influential report in 2020 advocating for Israeli regionalization. It is not such a far stretch to fold the emerging regionalization process into a larger Palestine-Israel reorganization.

FORGING A PATH TO FEDERALISM

Our final challenge is seeking a viable federal solution, one that would be achievable given the current state of the conflict and political realities. In this, separate analyses of the Palestinian and Israeli contexts are required.

For Palestinians, the first relevant question would be whether such a federalist vision is compatible with the aspirations of the Palestinian people and interests of their political leadership. Many of our Palestinian members believe so, at least in terms of the dominant and most globally legitimate Palestinian political entity, the Palestinian Authority (PA), and its largest party, Fatah.

The Palestinian Authority has consistently articulated its commitment to the goal of an independent Palestinian state and naturally assesses political proposals according to how they contribute to this objective. Federalism can therefore be framed not as an alternative end-state, but as a pragmatic transitional framework—a realistic intermediate stage toward independence under current political constraints. In this reading, a federal model would not negate existing transitional arrangements, but rather offer an additional pathway for consolidating rights, governance capacity, and territorial coherence alongside other established interim frameworks, including those that emerged from the Oslo process.

In this analysis, federalism would be a more appealing enhancement for Palestinians, as it has a set vision, rationale, and paradigm, unlike the wholly-negotiated and quite convoluted Oslo Accords. Additionally, these agreements were quite asymmetric as a solution, leaving the PA dependent on Israeli support and subject to Israeli security interests, while Israel does not have the same dependence on the PA. Finally, a federal solution would offer a crucial improvement over the Oslo Accords to the Palestinian people, including freedom of movement and access to all of historical Palestine. In other words, federalism is a more predictable halfway point to independence, which can offer greater immediate benefits to the Palestinian people than the current ailing stalemate situation. For those who genuinely seek a federal solution over total independence, having a federal solution adopted temporarily is the best means to build support for it permanently.

In a wider sense, however, many of our Palestinian members feel federalism is not contradictory to the historic vision of Palestinian nationhood held by parties such as Fatah. Ideologically, this is because Palestinian political thought has always valued membership in a wider global government or community as a part of statehood. Politically, it is because a federal model would still fulfill the Palestinian aspiration of sovereignty and the right of national self-determination. It would also likely unify the divided Palestinian territories of the West Bank and Gaza, as well as other parts of the fragmented Palestinian nation, as a single state within a larger federal model – a crucial aspect of Palestinian national interests.

For Israelis, a similar question exists: can a federal solution be accepted by Israel's Zionist mainstream, and is it more compelling than the current status quo? Many of our Israeli Jewish members believe that a compelling argument for a federal solution can be made.

Historically, Zionism (the founding and current ideology of the state of Israel) was not necessarily opposed to solutions beyond the standard nation-state approach. Prior to the state's establishment, core Zionist theorists such as Ben Gurion and Jabotinsky drafted federal models, and a "bi-national" movement called "Brit Shalom" reached prominence.

The Israeli public today, however, is loath to consider alternatives to the status quo. Conflict transformation is rarely a campaign focus, or even mentioned, by mainstream political parties. Instead, their stated vision typically remains a variation of the Oslo Accords, provided that the other parties meet various security demands and needs. This position effectively translates into support for the status quo. The status quo remains popular primarily because Israeli society is deeply affected by security concerns. Therefore, any concessions of military control are perceived as potentially increasing the risk of security lapses, which could, in turn, lead to increased violence and potential atrocities, a concern tragically substantiated by the events of October 7th, 2023, and the subsequent war.

If an alternative, interdependent solution is not accepted in practice by Israel's Zionist mainstream (though it is accepted in theory by many), what path can a federalist movement take towards success? One potential answer lies in the fact that Israeli society is currently experiencing great upheaval. The horrific October 7th massacre shattered mainstream Israel's feeling of relative security, while posters litter its cities accusing its politicians of blame. This is merging into other societal conflicts – between Israel's secular and religious Jews, liberals and conservatives, and supporters of the incumbent and opposition parties. Such upheaval and crisis, however upsetting, offers new possibilities and opportunities for transformative ideas such as federalism.

OUR UMBRELLA ORGANISATION & OUR COLLEAGUES' PROPOSALS

The possibility of a federal solution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict was revived in Daniel Elazar's 1991 book 'Two Peoples, One Land'. Seeking to progress the federal solution further, in 2020 Challenge, an NGO, launched a program called the "Federal

It is time to consider the possibility of a federal solution for the Holy Land.

Forum." This initiative aims to provide those seeking a federal solution in Israel-Palestine with support and collaborative synergy, building awareness about federal solutions, and promoting practical steps towards federal solutions. Recently, as its vision begins to mature, the Federal Forum has also welcomed into its community several new groups focused on Federal advocacy and awareness.

We, the authors of this paper, are organizers of the forum, and are proud to have gathered into it over a dozen models, which are being discussed and developed jointly by its members, including Israeli, Palestinian, and international activists, scholars, professionals and practitioners.

These proposed solutions vary widely. Some are modeled as federations, others as confederations, and some combine elements of both. Some have developed detailed geographical maps, constitutions, and legislative arrangements, while others focus on important shared symbolism such as Abraham or the Holy Land.

To read more about the several plans under the Federal Forum umbrella, you can visit the website.

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TIME FOR CANADA TO STRENGTHEN THE RULE OF LAW INTERNATIONALLY

Bill Pearce

Canada must do more to strengthen the rule of law internationally by demonstrating greater respect for existing laws. Doing so will help other nations working to revive and dignify the institution of the United Nations.

At the national level, respect for the rule of law requires everyone, including the head of state, the government and the judiciary, to be bound by the constitution, and by our laws. Enforcement is crucial for upholding the rule of law. Without enforcement, peace, order and good governance are diminished; law loses its force and is reduced to an ineffective tenet of theoretical aspirations. This principle is equally applicable to international law. Justice for the Canada goose is thereby seen as good for the globalizing gander too.

As the preamble of the United Nations Charter reminds us, the United Nations exists "to save succeeding generations from the scourge of war" and to "establish conditions under which…respect for the obligations arising from treaties and other sources of international law can be maintained". Article 1 of the Charter goes on to state that the United Nations was established, among other purposes, "to take collective measures for the prevention and removal of threats to the peace and for the suppression of acts of aggression…."

Since the UN's inception, the veto power has been exercised with increasing frequency, with the consequence of paralyzing the Security Council's mandate to take measures to end breaches of the peace. The effectiveness of, and respect for, the international rule of law is jeopardized with each misuse of the so-called 'veto privilege'. This is evident when it is invoked to block measures taken to address atrocity crimes and the crime of aggression.

WFM-Canada, with support from civil society and experts in international law, is urging our government to take a leadership role in drafting the formal introduction of a General Assembly resolution that refers questions to the ICJ, as to the legal limitations of the veto power in such situations. But before Canada can hope to inspire others to take the necessary steps to curb the veto power, it must first put its own house in order.

A recent example of the misuse of the veto occurred in November 2025 when a draft resolution, presented by Sierra Leone and the United Kingdom, condemning the continued assault by the Rapid Support Forces (RSF) on the city of El Fasher in Sudan and calling upon the parties to cease hostilities, was vetoed by Russia, with all other members of the Security Council voting in favour. This was a clear example of the misuse of the veto that our initiative seeks to end.

One need only reflect on the devastation that has continued in Sudan since November 2025. Over 30 million civilians are in desperate need of humanitarian assistance and a similar number are facing acute hunger. In early July, the Office of the Prosecutor of the ICC reported to the United Nations Security Council that it found reasonable grounds to believe that war crimes and crimes against humanity were being committed in Darfur. On November 14, 2025, Baroness Chapman, a member of the United Kingdom House of Lords, said "ongoing impunity, and reticence from the international community means

the conflict in Sudan is now the largest humanitarian crisis of the 21st century". Involvement by state actors in the region complicates the issues, and frustrates efforts to arrive at a diplomatic solution.

There are dozens of similar examples since 1945 of Permanent Members of the Security Council using their veto to block life-saving resolutions in order to protect their own economic and geopolitical interests, and those of their allies.

Canada does often act forcefully. For instance in a statement issued December 4, 2024, Canadian Minister of Foreign Affairs Mélanie Joly condemned "in the strongest possible terms the ongoing conflict in Sudan", calling "on all parties to end hostilities" without identifying which party or parties are responsible. It took Canada a full year to identify the problem when the government made a statement with 15 other countries on November 10, 2025, which acknowledged the important work being done to document "the nature of the violations committed by the RSF" and noting that "impunity must end and accountability must be upheld".

However, when Canadian Prime Minister Mark Carney visited the United Arab Emirates recently, the focus was on expanding Canada's trading relationship with that country. The reports of his meeting with the government of the United Arab Emirates did not reflect discussions about the country's alleged complicity with these crimes.

The Genocide Convention creates obligations on all signatories, of which Canada is one, to do everything that is reasonable and possible to terminate this situation. Expanding a trade relationship that is already worth billions of dollars a year does not pay proper respect to our international obligations.

The Gaza war is another situation in which Canada has failed to take appropriate measures with respect to international law; a situation that could have been resolved had the international community been able to enforce numerous UN resolutions addressing Israel's illegal occupation of the Palestinian Territories as defined by partition under UN Security Council Resolution 181 in 1947. Canada's oft stated support for a two-state solution is frequently reiterated, but without action there is insufficient effect. Bold action has been, and is still, required.

The rules-based order, one based on international law, has been on life support since Putin's war of aggression against Ukraine. After Gaza, and with the crisis in Sudan worsening daily, it now hangs by a thread. Upholding the rules-based world order starts by applying its rules without distinction or favour, and by defending the institutions mandated to implement them. In other situations where these international rules are routinely ignored or violated, we have put numerous sanctions in place, while other violators are spared from any meaningful consequences. After years of unheeded pleas for equality of justice for all, humanity continues with business as usual. We do so at our ongoing peril. This can change, and it must change to ensure the world will be better governed by the rules based order.

Canada is not the only UN member state that fails to apply equal distinction to crises when

others fail to comply with UNSC resolutions addressing war crimes and crimes against humanity. When atrocity crimes are perpetrated, or continue to be perpetrated, even on a lesser scale, we can often point to a lack of enforcement as the cause. Such impunity leads instantly to a degradation of the rule of law.

But Canada can correct course. We were once a more respected nation, precisely because we worked to strengthen international law. We were a major contributor to, and "Canada" was synonymous with, UN peacekeeping. We could be relied upon to contribute forces when called upon. In previous times we did not have to compete so vigorously to win a seat on the Security Council. Many Canadians still see themselves reflected in that history, but less so as time passes.

WFM-Canada is advocating for a return to that meritorious standing on the world stage. We call on the government of Canada to take a leadership role in restoring respectability to the UN. An opinion from the ICJ as to existing legal limitations of the veto would be a powerful first step.

Humanity is bound together in common purpose like never before and the times cry out for action. Will Canada answer the call?

AUTHOR

Bill Pearce was called to the bar in 1968. Since then he has had a varied career as a barrister. He is currently retired and living in Victoria, while continuing to serve as President of the World Federalist Movement – Canada (WFM-C) Victoria branch.

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ADDRESSING DISPLACEMENT

AN INHERENT PROBLEM OF A DIVIDED WORLD

David Gallup

More than 120 million people have been displaced from their homes due to war, climate change, political instability, and oppression in the past few years, a figure that has doubled in the last decade. Millions more are living in vulnerable situations as stateless individuals, frequently unable to exercise even their most basic rights.

The population of displaced persons is larger than that of more than 220 countries and dependent territories. In other words, only 12 countries in the world have a population larger than 120 million people. As the UN High Commissioner for Refugees explains, "one out of every 67 people on the Earth" is displaced from their homes. More than "20 people are forced to flee every minute of every day" according to the International Rescue Committee. These figures do not even account for the day-to-day oppression that millions, if not billions, face but are unable or reluctant to leave to seek a safe haven.

Most refugees in the world are either internally displaced in or are fleeing from the following countries: Afghanistan, Democratic Republic of Congo, Haiti, Myanmar, Palestine, Somalia, South Sudan, Sudan, Syria, Ukraine, Venezuela, and Yemen.

As violence, war, and climate destruction affect more countries and regions of the world, the growing numbers of refugees and migrants will put a strain on social systems. National governments have responded to immigration flows in different ways, some limiting immigrants from entering their claimed territories and others welcoming newcomers. Just five countries — Iran, Turkey, Colombia, Germany, and Uganda—have welcomed almost 40 percent of the world's refugees and others fleeing persecution and war.

The nation-state system has created the "refugee" and "stateless person," as well as the severe problems associated with being considered outside the law or without "legal" status. All human beings are legal and have rights that should be respected wherever they live. Yet, due to violations of their human rights frequently perpetuated by or ignored by national governments, thousands of people flee their homes and countries every day trying to find safety, stability, and asylum.

A division of the world into 200 or so different countries has created "in" and "out" groups, with some achieving dignity, acceptance, inclusion, and rights fulfillment, and others being treated as less than human, unable to meet their basic daily needs. This disparity of treatment destabilizes society.

Why should humans have to flee to have their rights and basic needs upheld? Why are millions stuck in refugee camps with inadequate food, housing, healthcare, education, and opportunity?

To have the kind of world in which the rights reaffirmed in various declarations and treaties such as the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, and the International Covenant on Economic, Social, and Cultural Rights are fully met, all people should be able to claim, and then exercise, their rights no matter where they happen to live on the planet. Human rights and duties are not

Human rights are innate and unalienable. People are born with them and cannot give them up. We have them simply by being human.

bound by territory; they are not dependent upon the nation-state in which one happens to be born or where one happens to live.

Human rights are innate and unalienable. People are born with them and cannot give them up. We have them simply by being human.

WORLD CITIZENSHIP

If everyone had citizenship everywhere—and the rights associated with that citizenship —statelessness would no longer exist, and only natural disasters would forcibly displace people. World citizenship, as a valid and legal citizenship beyond any other status that someone may carry, would ensure that everyone has at least one citizenship which, in its inclusiveness, upholds concomitant rights and duties.

With world citizenship, if people do not like where they live, if they do not like the politics or the rulers, then they could choose to live somewhere else, rather than being forced to flee for their safety and livelihood.

As a globally-recognized and legal status, world citizenship would reverse the power structure of ruler over the ruled. National government leaders could no longer rely on their claimed territorial borders to continue to exploit and oppress people who have the right to live and work elsewhere in the world. The veil of impunity and national sovereignty would not protect those leaders from prosecution for violating the rights of the people. Leaders would begin to recognize that to be legitimate leaders, they would need to uphold the rights of those living in their community; otherwise, the people would choose new leaders, or the people would choose to leave.

One principle of world citizenship is helping people wherever they are. Basic needs of food, clothing, shelter, and education are not only requirements of human existence, they are fundamental human rights. Almost all national governments have agreed to respect these rights. They give lip-service to these rights, while violating them every day. No matter where people find themselves in the world, they should be able to claim and exercise these rights.

When people have food, shelter, education, work, equality, justice, and freedom where they reside, they generally are happy to stay there. If people can go about their day without fear, oppression, humiliation, or aggression, then they have no reason to leave where their family, friends, language, and culture are located.

It makes sense to build a world where everyone feels safe and has their rights fulfilled locally, so that they will want to continue to live in that community. This would be a world where travel becomes an educational and cultural opportunity rather than an existential necessity.

In developing countries, governments would have to do their best to ensure that residents would want to stay put. This means implementing the UN 17 sustainable development goals. If governments did not have to worry about maintaining a military and building weapons, funds and resources would be available for peaceful pursuits, for providing better education and opportunities for everyone, everywhere. As world citizens, the people of the world have the right to demand that taxes are used to create tools that support and enhance all life rather than make walls, weaponry, and wars.

Instead of countries engaging in negative competition and the vicious cycle of military aggression, countries could participate in a positive competition to make their local communities increasingly welcoming and rights-affirming.

Developed countries would understand the immediate need to help governments and people in the developing world to prevent large groups of people arriving who might put a strain on the infrastructure and social system in their communities. Developing and developed countries could provide incentives for people to travel to less populated areas through lower-cost and subsidized housing, increased job opportunities, individual tax credits, and educational and training opportunities. Helping others where they are, as well as welcoming newcomers, improves the world for everyone.

LEGAL ENFORCEMENT

Requiring all governments to respect world citizenship status legally is the next step, which would support millions of displaced persons by ensuring that governments would begin to fulfill their obligations to respect the innate and unalienable rights of refugees as well as stateless and displaced persons.

Because citizenship and government are corollaries, as more individuals see themselves as world citizens and can act as world citizens, the establishment of world governmental institutions would help to support this newly recognized and legal status. Although everyone is already a world citizen based on the citizenship principles of jus soli and jus sanguinis, the legal recognition and implementation of this highest citizenship status would require global institutions of law, such as a World Court of Human Rights, a World Parliament of the people, and an Earth Constitution for a united and democratic federation of human communities.

During the current era of a revival of extreme nationalism, world citizenship may seem

utopian or unattainable. After World War II, the World Citizenship Movement garnered millions of followers around the world who were fed up with war and oppression. Another world war should not be necessary to consider other modes of human interaction based not on the current “us versus them” divide and conquer mentality but rather on a “unite and prosper” ethic.

World citizenship, as the highest level of allegiance, empowers people to focus on equity, justice, sustainability, unity, and harmony with each other and the Earth, without having to give up any local status, identity, or allegiance.

As long as the people of the world allow the nation-state system to maintain the arbitrary and exclusive borders that divide humans from one another, immigration will continue to be viewed as a problem rather than as an educational, economic, political, and social opportunity. When world citizens respect each other, both in terms of rights and duties, the entire earth will be a sanctuary of peace and safety for all.

AUTHOR

David Gallup specializes in human rights, world citizenship and world law education. He is President and General Counsel of the World Service Authority®, a global public service human rights organization founded in 1954. He is also a Board Member of Citizens for Global Solutions, creator of the World Citizen Club initiative, and Convenor of the World Court of Human Rights Coalition.

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SPURRING DEVELOPMENT, LOCAL AND GLOBAL MONETARY SOVEREIGNTY, AND REFORMING INTERNATIONAL FINANCIAL INSTITUTIONS

Larry Kazdan

World federalists hold that social, economic and environmental problems should be addressed at the lowest appropriate political level, and that some practical solutions can only be managed globally. Federal systems should be democratic, so that those affected by decisions have more and greater opportunities to influence their creation and implementation.

Unfortunately, non-democratic international financial institutions today impose strictures that prevent developing countries from optimizing the management of their affairs. In his blog post "When disaster strikes the poorest nations, the IMF guarantees to make it worse," economist William Mitchell criticizes structural adjustment programs (such as fiscal austerity, and market liberalisation) that the IMF and World Bank typically impose on poor nations struggling with balance-of-payments problems.

These programs act to dismantle domestic industries, rendering Global South countries more dependent on imports, and therefore also dependent on foreign currency and creditors. Options for growth are mainly raw materials exports such as oil or foodstuffs, or the export of cheap sweatshop output.

Extractivism however, is ecologically ruinous, while sweatshops ensure permanently low wages. In order to attract international investments, governments move to cut environmental regulations, reduce labour protections, and slash corporate tax rates in a brutal race to the bottom. This arrangement works well for international capital, by ensuring a steady supply of cheap labour and raw materials, but is also very damaging for developing governments and their peoples.

Foreign creditors require fiscal and monetary "discipline," so governments cannot use deficit spending to stimulate economic activity and growth. If they do, then creditors and ratings agencies punish them, capital flees, and borrowing costs rise. An alternate economic program is offered by proponents of Modern Monetary Theory (MMT) who advocate using the national currency to mobilize domestic resources, including labour to accomplish human development. It's a bright, relatively simple idea…a potential game changer for struggling national economies.

MMT economists have long pointed out that monetarily sovereign governments—those who issue domestic fiat currencies that float in value against others, and are non-convertible, on demand to other currencies or commodities — are not like households. They do not have to "earn money" first through taxing or borrowing in order to spend, but can simply create money, and expand their deficits, and can never be forced into bankruptcy. Despite an accounting legerdemain obscuring the process, this is how these governments including Canada actually function.

The Library of Parliament publication *How the Bank of Canada Creates Money for the Federal Government Through its Asset Purchases* explains that the Bank of Canada "records new and equal amounts on the asset and liability sides of its balance sheet, creating money through digital accounting entries. The federal government can then spend that newly created money in the Canadian economy as it sees fit, subject to Parliament's approval." This "is essentially an internal government process" and "external factors, such as financial market dysfunction, cannot cause the federal government to run out of money."

Of course, if a government and private sector spend too much money, demand may overwhelm the country's productive capacity and cause inflation. However, industrial policy can help expand available goods and services, and excess money can be taxed to reduce both aggregate demand and inequality.

Even governments with limited monetary sovereignty have the possibility to finance in the national currency, those technically feasible projects that require mostly locally available resources. This way, recourse to international finance and austerity can be minimized.

The goal is to reduce imports, secure a favorable trade balance to pay off debts, ensure full employment, and focus on the root causes of trade deficits. To achieve this, governments can simply issue money and spend on achieving urgent goals such as:

1. Developing generous, high-quality universal public services - healthcare and education, public transportation, affordable housing, water, electricity and internet.
2. Investing in sustainable agricultural practices (like aquaponics) and fisheries to produce healthy, organic food for domestic consumption, while restoring soils, biodiversity and marine life.
3. Rolling out renewable energy infrastructure—solar panels and wind turbines—to replace fossil fuels and reduce energy imports.
4. (Funding education, research and development to increase productivity and gain the ability to manufacture more valuable products.
5. Offering an Employment Guarantee to ensure that anyone willing can work,or train others, can contribute to socially valuable projects,like building houses and infrastructure, staffing public services, expanding renewable energy, or regenerating farmland, and be paid, at minimum a living wage while doing so.

A developing government can use its full monetary powers, while staying within the limits of the economy's productive capacity. Relying on national currency instantly eases the need for foreign credit, by working toward self-sufficiency, especially in food and energy. The overhang of existing debt acquired during the prior period of colonial and neoliberal policies however, may also require defaulting on some external debt obligations.

Loan default might make it more difficult to borrow on international markets or cause currency depreciation, however an array of mitigation measures are available to soften the economic (and political) impacts. Multiple countries could co-ordinate to default together ("united debt resistance"), in order to reduce creditors' leverage and force them to absorb the losses. Tariffs and subsidies can also be used to develop national industries, substituting imports and further reducing foreign reliance. In cases where imported goods cannot be substituted, trade with other developing countries where terms of trade are fairer can be maximized. Capital controls can be imposed to prevent finance from fleeing the country, or rules imposed that require approval or fees before investors move their profits or holdings abroad.

The ultimate constraint on prosperity is the real resources a nation can command, which includes the skills of its people, and its natural resource inventory. But if a nation can only access limited quantities of real resources relative to its population, then no matter what actions that government might take, the nation will likely stay poor. For some countries, appropriate international assistance may therefore be required.

A radically reformed World Bank and IMF must be charged with responsibility for ensuring that highly disadvantaged nations can access essential real resources such as food, and are not priced out of international markets due to exchange rate fluctuations.

Two essential multilateral functions aiming to reduce poverty through sustainable economic development would be:

1. Development aid—providing funds to develop public infrastructure, education, health services and governance support

2. Macroeconomic stabilisation—the provision of liquidity to prevent exchange rate crises in the face of problematic balance of payments.

Unfortunately the current institutions, set up post-WWII, are dominated by high-income countries (via weighted voting based on economic power/quotas) and lack direct democratic accountability to citizens, leading to policies that favour market liberalization over social equity.

World Federalists can be proud of the movement's history campaigning for democratic accountability and climate justice. Like CSO's are pressuring IFIs to reform their governance structures and lending practices to support genuine inclusive growth, rather than impose one-size-fits-all austerity or market-driven policies.

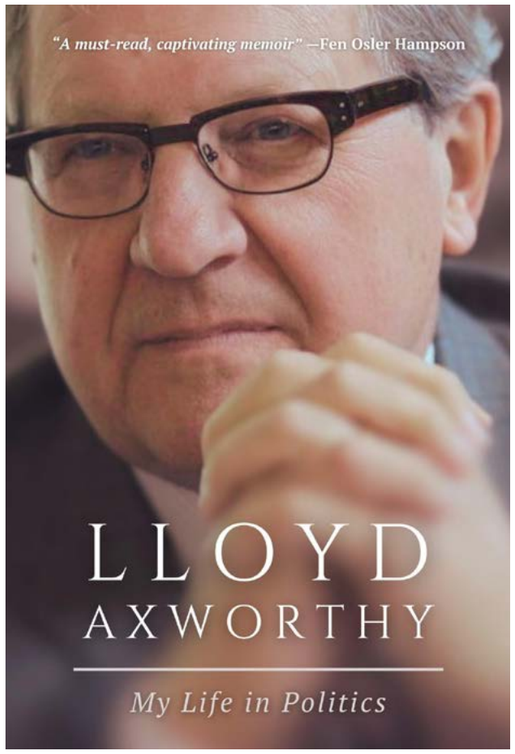
The existence of a global parliamentary assembly could also hasten IFI reform. A UN Parliamentary Assembly (UNPA) representing citizens rather than countries, could foster a planetarian ethos to act as watchdog, ombudsman and spokesperson seated at the centre and heart of international action, attracting media, and garnering public attention.

A UNPA would lobby for more effective and fairer management of the current system, to catalyze longer-term structural reforms (including its own legislative powers) thereby ensuring that those impacted by global decisions have direct input on global decision making.

Developing countries need to use the monetary tools at their disposal more to help themselves, and World Federalists must continue their campaigns to reform International Financial Institutions, so that disadvantaged countries get a nurturing, helping hand, not an extractive one that imposes a governing regression of their social and economic evolution.

AUTHOR

Larry Kazdan has undergraduate degrees in history and sociology, is a retired Chartered Professional Accountant, and runs the website Modern Monetary Theory in Canada.



BOOK REVIEW

MY LIFE IN POLITICS BY LLOYD AXWORTHY

Recommended by Rev. Dr. Karen Hamilton

BOOK REVIEW: MY LIFE IN POLITICS

In this stirring and beautifully written memoir, Lloyd Axworthy tells the unlikely story of a Canadian prairie boy, raised in the Social Gospel tradition, who studied politics at Princeton at the height of John F. Kennedy's Camelot, marched for civil rights in Alabama, and returned to Canada to embark on an illustrious political career of his own at the height of Trudeaumania.

On pages xvii and xviii of this memoir, Dr. Axworthy states, "One reason for writing this book, is, I hope, to rekindle the spirit of R2P [Responsibility to Protect] as the world faces evermore dangerous risks to ordinary people. …one's personal evolution is important in statecraft and politics. The influences of the ideas, people, and experiences that shaped my upbringing and education were what I brought to the table in making, literally, life-and-death decisions."

Those of us of World Federalist persuasion, including those of us who have passionately committed our work and lives to the ideals and concrete realities of World Federalism, might, initially, be disappointed in reading our way through this book. It does not overtly mention the World Federalist Movement, of which Dr. Axworthy was International Co-President for three years. However, reading more carefully, we realize that so many of the issues that Dr. Axworthy was deeply involved in and deeply influenced by World Federalist issues. His aforementioned quote on the rekindling of R2P as one of the reasons for writing the book will immediately resonate with World Federalists.

R2P is one of the issues that World Federalism has heavily engaged with, in addition to the International Criminal Court, the Landmines Treaty, and many others. To read through this book is to read the making of, the commitments and engagements of, and the passions and persistent actions of someone who lives and breathes World Federalism. Furthermore, several prominent World Federalists appear in the book because of their significant influence on his formation and life-and-death decision-making.

Rev. Dr. James Christie, Professor Emeritus, long-term WFM-C Council Chair and President, and member of the international World Federalist Executive, is profiled on pages xiii, xiv, xv, and xvi as a key influence on Axworthy's thinking about Canada's response to the Kosovo crisis. As violence and ethnic cleansing intensified under Slobodan Milosevic's regime, Christie applied Just War principles to the unfolding events, arguing that Kosovo was a critical test of international action at "a time when the international community had a duty and moral obligation to protect the basic rights of people to be free from fear."

My Life in Politics spends substantive time detailing Dr. Axworthy's early life and how his roots in the north end of Winnipeg, his family, his education – with its concrete experiences and social justice actions – and his faith influenced the ideologies and practicalities of his life as a political leader. He also relates, in fascinating detail, the joys and challenges of a political career engaging in crucial Canadian issues, such as the Charter of Rights and Freedoms. What may be of most interest to World Federalists are the latter chapters of the book which detail the processes and procedures of defining Canadian and World Federalist issues such as the Landmines

Treaty, the International Criminal Court, and the Responsibility to Protect doctrine under, what he calls, "The Human Security Agenda."

Dr. Axworthy is deeply and actively concerned with the reality of child soldiers, the strengths and weaknesses of the United Nations, and Indigenous rights. Dr. Axworthy also speaks passionately about the need for participatory democracy in several places throughout the book. On page 175, he connects national and international issues in a way that resonates with federalism, and he continues to be thoroughly committed to service as a way to a just society. He is earnest about all the ways he feels Canada has fallen short of its ideals, mandates, and capabilities on the global stage, particularly in world federalist areas such as peacekeeping.

Dr. Axworthy concludes this book with what he calls "A Proposition for Canada," which is based on the true creation of "a third pillar of governance, a marked demonstration of First Nations and non-First Nations working together." (page. 287) He issues a very timely call, "With another election on the horizon, the time is ripe for the launching of a bold proposition of deliberative democracy, leading to a definition and redesign of Canada's democracy based on the full recognition of the rights of First Nations, Inuit and Metis people." (page 288) In good World Federalist methodology, he then lays out the concrete steps to achieving it.

"By confronting our past with courage and conviction, we can forge a future defined by justice, inclusion, and prosperity for all Canadians. The path forward may be challenging, but the rewards of success will be immense- not just for our country, but for the global community of which we are a part." (page 305)

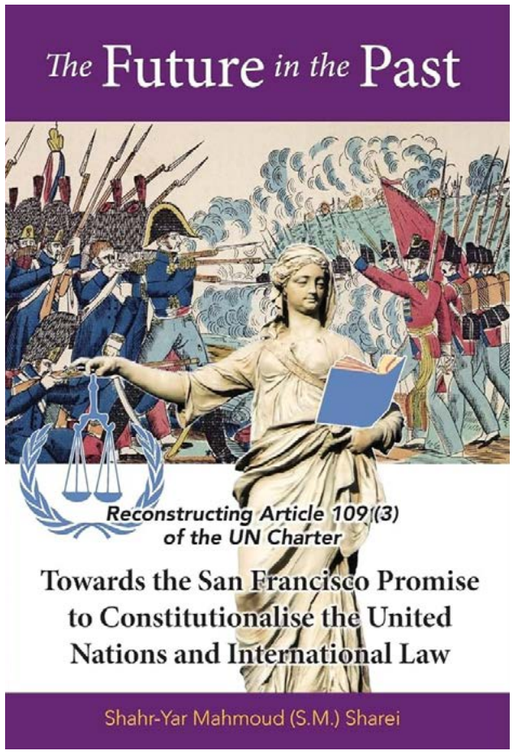
Allons-y World Federalists!

Book recommended by the Rev. Dr. Karen Hamilton

Rev. Dr. Karen Hamilton is the President of the The World Federalist Movement – Canada, former General Secretary of the Canadian Council of Churches and a former Co-Chair of the 2018 Parliament of the World's Religions.

Book Jacket

Lloyd Axworthy is a Canadian politician, elder statesman, and academic. He served as minister of Foreign Affairs in the cabinet, chaired by Prime Minister Jean Chretien. In 2000, he retired from politics, returning to western Canada where he served as president of University of Winnipeg for ten years. In December 2015, he was promoted to Companion of the Order of Canada. He now chairs the World Refugee and Migration Council and lives with his wife, Denise, in Ottawa.



BOOK REVIEW

THE FUTURE IN THE PAST BY S.M. SHAREI

Recommended by Joseph Preston Baratta

This important new book on UN reform is a work of international law. The actors in it are states, not individuals, until the very end, when the author Dr. Mahmud ("Shahr'Yar") Sharei concludes with an envisaged General Conference of the Members of the United Nations to review the UN Charter, in accordance with Article 109(3) of the Charter, at which diplomats from nations large, medium, and small — pressed by federalists and others in civil society — struggle to "constitutionalize" our global international organization.

The thesis of the book contains a history of the founding of the UN and the diplomatic record behind the scenes, yet is very relevant to the causes of the world federalist movement. It also contains a kind of primer on how the goals of peace and security, human rights, preservation of the environment, economic justice, and the like can be practically achieved.

Sharei explains that originally, in1945, the UN Charter was more than a peace treaty or world security pact in which the UN Security Council was vested with "primary responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security." It was a "multilateral global governance system of law," a "quasi-world government." The UN was not deliberately given powers of law-making, court-making, and legislative functions, but they evolved. The turning point came with the First Iraq War (Persian Gulf War) of 1990, which U.S. Secretary of State James Baker described as coming at a "defining moment" in the post-Cold War era. We had come to the end of settling conflicts by appeals to force.

What has evolved is international law — by reference to the ICJ Statute Art. 38 — not by treaty, but by custom and principles like subsidiarity, proportionality, and direct effect on persons subject to international law. Sharei describes it in legal terms as not ultra vires (beyond delegated power), but intra vires (within the scope of authority recognized by member states), though he never quite decides this question. What was new after 1990 was that the five permanent members of the Security Council (the P5) began to restrain themselves from use of the veto. Resolutions began to pass with the concurrence of 9/15, including all the five permanent members. A common interest in what Sharei calls "quasi-global government" began to take shape.

Following the First Iraq War (Persian Gulf War) in 1990, the UN Security Council assumed new powers of legislating, adjudicating, and even taxation (without representation) of individuals found guilty of crimes like supporting Saddam Hussein's conquest of Kuwait. Iraq, one of the poorest countries in the world, was made to pay reparations, drawn from oil revenue, to other states, corporations, and individuals. This, conceivably, is what a world government might do for the suppression of war or for the common good, such as the preservation of the climate and the diversity of life.

What is instructive for us throughout this book is how some of the UN reforms we contemplate might be translated into law. Sharei shows, apart from current injustices, how the states — particularly the United States, Russia, and China — might be induced to accept proposed reforms. World federalists have written excellent proposals, like the Global Governance Forum's A Second United Nations Charter, but they are simply laid before the great powers as on a silver platter, as if to persuade them by so

much sweet reasoning. This is no way to effect change in international relations. We often say that we are forming world public opinion to pressure the great powers, but they ignore us. World affairs are so desperate, the public so divided, and democratic legislatures so often paralyzed that responsible policy makers remain seized of traditional methods of peace through strength.

Sharei shows how progress is possible by supporting the evolution of imperfect international law. Short of world revolution, we are not going to impose laws on great powers without their consent. "Great power unanimity" (the veto) must be maintained until the people are ready for a global parliament and precedents accumulate that states can find safety in representative world assemblies.

In the latter half of the book (Chapters 4–9), Sharei provides a very instructive examination of how the public could assist in a process of "UN Constitutionalism." This time, the medium and small states might act, as they did not dare in 1945, to exercise the still live Article 109(3) to convene a Charter review conference, implying its amendment. The aim would be to produce a limited world government, without great power veto, on the principle, expressed in 1945 by Eelco van Kleffens, minister of foreign affairs of the Netherlands, that granting the Security Council "quasi-judicial" functions and at the same time "executive" powers to enforce them, in cases where one of the five permanent members of the UN Security Council was a party to a dispute, which violates the guarantee of elementary impartiality, would produce a legal dilemma. (161)

Sharei lays out three legal strategies, still involving the people only at the highest levels: 1. ICJ contentious cases (one or more states vs. the five permanent veto holding members of the security council); 2. ICJ advisory opinions (requested by UN organs or agencies); 3. A decision of the General Assembly (members reactivate the Arrangements Committee).

Sharei foresees a climactic struggle by the states over global government, making the people citizens of the world, and sharing sovereignty between the states and the people.

Book recommended by Joseph Preston Baratta

Joseph Preston Baratta is a professor emeritus of history and international relations at Worcester State University.

About the Author

S.M. Sharei, PhD in International Law, is a principal in the UN Charter, Global Governance, and International Constitutional Law. Sharei co-founded the Center for United Nations Constitutional Research, specializing in research and policy recommendations on international legislation-driven governance of AI, climate change, the Security Council and UN reform.

ABOUT MONDIAL

Mondial is the biannual journal of Citizens for Global Solutions (CGS) and World Federalist Movement-Canada (WFM–C), two nonprofit, nonpartisan, nongovernmental organizations. It offers a forum for diverse voices on democratic world federation. The views of contributing authors do not necessarily reflect the positions of CGS, WFM–C, or the masthead membership.

CGS is dedicated to a democratic world federation built on peace, respect for human rights, and the rule of law. Founded in 1947 as the United World Federalists, CGS works through its Education Fund, a 501(c)(3) charitable organization, and its Action Network, a 501(c)(4) that promotes social welfare through advocacy. Both CGS and WFM–C are member organizations of the World Federalist Movement Institute for Global Policy (WFM–IGP), a global network committed to this shared cause, and CGS holds consultative status with the United Nations Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC).

Publication in Canada is also supported by the World Federalist Foundation, a charity registered with the Canada Revenue Agency (reg. #: 123998957RR0001).

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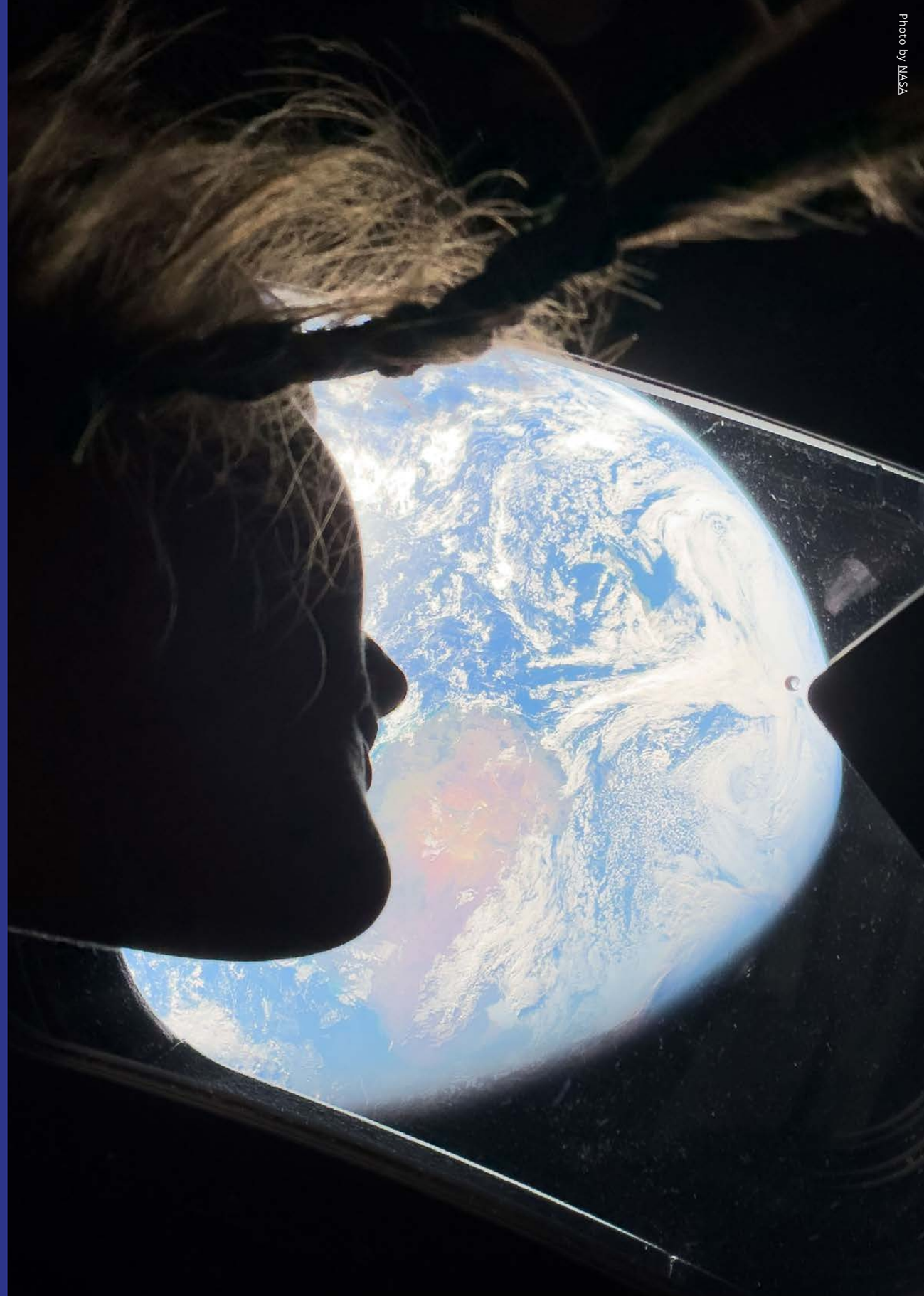

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