

Building a world community

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Global Democracy

“[Nations must] do everything in [their] power to pass on to the next generations an effective UN with the ability to respond preventively to security challenges and thus guarantee peace.”

- Volodymyr Zelenskyy

A Principle-Driven Three-Step Action Plan for Building a World Federation

By Sovaida Maani Ewing

We live in a world that has become inextricably interconnected and interdependent: The world has de facto become a single organism. This reality has, however, made us susceptible to systemic risks. The global upheavals of the last three years should have driven this point home: a virus emanating in one part of the world can trigger a global pandemic threatening the safety and well-being of those everywhere. A slowdown in production of goods or the lockdown of ports in one part of the world can choke off critical supply chains and wreak havoc with the world's economy. A war in Ukraine that might in the past have remained a regional affair has precipitated a global energy crisis, a global food crisis, and threatens to destabilize the peace of the planet, potentially trigger a nuclear conflict. Irresponsible burning of fossil fuels in one country threatens to sink the ship of humanity by exacerbating climate change everywhere.

Yet, despite all the evidence of our common destiny, humanity has yet to take the next inevitable step in its collective evolution and make allegiance to the human race its primary one. Such recognition must find practical expression in the crafting of supranational institutions and collective decision-making processes fit to meet the collective needs and tackle the collective challenge of the 21st century and beyond.

As in our personal lives, so too in our collective lives: We need to have a very clear vision of the kind of world we want to live in. A growing number of us have come to believe that the only viable long-term solution to our global challenges is the establishment of a world federation in which each nation cedes a modicum of its sovereignty to supranational decision-making and enforcement institutions in narrow spheres where the collective interests of all nations can only be addressed collectively. Such a world federation

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must include a democratically elected world parliament with the requisite authority to pass binding legislation in these spheres, for example, by regulating the types and amounts of energy that nations can use to meet their legitimate needs. It would also include an International Executive backed by a permanent standing force capable of enforcing the laws passed by the Parliament and of maintaining international peace. A World Court with compulsory jurisdiction to rule on all disputes that threaten the world peace and capable of enforcing its decisions is another key component of a world federation.

Our dilemma lies in how to get from where we are to this vision of a world federation. On the one hand, it is unlikely that we can achieve it in one fell swoop; the leap is likely too big for most as it understandably triggers too many visceral fears. On the other hand, we cannot afford the luxury of waiting for the slow-moving process of UN reform to render the institution fit for purpose and capable of meeting the challenges of our time. The cost in human suffering is just too high to pay. It is to resolve this dilemma that I

propose that we adopt an Interim Model of global governance that would act as a bridge between where we are and the Ultimate Model of a world federation.

This Interim Model involves the creation of a supranational Global Energy Authority that is granted the exclusive authority to control and manage all pooled key sources of energy such as oil, gas, and nuclear energy and the facilities that produce them, for the collective benefit of humanity. This Authority would be key to tackling a triad of seemingly intractable global challenges: nuclear proliferation, the equitable distribution of energy, and climate change. It would ensure that all nations had equitable access to energy on reasonable terms to meet their legitimate needs. It would also have the authority to regulate in the kinds and amounts of energy each nation could use in a manner that ensured that humanity would be spared the worst ravages of climate change. There would also be complete transparency regarding, and control over, the production of nuclear material thereby ensuring that all such production was made for peaceful generation of much-needed electricity and that none of it was diverted to make illicit nuclear weapons.

The Interim Model has many benefits. By achieving success in a narrow sphere of international endeavor it will inspire confidence and engender hope that the methodology works. We can then build it outward, gradually and methodically expanding its authority into ever-widening areas of collective need. Fortunately, we know that such an elegant yet practicable model has worked in the past in the form of the European Coal and Steel Community that was used to help rebuild and restore Europe in the aftermath of the Second World War.

Lastly, an essential ingredient in the success of both the Interim and Ultimate Models is for all nations to identify, agree upon, and weave in uncompromising fashion a set of “First Principles” or “Global Ethics” into the very structures and processes of these new supranational institutions. The most important of these principles is the oneness of nations which means that the advantage of the part (any one nation) can only be guaranteed by ensuring the advantage of the whole (all nations). There is much we can learn about the operationalization of this principle from the ECSC.



Constitution for the Federation of Earth: Structure and Function

By Glen T. Martin

The first and most important feature of the “Earth Constitution” is that it is founded on the common dignity and humanity of the people of Earth, not on territorial sovereignty, militarism, nor nation-state power. Its Preamble states correctly that “humanity is one, and the principle of unity in diversity is the basis for a new age when war shall be outlawed and peace prevail.”

Its “broad functions” (Article 1) include ending war, protecting universal human rights, promoting social justice, and creating ecological sustainability. These functions are the responsibility of all agencies of the democratic world government. The law-making authority for the Earth Federation is the World Parliament composed of three houses: Peoples, Counselors, and Nations.

The House of Peoples has 1,000 representatives elected directly from 1,000 World Electoral and Administrative Districts (WEADs) substantially equal in population. As Administrative Districts, these 1,000 localities worldwide will have offices from all branches of government, staffed by people from each district, thereby mirroring the structure of the whole at the level of direct, local participation. They represent the people of Earth directly.

The House of Counselors will have 200 representatives nominated by students and faculty from higher education in 20 world regions with 10 from each region elected by the other two houses of the Parliament in joint session. While the three Houses of Parliament vote in joint session on many occasions, a specific function for the Counselors will be to elect nominees to head many government agencies who are then selected by vote of the entire Parliament in joint session. They represent “the common good and best interests of humanity as a whole” (Article 5.2.1).

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The House of Nations is composed of all nations on Earth, with one, two, or three representatives each depending on population. The Constitution does not predefine “nations” in terms of today’s existing group of nearly 200 nations. Thus, it leaves the law open to include new nations, such as “Palestine,” the Kurds, or Puerto Rico, etc. The internal affairs of nations are protected under Article 14 and must include conformity to the universal human rights given in Articles 12 and 13.

The three Houses of the World Parliament will therefore embrace the entire diversity of humankind. To chair sessions, the Parliament will elect a panel of five Chairpersons, one from each Continental Division of Earth, who will rotate annually as Chief Presiding Officer. This pattern, of having organs of the Earth Federation government headed by groups of five with one from each Continental Division, applies to all main agencies and organs of the government, thus institutionalizing the “unity in diversity” declared in the Preamble.

Under the World Parliament will be the four main agencies: the World Judiciary, the World Attorney-Generals and Police, the World Ombudsmus, and the World Executive. The Collegium of



World Judges will be made up of some 20 to 60 of the highest qualified justices on Earth, vetted by strict civil service qualifications and then nominated by the House of Counselors and Elected by the World Parliament, with an equal number in the Collegium from each of the Earth's 10 Magna-regions. Judges will staff the eight benches of the World Supreme Court, with lower court federal judges, as mentioned above, in each of the 1,000 WEADS.

The World Attorney Generals and World Police will be likewise headed by a presidium of five, one from each Continental Division and shall have lower-level offices in each of the 1,000 WEADS. The World Ombudsmus will similarly be headed by a council of five and have offices worldwide. The World Police will be “nonmilitary” and as much as possible use “non-lethal” means of apprehension. The World Ombudsmus will be responsible for protecting the human rights of the people of Earth and of serving as a “watchdog” on all the agencies of government to be sure human rights are not being violated.

The World Executive, headed by a Presidium of five, will be in charge of the eight agencies in the Integrative Complex and the 28 departments of the World Administration. It will have no police powers, no veto powers over the Constitution or World Parliament, and is required to faithfully execute the budget assigned to it by the World Parliament. While its 28 departments will run the affairs of the Federation with respect to education, transportation, labor, health and

nutrition, energy, settlements, commerce and industry, etc., the eight Agencies of the Integrative Complex will be available to all branches of government in terms of resources, advisory, and administrative functions.

For example, the World Civil Service Authority will set standards and wages (with approval of Parliament) for all government areas. The World Boundaries and Elections Administration will conduct safe, secure elections worldwide. The Agency for Technological and Environmental Assessment will make sure industrial and technical applications worldwide do not damage our planetary ecosystem and the World Financial Administration will offer debt-free public banking in currency valued the same everywhere for truly ecologically sound development.

Additional design features that help bring humanity to a truly new level of existence:

1. Sovereignty belongs to all people who live upon the Earth (Article 2).
2. The Earth Federation is “non-military and “democratic in its own structure” (Article 2).
3. The global commons (the oceans, atmosphere, and essential natural resources such as the rain forests) belong to the people of Earth and are protected for planetary ecological health (Article 4).
4. In sum, all the people of Earth now participate in directly governing themselves through all these Earth Constitution design features synergistically operating together.

International Survey: Citizens Want a Stronger and More Democratic UN

By Farsan Ghassim

Since its creation, there have been discussions about reforming the United Nations. Soon after the UN was founded in 1945, public figures like Albert Einstein called for a much more powerful and democratic UN. Today, leaders such as Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky urge fundamental reforms to strengthen the UN, while NGOs like Democracy Without Borders campaign for making the UN more democratic and representative of citizens.

In an international survey in six countries worldwide (Argentina, China, India, Russia, Spain, and the United States), my co-authors Mathias Koenig-Archibugi of the London School of Economics and Political Science, Luis Cabrera of Griffith University in Brisbane, and myself find widespread public support for increasing — or at least maintaining — UN authority over member states and for making its structures more directly representative of citizens around the world. Our findings thus show that citizens support decade-old and present-day calls for a more powerful and democratic UN.

A survey about the UN's status quo vs. major reform proposals

In our survey experiment (a so-called conjoint analysis), we asked respondents to choose between different combinations of UN design features including decision-making procedures, the bindingness of resolutions, enforcement capabilities, and sources of revenue. Survey options included expanding the powers and representativeness of the UN, limiting them, and maintaining the status quo.

Overall, we find that respondents support strengthening or maintaining the current authority level of the UN and making its structures more representative of the world population. For example, at the moment, UN decisions are

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binding on every UN member state only on matters of international peace and security if so adopted by the UN Security Council. Our survey shows that respondents are supportive of making decisions on important environmental and economic matters binding as well. In contrast, the option of making decisions binding only on those states that voluntarily accept them is the most unpopular proposal across all survey countries.

Respondents prefer a directly elected second chamber

On the issue of delegates, we asked respondents about their views on the status quo and two reform proposals: a second chamber composed of directly elected representatives and one composed of national parliamentarians, as suggested by the Campaign for a UN Parliament. The international public views both proposals more positively than the status quo where the highest decision-making bodies of the UN include only representatives from national executives. Moreover, people clearly prefer a second chamber with directly elected representatives to one with national parliamentarians.

We find diverging views on UN reforms to be associated with personal political values like cultural libertarianism versus traditionalism, as well as home country characteristics such as membership status in the UN Security Council. For instance, while citizens of the permanent five



(P5) member states of the Security Council (in our survey, China, Russia, and the United States) on average prefer to maintain their governments' veto in the Council, citizens of non-P5 countries (in our survey, Argentina, India, and Spain) tend to be significantly less supportive of maintaining the veto of the current P5 countries. However, citizens of both groups of countries agree on extending veto powers in the Security Council to other important UN member states.

Will the UN see the transformation that people want?

Our survey shows that often the most popular option is not the one represented by the current UN. On the whole, we find public opinion to lean toward the positions of those reform advocates who have called for the UN and related global institutions to move closer to supranationalist and cosmopolitan ideals. Our findings are consistent with that highlights the importance of institutional design features to public perceptions of the legitimacy of international institutions.

Commenting on the findings, Koenig-Archibugi says: "Publics around the world are often portrayed as hostile to international institutions and keen to loosen constraints on national leaders. Our survey disproves that perception. Far

from supporting attempts to weaken and undermine the UN, they want this global organization to have more power to address today's security, environmental, and economic challenges. But they also want to choose who represents them at the center of the UN rather than relying entirely on their governments for that."

With the UN facing long-standing calls for structural and procedural changes, and as the UN General Assembly is discussing such potential reforms at its ongoing session, our study contributes to an important current debate. UN Secretary-General António Guterres wants this year's session to be "a moment of transformation", and President Zelensky called on member states "to do everything in our power to pass on to the next generations an effective UN with the ability to respond preventively to security challenges and thus guarantee peace." Our research shows that such leaders' calls for reforms are supported by people around the world, including citizens of some of the most powerful member states of the United Nations.

This article first appeared as a blog on the Democracy Without Borders website.



Global Peace & Security

“peace is not merely the absence of war,
but the presence of justice, of law, of order”

- Grenville Clark

Who Speaks for the World?

By Lawrence S. Wittner

Russia's brutal war upon the nation of Ukraine should remind us that, for thousands of years, great powers have used their military might to launch military assaults upon smaller, weaker societies.

Since World War II alone, these acts of aggression have included France's colonial wars in Indochina and Algeria, Britain's military intervention in the Middle East and Africa, the Soviet Union's military conquest of Hungary, Czechoslovakia, and Afghanistan, China's invasions of Tibet and Vietnam, and America's wars in Indochina, Iraq, and Afghanistan.

Today, great power crimes against humanity, often driven by imperial arrogance and ambition, remain a plague upon the world.

Early Steps To Cope With the Problem

Centuries ago, farsighted thinkers began suggesting that wars of aggression could be prevented by establishing a federation of nations to safeguard the peace. Writers such as Dante Alighieri, Immanuel Kant, Alfred Tennyson, and H.G. Wells promoted the idea of moving beyond individual nation-states to create a government representing all of humanity.

By the 20th century, even officials of national governments began to take this idea seriously, particularly after the vast slaughter of World Wars I and II exposed the terrible consequences of international conflict and great power imperialism. The result was the formation of the League of Nations and, when this international confederation proved too weak to cope with the world crisis of the 1930s and early 1940s, the United Nations.

UN Achievements and Limitations

Launched in 1945 with the primary goal of saving future generations from "the scourge of war," the United Nations moved the world closer to a peaceful, governed planet. The signers of its

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Charter agreed to "refrain in their international relations from the threat or use of force against the territorial integrity or political independence of any state." Its General Assembly provided a forum for discussion of global issues by all nations, large and small. Its Committee on Decolonization supervised the end of colonialism across vast swathes of the globe.

In addition, the United Nations smoothed the path for political settlements of numerous small wars, issued the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, established an International Criminal Court, and developed significant programs for economic development, world health, social justice, and environmental sustainability.

Even so, despite these concessions to civilized norms, the great powers were not willing to give up their traditional dominance of world affairs. Structurally, this was expressed through the UN Security Council, with five imperial powers being granted permanent membership and veto power. Behaviorally, it was expressed by their powerful armies, by their wars of aggression against smaller nations, by their development of nuclear weapons, and by their insistence upon their right to retain and use them. Again and again, their rulers showed that they really did think that they had the right to run the world.

Are the people of the world condemned to live forever under the heels of the great powers? Or is it still possible to take another step along the road



to a peaceful, humane planet?

Strengthening the United Nations

At the moment, the United Nations is the major governmental structure that transcends the desires of a particular nation's rulers and acts in support of all humanity. When it comes to peace, climate change, world health, women's rights, refugee resettlement, the eradication of poverty, and a host of other issues, the United Nations invariably defends the interests of the entire world. Given this vital role on a planet still riven by the belligerence of rogue nations, hasn't the time arrived to strengthen it?

Some of the ways to strengthen the United Nations have been evident for years.

One of the most obvious is to remove the permanent membership and the veto power of the great powers in the UN Security Council. There is no logical reason for them to have these privileges. Furthermore, they have often abused them.

Another is to create a UN Parliamentary Assembly, with elected delegates from throughout the world. Such an assembly would enhance the

world organization's democratic and participatory character by adding an entity chosen by people, rather than by governments.

Yet another is to give the United Nations power to levy taxes to cover its expenses. A UN tax on currency speculation (the "Tobin tax"), for example, would end the organization's impoverishment, free it from the need to beg for emergency funds from the great powers, and enable it to adequately fund vital global programs.

In addition, the United Nations could develop a standing rapid military deployment force, available to contain violent crises before they become full-scale wars and humanitarian disasters. Meanwhile, the great powers could be disarmed down to the level of domestic policing. This reduction in their military might would do a great deal to reduce their imperialist tendencies.

These kinds of UN reforms are based on the principle that no single country or small group of countries adequately represents the world and its multiplicity of peoples. The world can — and should — speak for itself.

Winter is coming in Ukraine: Are there prospects for peace?

Robin Collins & Sylvie Lemieux

“How wars end is important. The First World War ended with the Versailles Treaty that many argue led to unresolved grievances and another war. The Second World War was followed by the more benign Marshall Plan that included reconstruction and long-term support commitments. We need to acknowledge that something other than total victory may be required now for peace.

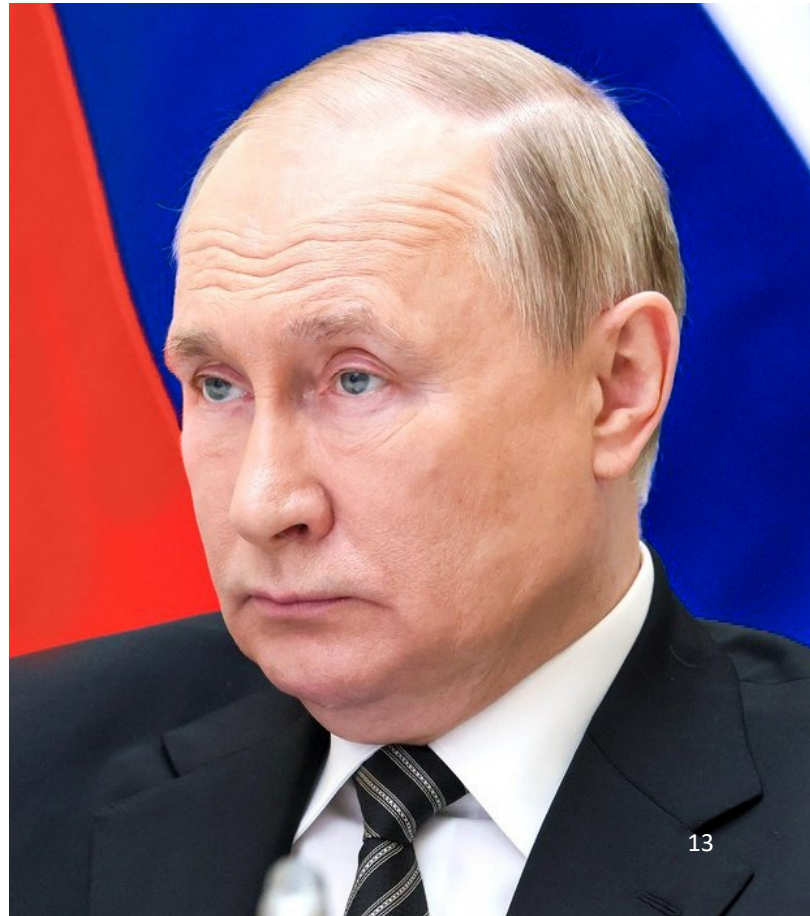
Recently, NATO’s Secretary General Jens Stoltenberg said that the alliance will continue to support Ukraine for “as long as it takes.” Prominent columnists have challenged the very idea that a ceasefire in the Ukraine crisis is

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possible or have even suggested that it might lengthen the war on Russian President Vladimir Putin’s terms. Some are pressing for a “fight to victory” by Kyiv, given recent gains on the battlefield. Too often the nuclear weapons threat is seen as blackmail, a bluff, or a risk worth ignoring.

Ukraine President Volodymyr Zelenskyy, left, and Russian President Vladimir Putin. Russia invaded Ukraine on Feb. 24, 2022. There is debate about the usefulness of Canada in resolving the Ukraine crisis because this country is not seen as neutral, is loudly backing one side, and is showing little interest in a peace negotiations track. *Photographs courtesy of Wikimedia Commons*



Is there hope for peace?

Panelists at a Canadian Network to Abolish Nuclear Weapons discussion in late November were asked to consider opportunities for reducing the nuclear weapon threat. All acknowledged the dire situation in Ukraine following the illegal Russian invasion. But a crisis is also an opportunity to reassess. This moment could ideally lead us closer toward a common security understanding of conflict and conflict resolution. There was some hope coming out of the G20 Declaration in Bali: “The use or threat of use of nuclear weapons is inadmissible. The peaceful resolution of conflicts, efforts to address crises, as well as diplomacy and dialogue, are vital.” Before the invasion, NATO and G7 states initially supported the Minsk Accords, but subsequently were reluctant to fully implement them. Similarly, Putin’s reference to “one people” as a justification for aggression is unhelpful, and for the benefit of his domestic nationalistic audience. Can Putin be trusted to negotiate in good faith? Many have argued against NATO enlargement for decades, and most agree this was part of the deal at the end of the Cold War. Real or imagined, Russia sees this now as a form of encirclement and therefore its own retaliatory capacity being compromised. However, despite all this, there have been civilian corridors established, and temporary ceasefires to allow grain shipments (enabled by Türkiye, the International Committee of the Red Cross and the UN) for mutual benefit. The security services of the United States and Russia have also been in contact with one another.

Canadian Role

There is debate about the usefulness of Canada in resolving the Ukraine crisis because this country is not seen as neutral, is loudly backing one side, and is showing little interest in a peace negotiations track. Deputy Prime Minister Chrystia Freeland has referred to a necessary “vanquished Russia.” Nevertheless, there is still an opportunity for Canada to call for reduced salience of nuclear weapons in NATO policy, and to advocate for de-alerting and No First Use. As a middle-power country with some credibility, a call to push within the alliance for negotiations between Russia and Ukraine would be

noticed. These would all be positive signals. The risk of nuclear weapon use is intolerably high, but not only due to the rhetorical statements of Putin or Dmitry Medvedev. As Project Ploughshares’ director Cesar Jaramillo notes, nuclear deterrence is a continuing unacceptable risk. Each day is a high-risk day. Bringing conflict experts together might also provide an opportunity to make some headway, even if difficult. Peace researchers have suggested that an international forum should be convened. Türkiye, which has good relations with both Ukraine and Russia, could be a helpful interlocutor. Or a neutral civil society organization like the International Pugwash Movement might offer to coordinate an exchange of views. With the destruction of infrastructure, including knocked out heating and electricity, Ukrainians are heading into a brutal winter. Already an estimated 100,000 have been killed or injured on each side, according to some estimates. This tragedy and horrific loss of life may yet be a factor that leads towards meaningful pressure to end this war.

What Might Victory for Ukraine Look Like?

For many reasons, Putin’s complete defeat is difficult to imagine. Any strategy that might lead to Russian humiliation is very dangerous. Putin is facing a kind of defeat with Sweden and Finland joining NATO, in addition to broad isolation of Russia caused by his invasion and annexations. But ending the war is also the only way to end the current heightened nuclear weapon threat. This requires negotiations, even if many are currently uninterested. How wars end is important. World War I ended with the Versailles Treaty that many argue led to unresolved grievances and another war. World War II was followed by the more benign Marshall Plan that included reconstruction and long-term support commitments. We need to acknowledge that something other than total victory may be required now for peace. Canada can pursue the downgrading of the role of nuclear weapons within NATO’s strategic concept and thereby reduce the possibility that they might be used intentionally or accidentally. Both the Canadian government and civil society can devote resources— now—to a Ukraine peace platform that will be essential for ending the current crisis and building a basis for future stability.

The Clark-Sohn Plan

By Joseph Preston Baratta

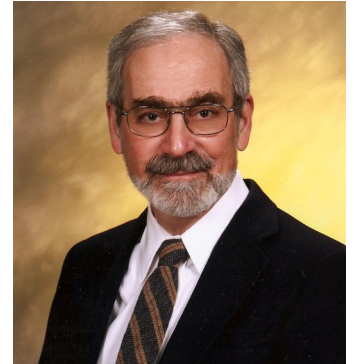
World Peace through World Law was the title of a 1958 book that is generally regarded as a minimalist plan of world government. It was designed to abolish war by substantial amendment of the United Nations Charter. It did not attempt to establish a world government that would be empowered to address all the problems of humanity, though it provided a more liberal amendment procedure so that its powers could grow.

Known as the Clark-Sohn plan, it was distinct from the maximalist Preliminary Draft of a World Constitution of 1948 by University of Chicago Chancellor Robert M. Hutchins and other Western academics to achieve both peace and justice after World War II. It differed, too, from Clarence Streit's maximalist plan Union Now of 1939, which aimed to unite the democracies to overawe the fascist states by the Union's preponderance of force and thus prevent the war.

Historically, the Clark-Sohn plan was very late to respond to the opportunity opened up by the Allied victory in World War II and the establishment of the weak United Nations Organization. But their plan was seen as practical and realistic, because it was a very carefully drafted series of UN Charter amendments designed to achieve universal disarmament and hence peace by the rule of world law. To my mind, the book is still eminently readable. If you want to understand the UN Charter and what it would take to make it effective, this is the plan to read. No other plan from the old world federalist movement can make its objective so clear and persuasive.

They assumed, as Clark said at the beginning of World Peace through World Law, "There is no peace without law." Another time he said, "It is almost axiomatic that there can be no peace without order and no order without law." United World Federalists went even further, saying, "We believe that peace is not merely the absence of

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war, but the presence of justice, of law, of order — in short of government and the institutions of government; that world peace can be created and maintained only under a world federal government, universal and strong enough to prevent armed conflict between nations, and having direct jurisdiction over the individual in those matters within its authority." Clark and Sohn understood that they were proposing "constitutional legislation." They were drafting a fundamental law for the world. Clark and Sohn believed that states would find their proposals acceptable if they offered a practical plan to achieve peace, a common interest. States could coexist and compete without the arbiter of war.

But they went very far, as a reader will immediately see. In order to achieve general and complete disarmament, they made the General Assembly democratically representative of the peoples of the world. They made the Assembly primarily responsible for the maintenance of peace and security. At a stroke, they abolished the Security Council with its veto. In its place, they made it an Executive Council of the world laws enacted by the Assembly. A careful 10-year, step-wise plan would abolish all military forces and ultimately secure a disarmed world by a new World Peace Force alone equipped with arms.

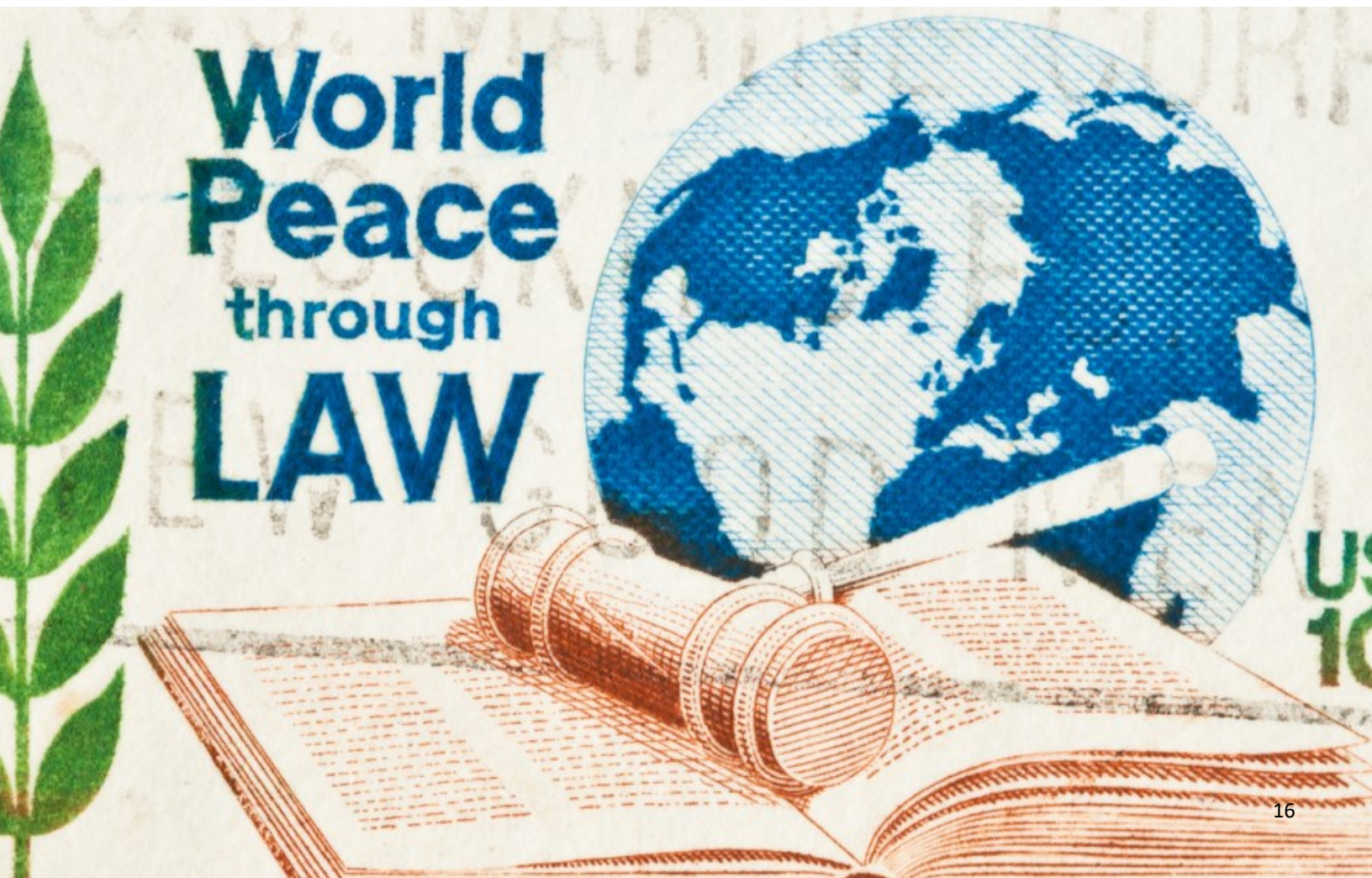
They also proposed two new organs of the UN to deal with political disputes beyond the competence of the International Court of Justice: a World Conciliation Board and a World Equity Tribunal. The Board was to consist of "five most

qualified international mediators or conciliators,” chosen by the General Assembly and responsible to it. The Equity Tribunal was to consist of 15 persons “whose character, experience, and reputation would furnish the best assurance of impartiality and breadth of view,” who would be elected for life by the General Assembly. “Equity” was an old English process by which a royal judge could find justice when the Common Law was inadequate, which Clark and Sohn proposed to revive and apply to international law today. The Equity Tribunal could recommend solutions to such international problems as the Israeli-Palestinian crisis (an illustrative case that they took up). If the General Assembly reached a four-fifths majority to accept the recommendation, it would become binding. Even a recalcitrant state might find it difficult not to abide by such a majority. In the worst case, Clark and Sohn provided for enforcement by economic and military sanctions, ultimately by a new UN Peace Force.

Could such processes have stopped the Vietnam

War, or Russia’s current war in Ukraine? The General Assembly in the Clark-Sohn plan would be elected by the peoples of the world, voting as individuals in accordance with their judgment of where justice lay, as in national republican assemblies. They would not be appointees of the state governments under instructions on how to vote, as at present. The whole scheme presumes world democracy on those questions affecting international peace and security.

A monopoly of force in the world state — necessary to permit the rule of world law — would have to be vested in the reformed UN, but recourse to force would be no more common than in democratic states. Police powers would be sufficient. Individuals — including heads of governments — could be accused of violation of the laws and brought into new world courts, where they would be tried by due process. If found innocent, they would be freed; if guilty, properly punished. It sounds radical, but it is exactly what happens in every well-organized state. No more war.



World Peace through World Law made a substantial contribution to the movement for general and complete disarmament that flourished for the next few years. At a time when the new intercontinental ballistic missile (ICBM) was about to be deployed in the United States and the Soviet Union, Nikita Khrushchev proposed to the United Nations a plan for “general and complete disarmament.” Presidents Dwight Eisenhower and John F. Kennedy responded positively and negotiations actually produced a complete plan, known as the McCloy-Zorin agreement, in September 1961. The text explicitly set out the military forces, bases, stockpiles, weapons, and expenses to be eliminated; the stages of implementation, with compliance and verification procedures at every stage; the creation of an international disarmament organization with powers of inspection and control, not subject to a veto; and the creation of a UN peace force and of reliable procedures for the peaceful

settlement of disputes.

What happened to the McCloy-Zorin agreement? From a world federalist perspective, the insecurities and nationalist traditions of a world without order overwhelmed it. The Cuban missile crisis, the Kennedy assassination, the Vietnam War drove it out of mind. In response to the disappointment with disarmament, the ICBMs were rapidly deployed. Deterrence was the doctrine of the day.

So it all came to naught. The U.S. Arms Control and Disarmament Agency resisted the tide for a few years (1961-99), and at the UN the goal of “general and complete disarmament under effective international control” continued to be voiced into the 1970s. The last major efforts were launched by Mikhail Gorbachev, whose disarmament treaties ended the Cold War by 1991, but the treaties are now defunct.

Building a world community

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“we must adopt the mindset with which
world leaders approached the enormous task
of ensuring global peace following the
horrors of World War II”

- Jacopo De Marinis

The Need for Global Unity: How World Law Can Save Us All

By **Jacopo De Marinis**

Enforceable World Law is Key to World Peace and Environmental Security

If humanity is to survive in the face of climate change, nuclear proliferation, and international political conflict, we must muster the courage to act with conviction and unity. On every level, starting at the individual and rising to the nation-state, we must adopt the mindset with which world leaders approached the enormous task of ensuring global peace following the horrors of World War II. Yet, unfortunately, we are currently lacking that conviction and that unity.

Multilateral institutions have all too often failed to fulfill their mandate. António Guterres, the UN Secretary-General, publicly acknowledged the failure of the UN Security Council, the organ of the United Nations tasked with ensuring global security and peace, to prevent or end the Ukraine war. The Security Council has been ineffective because it is composed of five permanent members — the United States, China, Russia, France, and Britain — that have veto power that can block any resolution set forth to cope with conflict, as Russia has repeatedly done with respect to the Ukraine war.

Although there is a general consensus that the climate crisis must be addressed internationally, climate accords tend to be legally unenforceable and are easily stymied by disagreement over which countries are most responsible for cutting back on fossil fuel emissions and how to establish a roadmap for emissions reduction. For example, the Paris Accords require countries to set their “national determined contributions,” which can be lax or stringent, and rely mainly on peer pressure to promote compliance. Furthermore, the backing of the largest emissions contributors, the United States and China, is crucial if these agreements are to be effective. International

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action on climate change was greatly hindered by the U.S. government’s decision against ratifying the Kyoto Protocol, just as the Paris Agreement suffered greatly when the Trump administration decided to pull the United States out of it.

Nor do our current global institutions seem capable of securing nuclear disarmament. Nuclear weapons states (NWS) like Russia, China, and the United States have recently failed to honor their nuclear disarmament commitments, with the Russian government refusing to back the final draft of an updated declaration on the nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT). Furthermore, China, the United States, Russia, and the six other NWS have declined to support the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons, an agreement promoted by non-nuclear weapons states frustrated with the failure of the nuclear powers to adhere to the nuclear disarmament commitments laid out in the NPT.

To effectively address these transnational threats, we need to begin strengthening and transforming the United Nations into a democratically elected world federation. This is a colossal yet imperative task currently promoted by the World Federalist Movement and its U.S. member organization, Citizens for Global Solutions.

Why is a world federation necessary? As the philosopher, Emery Reves argued, the Industrial



Revolution ushered in an economically and physically interdependent world while leaving political decision-making power in the hands of individual states. This is a lawless system that gave rise to the world wars. The only way to prevent conflict is to transfer some political authority to a higher source: a world government. Norman Cousins, former editor-in-chief of the *Saturday Review*, put the need for world federalism in the context of the atomic age, arguing that the advent of the nuclear bomb made national sovereignty “obsolete.” In an unregulated international environment, any country could easily acquire nuclear weapons, thereby threatening the national sovereignty of others, as well as all humankind. Thus, the concession of absolute national sovereignty is essential to secure the stability and survival of all nations in the future.

How can a world government be created? One key proposal is to strengthen the United Nations by transforming the General Assembly into a world legislature that can pass binding resolutions. Richard Hudson, a world federalist, argued that such a legislature could employ a procedure for decision-making in which binding resolutions would be approved with a two-thirds majority vote of the current member states, countries that represent two-thirds of the total population of the member states, and nations that contribute two-thirds of funds to the world government’s budget. World federalists also advocate reforming the UN Security Council by revoking the veto and increasing the number of permanent members on the Council, key reforms supported by figures like Brazil’s newly elected president, Lula da Silva. Other key suggestions include creating an “International Disarmament Organization” and strengthening the

International Criminal Court.

The newly created world government could be equipped to effectively address climate change, interstate conflict, and nuclear proliferation. Each country’s national military could be reduced to what is required for internal policing, diverting military budgets into domestic infrastructure that would enhance its citizens’ quality of life. An “international peacekeeping force” could be created to enforce world law and prevent interstate conflict as part of an international executive branch. Furthermore, the democratically elected world legislature could require the complete disarmament of weapons of mass destruction, including nuclear weapons. As for climate change, the world government could issue binding resolutions guiding the Earth toward a more sustainable future through green technology and climate change mitigation. Furthermore, some world federalists and environmental activists advocate the creation of an International Court for the Environment, which could provide an enforcement mechanism for climate treaties.

Many people will say that a world republic is unattainable. What country would agree to limit its absolute sovereignty? And yes, a country whose political leaders are held captive by special interests like military contractors and the fossil fuel industry might not agree to such an arrangement. Yet if the people unite with conviction to claim their right to live in a peaceful world, free from nuclear weapons, and to enjoy an economically and environmentally sustainable future — birthrights a world federal government is uniquely positioned to protect — this seemingly unattainable dream could become our reality.

Use of the ICJ Re the Veto

By Bill Pearce

The recent misuse of the UN Security Council (SC) veto has prevented the SC from exercising its functions with respect to some of the gravest threats to international peace and security. Even the threat of the veto has far too often prevented the SC from exercising its functions. Rwanda, Syria, Georgia, Myanmar, Crimea, Yemen and most recently Ukraine come to mind. Since 2000 many initiatives have been put forward for countries to make a voluntary commitment to support decisive action to end crimes against humanity, war crimes, and genocide, but all have fallen short of gaining enough traction to be effective.

This article offers a solution in the form of an advisory opinion from the International Court of Justice (ICJ) as to the legality of the February 26th, 2022 Russian veto of the SC resolution for Russia to stop its invasion on Ukraine and withdraw its troops, based on the argument that Russia acted outside of the limitations imposed by the Charter upon Members of the UN to adhere to the Purposes and Principles of the Charter at all times.

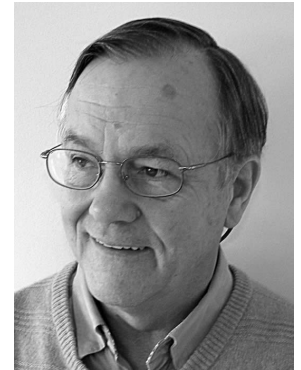
Reform of the Charter to date has been hampered by Art. 27.3 of the Charter which provides that decisions of the SC must include the concurring votes of the permanent members. Various initiatives for voluntary change over decades have failed for the simple reason- the superpowers are not interested in relinquishing their power.

There are only two options that are really open for change, one being a revitalization of the use of the UN General Assembly (GA) power to act when the SC is paralyzed (considered by myself in an article, which appeared in the last issue) and the other is a legal challenge to the veto. With respect to the latter, the Russia veto is the best case to take forward to the ICJ because the facts are so egregious and cry out for a remedy.

The starting point is to understand that every

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entity or person that is provided with a power of decision-making either through legislation or treaty (which is a contract) can only act within the power that is assigned to that body or person. If an entity or person acts outside that authority the acts are null and void as being ultra vires i.e. acts outside jurisdiction.

The main limitation on the SC power comes from their Art. 24(2) duty to “**act in accordance with the Purposes and Principles of the United Nations**” (which are set out in Arts. 1 and 2). To this, I would add all **Members** have the obligation to “fulfill in **good faith** the obligations assumed by them in accordance with the present Charter” (Art. 2(2)), one of which is to “**refrain from the threat or use of force against the territorial integrity or political independence of any state or in any other manner inconsistent with the Purposes of the United Nations**”, (Art. 2(4)).

In Art. 1 first on the list is the purpose of maintaining peace and security “and to that end: to take effective collective measures for the prevention and removal of threats to the peace and for the suppression of acts of aggression or other breaches of the peace, and to bring about by peaceful means, and **in conformity with the principles of justice and international law**, adjustment or settlement of international disputes...” (Art.1(1)).

Dapo Akande in his article “The International Court of Justice and the Security Council: Is There Room for Judicial Control of Decisions of the Political Organs of the United Nations” states that it is almost inconceivable there are no legal limits to the power of the SC when acting under Chapter VII, and that in particular the SC is constrained by jus cogens. The prohibition of genocide, crimes against humanity, and war crimes are jus cogen norms from which no derogation is ever permitted. The UN is a body under international law and subject to it. It follows that the SC is constrained by jus cogens.

The author gives us an example from the Bosnia Genocide case where Bosnia asserted that the SC resolution which imposed an arms embargo on Bosnia assisted the commission of genocide. Judge Eli Lauterpacht said that when the operation of that resolution began to make Members of the UN accessories to genocide it ceases to be valid and binding in its operation and such Members became free to depart from it. This was because the continuing embargo became a matter of doubt it required the further consideration of the ICJ. Even though the further hearing did not take place it demonstrates that SC decisions have to conform to international law.

Jennifer Trahan, Cambridge Professor, has written a book “Existing legal Limits to Security Council Veto Power in the Face of Atrocity Crimes” in which she advances the same argument in the context of SC vetoes being subject to jus cogens and in addition are subject to the Purposes and Principles of the UN quite independently of the jus cogens. This was recognized by Judge Weeramantry in the Lockerbie case as well as Judge Lauterpacht in the Bosnia case. I would even add that treaty obligations are also part of international law that permanent members must have regard to when exercising their veto powers.

For states that are party to the Genocide Convention they would have an obligation to “prevent” and to “ensure” respect for the Convention. The ICJ has held that “prevent” means everything in one’s power, depending on a state’s ability to influence. Trahan asks “Are the

vetoes being used in line with these treaty obligations?” Clearly, they are not.

Russia’s veto to block a SC resolution directed at terminating Russia’s illegal invasion has the effect of facilitating Russia’s furtherance of the invasion and continuance of its illegal targeting of citizens beyond the aforesaid limitations to the exercise of Charter powers. Just as a hypothetical SC resolution that supported Russia’s invasion would be declared ultra vires, so too would the veto decision of one of its members having the same effect. There is not much debate as to the vires of the veto.

The real question is whether the ICJ can deal with the issue in the form of an advisory opinion with consequences, which are meaningful.

We must first ask: How does one engage the jurisdiction of the ICJ to deal with the issue? Here, Akande suggests that the broad language of Art. 96 which permits both the GA and the SC to request the ICJ to give an advisory opinion on “any legal question” permits the GA to request an advisory opinion respecting a SC decision and vice versa. That makes sense.

The next question is whether the ICJ would consider the issue to fall within its purview. In our domestic law, the question would be whether the question is justiciable. It would be argued that the Charter would not have come into being without a veto power given to the 5 permanent members (P5), who held most of the military power in the world (and would be the most called-upon nations to use military force to enforce the peace).

Since there were no restrictions placed on the veto power, since there was no requirement to provide any reasons for such a vote, and since none have been provided from the commencement of the Charter, the argument would be that the legality of a veto is off limits for the court to question.

This position is consistent with previous decisions where the ICJ has opted not to review decisions made by the SC under Art. 39 when declaring “the existence of any threat to peace”. This is based on the grounds that the court has

no right to substitute its opinion for that of the SC where the Charter has expressly given that discretion to the SC and the court has no right to substitute its judgment of the facts for that of the SC. The ICJ has stated in that regard that the court cannot review “political decisions on policy on which legal guidelines are lacking”.

The Purposes and Principles of the UN are expressed in the Charter and are easy to interpret and apply to the facts of most situations, especially the Ukraine crisis where it is obvious that Russia is trying to conquer the territory of a sovereign country. The fact of aggression and the fact Russia is intentionally targeting civilians are not questions that the Court will have any difficulty making a determination of fact upon, just as the court had no difficulty dismissing Russia’s pretext for entering eastern Ukraine on the basis that Ukraine was engaged in committing genocide on Russian-speaking peoples.

In other words, the legal guidelines are crystal clear and their application to the facts on the ground are not difficult questions and certainly not of a speculative nature. Furthermore, the question for decision is not a political question of a discretionary nature. The question to be decided is simply whether the exercise of the veto power was within the jurisdiction of the Court, a pure legal question.

In the Supreme Court of Canada case of *Operation Dismantle v the Crown*, the Court reviewed the statement of claim of Operation Dismantle which alleged that the Canadian government’s decision to permit the testing of the cruise missile constituted a violation of citizens’ section 7 Charter rights on the basis such testing would lead to use of the missile which would heighten the risk of nuclear war, and, that the decision to permit testing on Canadian soil would make Canada more likely to be a target for a nuclear attack.

The court found that the foreign policy decisions of independent nations were not capable of prediction on the basis of evidence to any degree of certainly approaching probability and that the nature of the reaction to the decision to testing of the missiles can only be a matter of speculation such that the appellant could never prove the

causal link between the testing and the increased risk to the threat of nuclear conflict. In short, the court dismissed the claim on the basis that it did not disclose a reasonable claim and that the issues raised in the claim were non-justiciable.

In contrast, the issues presented on the legality of the Russian veto are not of a speculative nature and the ICJ is not presented with any issues of mixed fact and law that present any difficulty to decide.

Further, I would add that if the drafters of the Charter had the intention that the P5 should not be held to account for any breaches of the peace they committed, they would have made exceptions in the Articles referred to, that members of the P5 were not under such obligations to comply with the Purposes and Principles of the UN when voting as members of the SC.

In addition, Chapter VI of the Charter deals with Pacific Settlement of Disputes. Art. 33 obliges all members when engaged in any dispute “which is likely to endanger the maintenance of international peace and security” to first seek a solution through one or more of the dispute resolution mechanisms set out in that Article. When such mechanisms fail to settle the dispute the parties are required to refer the matter to the SC under Art. 37.

When the SC votes in such a matter parties to a dispute are required to abstain from voting (Art. 27(3)), the obvious purpose being to avoid a conflict of interest and permit the SC to make an impartial decision on a recommended course of action for the parties to the dispute. When Russia decided to invade Ukraine, it was not only in breach of the Principle requiring settlement of disputes by peaceful means (Art.2.3) but also the Principle to not use force against the territorial integrity or political independence of a state (Art.2.4). In addition, it was in breach of its obligation under Art. 33 to seek peaceful means to resolve the dispute with full knowledge that if such dispute was brought to the attention of the SC under Art. 27 in Chapter VI it would not have the power to exercise its veto.

In short, there exist compelling reasons for the ICJ to accept it has jurisdiction, in this case, to deal with the question as to the legality of the veto because to decline jurisdiction would encourage other like-minded P5 members to avoid Charter-mandated peaceful means to resolve disputes with other states, something that was clearly not contemplated by the Charter.

The other question that must be considered is what is the effect of an advisory opinion on the question of the legality of a veto vote by a permanent member? Art. 59 of the court statute provides that the decision would be binding on the parties to the case. In our hypothetical application for an advisory opinion, the parties would include Russia and the SC. This would allow the SC to treat the veto as being a nullity which would permit them to treat the resolution that was vetoed as having been passed. It would also allow the SC to follow up with another resolution to enforce the first without the concern that Russia could block it with another veto.

Most importantly though it would set a precedent which would likely greatly reduce the misuse of the veto going forward and it would rejuvenate

the effectiveness of the SC to address peace and security issues without the necessity to make any modifications to the Charter.

In April of last year, I was in communication with Professor Trahan and she sent me an email response from Andras Vamos-Goldman, who was legal advisor to the Canadian Mission to the UN when Canada was on the SC, to a question whether the time was right to seek an advisory opinion and the pros and cons of same. In his response, Vamos-Goldman acknowledges that “there will never be a better moment for political will” but Russia and China will fight it tooth and nail and the P3 (the US, France and the UK) may not like it either. “But, given that there is not likely to be a better chance for a while, I would encourage Canada—with others—to go forward.”

The end of the conflict does not seem to be close at hand. Even though it would have been much better for an application to have been made a year ago it is not too late to do so now because such opportunities do not often present themselves and a successful application would effectively reform the SC in a positive direction for generations to come.





World Environment

“the term “global commons” needs to be expanded to include all systems that regulate the stability and resilience of Earth”

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Biodiversity: A Pledge, Now Action

Rene Wadlow

In the early hours of 19 December 2022, the delegates to the UN Convention on Biodiversity (COP 15) reached an agreement on a Biodiversity Framework after 12 days of intense negotiations. The theme of COP 15 was “Ecological Civilization: Building a shared future for all life on earth”. There were some 15,000 persons present during the meetings: government delegates, some 70 Non-governmental Organizations, academic research institutes and business companies. The global biodiversity framework, to be called the “Kunming-Montreal Framework” sets out to protect at least 30 percent of the world's land and water by 2030. Montreal is the headquarters of the UN Secretariat of the Convention on Biodiversity. Kunming is the city in the People's Republic of China where the conference was to be held but was changed because of COVID-19 restrictions.

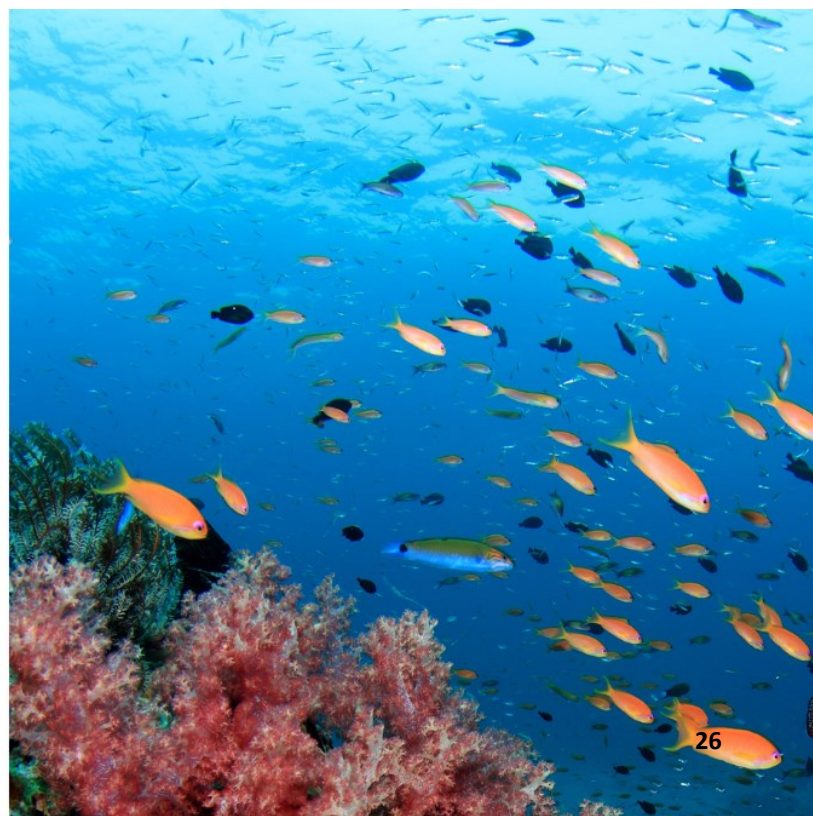
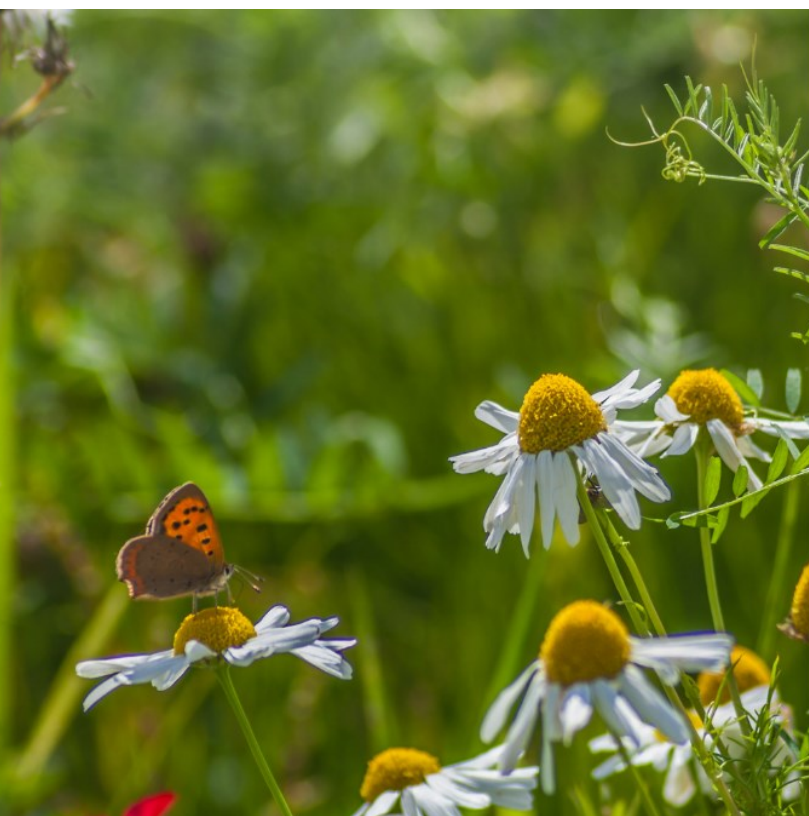
There is general agreement among specialists that worldwide there is a loss of biodiversity due to a number of factors such as increase in monoculture agriculture, livestock grazing, the

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loss of forest lands through lumbering and firewood gathering, overuse of pesticides, and the growth of urbanization. Many ecosystems are under stress and facing degradation. The tree and plant cover of the world have been taking increasing losses in almost all parts of the world. There is also the impact of climate change and a lack of rainfall in some parts of the world.

As with many UN conferences, a key issue of discussion is finance. The protection of biodiversity and the restoration of degraded areas costs money without necessarily bringing in new financial wealth. There is a Global Environment Facility, which is called upon to manage funding increases.



It is hoped that non-governmental organizations can play a vital role at the international level on biodiversity protection. At the national level in many countries, non-governmental organizations have played an important role in the creation of national parks and protected areas. Can they play a vital role at the international level? While there are some long-standing international ecological organizations, none yet have been able to mobilize a wide international public opinion. However, what was new at Montreal was the concerted effort of women's organizations to have a gender focus put into the Framework for the first time. They were successful, and the Framework states that the Framework should "ensure gender equality in the implementation of the Framework through a gender-responsive approach where all women and girls have equal opportunity and capacity to contribute to the objectives of the Convention, including by recognizing their equal rights and access to land

and natural resources and their full, equitable, meaningful and informed participation and leadership at all levels of action, engagement, policy, and decision-making related to biodiversity."

There is also a growing movement among young people for the safeguard of biodiversity who may watch closely at the ways the Framework leads to action. As Marco Lambertini, Director General of World Wildlife Fund International said "The agreement represents a major milestone for the conservation of our natural world, and biodiversity has never been so high on the political and business agenda, but it can be undermined by slow implementation and failure to mobilize the promised resources. Governments have chosen the rights side of history in Montreal, but history will judge all us if we don't deliver on the promise made today."

New book explores global solutions to global problems

By Keith McNeil

"So, perhaps now is the time to reopen discussions about adopting more democratic principles at the global level – everyone might one day vote in a world parliament."

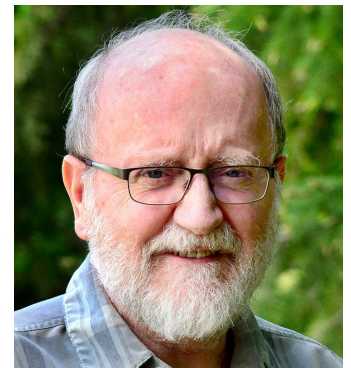
Those words appear on page 203 of the Kindle edition of "*Breaking Boundaries*," a new book on the climate crisis and other related problems.

It is one of several places where authors Johan Rockstrom and Owen Gaffney mention the United Nations.

They also discuss policies that would work best in a more effective and democratic UN although they do not make the connections with world federalism this would imply.

The policies include an international carbon tax (with much of the money going as social dividends to low-income households), a global

Now retired, author Keith McNeill was formerly the editor of the North Thompson Times newspaper in Clearwater, B.C. He has been a member of World Federalist Movement - Canada since 1989.

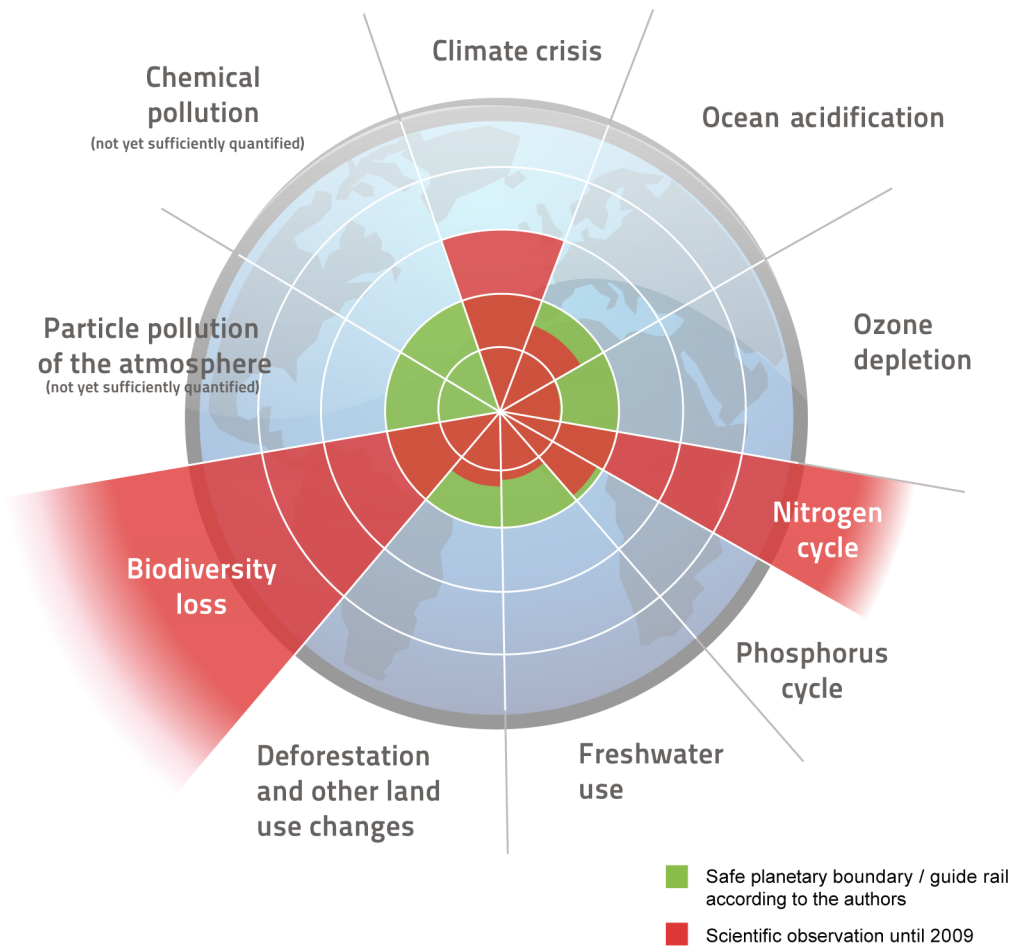


wealth tax, prices on nitrogen, phosphorus, and water, a global transformation of agriculture, a radical overhaul of the global health system, geo-engineering, and long-term global planning.

Rockstrom is a co-director of the Potsdam Institute for Climate Impact Research (PIK) in Germany. He was formerly the executive director of the Stockholm Resilience Centre at Stockholm University.

Planetary Boundaries

after Johan Rockström, Stockholm Resilience Centre et al. 2009



Planetary boundaries, according to a paper by Rockstrom et al. published in Nature in 2009. The red areas represent the estimated current state with the inner green circle being the estimated boundaries. *Credit: Wikimedia graphic by Felix Mueller*

Gaffney is the director of international media and strategy at the Stockholm Resilience Centre. He is a journalist, filmmaker, and writer, and trained as an astronautic and aeronautic engineer. A Netflix documentary narrated by David Attenborough accompanies the book. Greta Thunberg wrote the book's forward. In 2009, Rockstrom led a team that developed what they call the planetary boundaries framework.

The framework identifies nine subsystems of the Earth system, each with boundaries that should not be crossed. The nine are climate change, ocean acidification, novel entities such as chemical pollution, nitrogen and phosphorus nutrient cycles, freshwater use, land use changes, biodiversity loss, air pollution, and ozone depletion. So far, **four boundaries have been transgressed**: climate, biodiversity, land, and use of nutrients.

One could argue about how the subsystems were chosen. For example, nuclear weapons and artificial intelligence are included under novel entities while a case could be made that they deserve their own categories.

Act I of the book tells the story of Earth's life support system. The main message here is that the Earth has a hair trigger – small changes in the past have sent temperatures soaring and could do so again.

Act II is the story of the scientific advances of the past three decades. We are no longer in the Holocene, the relatively stable geological epoch of the past 10,000 years. Instead, since about the 1950s, we are in the Anthropocene – an epoch during which Earth's system processes are being dominated by human beings on an exponential basis.

BREAKING BOUNDARIES

THE SCIENCE OF OUR PLANET

Act III tells about the Earthshot – meaning to save the Earth we need to organize as was done for the moonshot back in the 1960s and 1970s

The essential elements of the Earth shot appear to be the Carbon Law – the need to reduce our use of fossil fuels by 50% per decade and to be at net zero by 2050, and the Zero Law for nature – from now on we need to have zero loss of habitat.

To do this we must learn how to collectively manage our global commons.

There are at present four legally recognized global commons: Outer Space, the high seas, Antarctica, and the atmosphere.

However, the term “global commons” needs to be expanded to include all systems that regulate the stability and resilience of Earth.

The book mentions Elinor Ostrom, who won the Nobel prize in economics for her research into how people manage common resources.

In 1999 Ostrom outlined how to adapt her eight principles of managing common resources to planetary stewardship.

An important tool for planetary stewardship will be “doughnut economics,” as proposed by

Oxford economist Kate Raworth, which seeks to provide a floor of basic needs of citizens (inner doughnut) beneath a ceiling posed by the planetary boundaries (outer ring).

Rockstrom and Gaffney say the tools we need are available: regenerative agriculture, nature-based solutions, circular economic models, science-based targets for business, and collective governance of our global commons at all scales.

Stability is achievable within 30 years, they believe. They ask, what if this is the fifth phase of planetary evolution, when the biosphere consciously manages the planet for habitability? The goal could be Terra Sapiens or Wise Earth.

The book is worth reading and the documentary is worth watching. Both give good overviews of the complex environmental crisis we face. Be aware, however, that they are targeted at a popular audience and therefore often do not go into a subject in any great detail.

And if the authors don’t make the connections between their proposed solutions and world federalism, perhaps it is up to world federalists to make the connections for them.



World Economy

“Only through global cohesion can we mitigate global inequality and ensure our resources are directed toward endeavours that supports the well-being of all global citizens.”

- Erica Wilson

Accountability for Pandemic Profiteers

By Erica Wilson

In countries across the world, the cost of living has been increasing at a rate that outpaces the growth, or lack thereof, of wages. Rising inflation has challenged the ability of the average household to make ends meet. The consensus is that we've entered a recession, a phenomenon that has become far too common. Cycles of booms and busts are a fixture of our economic reality, with the cycle repeating roughly every 10 to 15 years. Whether it's conflict-related supply chain challenges, a global pandemic, the 2008 housing crash, or the 1980s savings and loans scandal, each period of economic woe has also had those who emerged wealthier than ever.

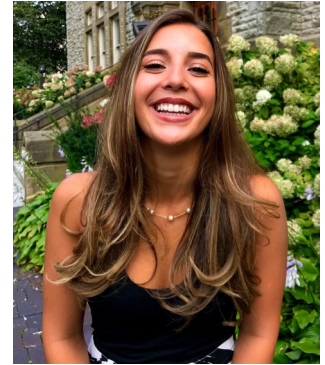
Pandemic Profiteering and the Weston Family

In Canada, attention has been focused on the most recent profiteer of the pandemic-era economic crisis: Galen Weston Junior. The mild-mannered billionaire is the owner of the global retail empire Loblaw Companies Ltd and Choice Properties Real Estate Investment Trust; both of which are incorporated under George Weston Limited. Weston Jr. took over after his father Galen Weston passed away in 2021. Loblaw Companies operates under several different banners in Canada as well as globally; some include No Frills, Shoppers Drug Mart, Superstore, and Loblaws as well as several other brands like No Name and President's Choice.

With restaurants unable to operate normally due to stay-at-home orders, more people were purchasing groceries to cook at home. This was reflected in Loblaw's profit margins as well as Weston Jr.'s wealth, which increased rather dramatically. By June of 2020 Forbes recorded a \$1.6 billion increase in Weston Jr.'s net worth – but what's behind this sudden increase?

At the outset of the pandemic, frontline workers were at the center of the public conversation for their vital role in the day-to-day operation of our economy during this tumultuous period and were rewarded with a pay increase of \$2 an hour. This

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acknowledgment would become nothing more than lip service, however, when the pay increase was rolled back only 2 months later. Weston Jr. cited the post-pandemic return to normalcy as the reason for clawing back this modest wage increase despite the fact many families were struggling from job loss and other financial troubles. This move is consistent with Weston Jr.'s vocal opposition to the \$15 minimum wage increase. He actively spoke out against the pay increase stating it would cost too much and have a destabilizing economic effect.

Weston Jr.'s attitudes towards salary increases differ dramatically when applied to himself, however. His annual salary increased from \$3.55 million in 2020 to \$5.41 million in 2022; an increase of over 52%. The money was certainly there for wage increases, given that “(b)y the fourth quarter of 2021, Loblaws raked in \$349 million more than the same period of 2020”.

Now Weston Jr. is blaming inflation for the latest increases in grocery prices despite first-quarter profit margins being 40% higher in 2022 than the year prior. Critics claim Weston Jr. is engaging in price fixing, something Loblaw Companies was already found guilty of in 2018 – the scheme persisted for 14 years, between 2001 and 2015. Also in 2018, Loblaw Companies was found guilty of using offshore bank accounts in the Caribbean to evade millions in taxes, a practice among billionaires and massive conglomerates that has become so commonly documented its borderline cliché. Loblaw Companies was ordered

to pay \$368 million in back taxes for 2018; a punishment that is ultimately a drop-in-the-bucket considering their annual profits were \$800 million the same year.

The company has responded to accusations of price fixing with a temporary price freeze for No Name products that began October 17th, 2022 and expired recently on January 30th of this year, a response that has left many unsatisfied. This prompted inquiries into how high prices were when they froze and unsurprisingly, they were “up over 10% annually from October to December” above pre-pandemic prices according to the Consumer Price Index. As negative media attention grows, the public is left to wonder will the retail magnate ever be held accountable?

Accountability for the Profiteers of Misery

In a system that emphasizes the pursuit of profits over the well-being of individuals, these outcomes are inevitable – and Galen Weston Jr. is no exception. He is among the ranks of a class of elites that obfuscate their wealth to hoard their money. The Westphalian nation-state model has enabled this conduct. With no supranational body to hold these profiteers accountable they can circumvent traditional accountability mechanisms that exist at the national level, allowing this elite class to operate with impunity globally.

This outcome is not an unintended consequence of our system, but rather an Intentional construct by status quo powers to maintain their wealth and influence over our world. This brief look into the Weston family’s exploits presents a stark reminder that the rules exist for most – but not for all.

We need a supranational body that can prevent

this global-scale profiteering that siphons money from the lower class. And gives it to the wealthiest 1%. Only through global cohesion can we mitigate global inequality and ensure our resources are directed toward endeavours that supports the well-being of all global citizens.

In the popular TV series, *Breaking Bad*, which focuses on the transformative path of anti-hero Walter White towards the sale of drugs to pay for his cancer treatments, internet users would jokingly remark how the premise of the show becomes irrelevant if the main character simply lived in Canada - where treatment would be covered through universal health care. Similarly, series like *Ozark* about financial planner Marty Byrde, who is forced to help a cartel launder their money through international tax havens (not unlike those used by Loblaw Companies Ltd.), could also be rendered irrelevant if a supranational body with the ability to ensure those individuals who refuse to pay their fair share were held accountable.

In the same way the divine right of kings was not a valid ordinance of power, inherited wealth does not make an individual deserving of outweighed influence and power over our world. Our current system is naïve; it hopes that a company built on inherited wealth, worker exploitation, and consumer fraud will hold itself accountable – but this will never be the case. True accountability requires a system that prioritizes transparency and social well-being. Addressing global tax evasion is not only the right thing to do, but it could present an alternative revenue stream through which we could fund projects that could advance sustainability practices and enhance quality of life for humankind.



Seven ways to tackle inflation without raising interest rates

By Guy Dauncey

There are many causes of inflation, but there's only one solution central banks seem willing to consider: increase interest rates. This has many people scratching their heads: Why would this bring down the price of rent, food or gas? Won't it increase costs for anyone who pays interest on a variable-rate mortgage or consumer loan? And won't it make essential green investments more difficult?

The current bout of inflation started with supply-side disruptions. COVID-19 disrupted everything, especially goods originating in China. Climate-worsened droughts disrupted farming. Then Russian President Vladimir Putin went and disrupted Ukraine. Supply chains broke for critical items such as oil, wheat, fertilizer and microprocessors, causing shortages that enabled producers to increase their prices.

Once inflation had started, some businesses took the opportunity to increase their prices, bringing the second cause: profits-push inflation. This is when companies use their market power to boost their prices. Average Canadian profits, which ran at 5 to 10% between 1960 and 2000, rose to 20%, while corporations enjoyed their lowest-ever tax rate.

The third cause of inflation was the increased price of oil that came with the invasion of Ukraine and seeped into many products. The fourth cause was increased mortgage and rental costs. Prices went through the roof when the Bank of Canada printed money in response to the 2008 financial crisis and then the pandemic, distributing it to the banks – combined with historically low interest rates in a relatively rigid housing market.

Conservatives and Republicans like to claim that inflation is caused by increased government spending, but this is true only when a corrupt or

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incompetent government prints money instead of raising taxes to pay for its cronies or its wars. In normal circumstances, every dollar that a government spends comes either from taxes or from loans in the form of bonds, and in both instances, money is taken out of the economy to pay the taxes or buy the bonds, so there is no impact on aggregate demand (the total demand for all goods and services in an economy).

Money created by central banks, on the other hand, does increase the money supply, risking an increase in aggregate demand and hence inflation, if supply is constrained. During the early days of COVID-19, central banks also used quantitative easing to buy government bonds, creating money that was distributed as support cheques. They pumped £895 billion (US\$1 trillion) into the U.K.'s \$3-trillion GDP economy with the explicit purpose of sustaining aggregate demand, and the Bank of Canada did likewise.

The Bank of Canada believes that it needs to cool demand, enabling supply to catch up, and its way of doing this is to increase interest rates, even if it causes a recession, increases unemployment and makes those essential green investments harder.

In *The Causes of and Responses to Today's Inflation*, however, the economists Joe Stiglitz and Ira Regmi show that there is no excessive aggregate demand in the United States, that real personal consumption has been largely below

trend, and that the U.S. is not facing a wage-price spiral. The close linkage between our economies suggests that the same is true in Canada.

Rather than simply watching as central banks raise interest rates, what should governments do, given that those who suffer the most are those who are only just getting by?

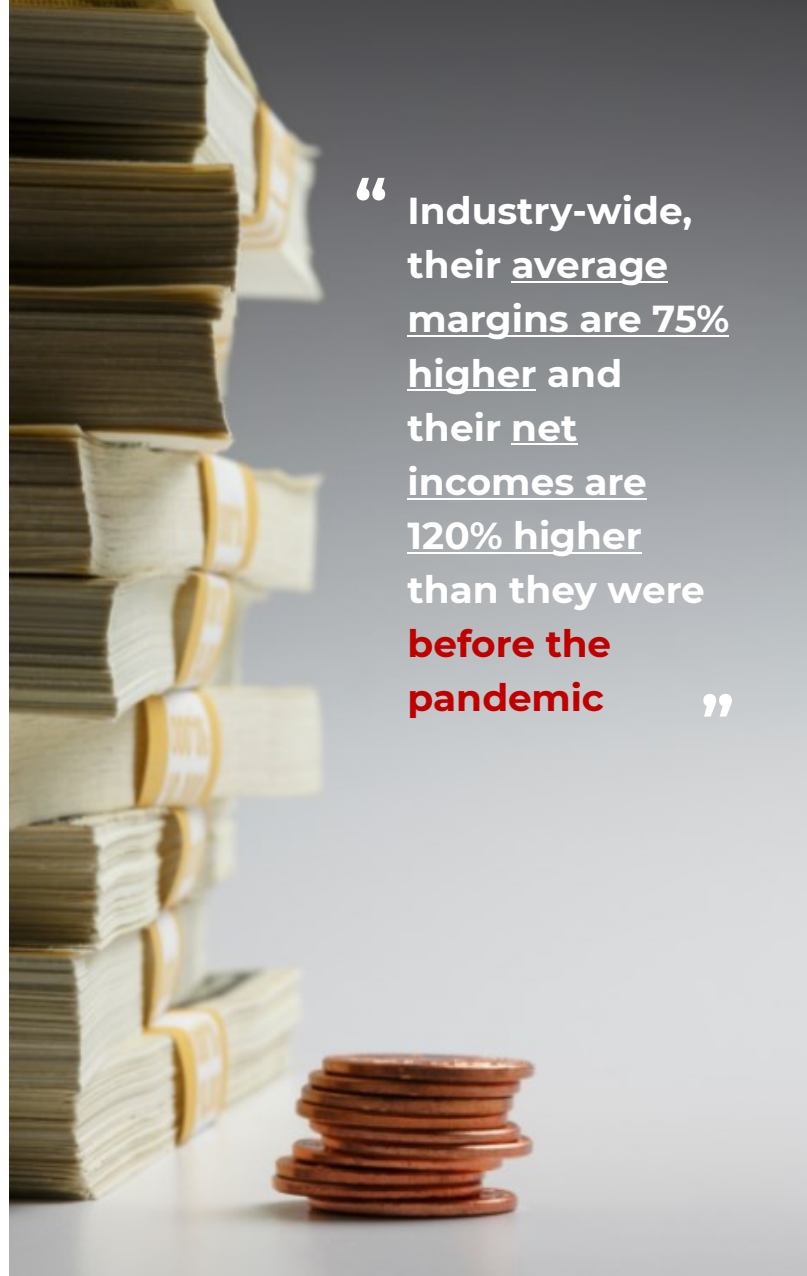
1. Increase wealth taxes

Between 2008 and 2022, the world's central banks gave US\$41 trillion in quantitative easing to banks and corporations, which did inflate asset prices in the housing and stock markets, which is where the money ended up. An analysis by the Institute for New Economic Thinking found that increased aggregate demand in the United States is a fifth contributing cause of the current inflation but that 40% of the increased demand is coming from the wealthiest 1% and 75% from the wealthiest 10%, who made immense gains in personal wealth during the pandemic, mostly as a result of this same quantitative easing, and are now busy spending it.

We don't need to cool general demand; we need to cool demand by the wealthiest 10%. This is best achieved not by raising interest rates but by increasing taxes on those who are already rich, for whom inflation is not a problem. At the same time, governments should encourage more green investment by developing a sustainable activities taxonomy, similar to Europe's, favouring lending at low interest for critical items such as affordable housing and climate solutions.

2. Impose a windfall profits tax

When Canadian economist Jim Stanford analyzed profits in 52 Canadian business sectors, he found that compared to before the pandemic, the combined after-tax profits of the 15 most profitable sectors had increased by 89%, while profits in all other sectors fell. The big culprits are the oil and gas companies, followed by banks and financial intermediaries, mining, groceries, and home maintenance companies. Together, they took \$143 billion out of the pockets of businesses and consumers (4.5% of Canada's GDP), causing more than half of the current inflation. This then had a knock-on effect, further increasing prices



“ Industry-wide, their average margins are 75% higher and their net incomes are 120% higher than they were **before the pandemic** ”

for food and other consumer goods.

The same thing happened in Britain, where corporate profits were 73% higher in 2021 than in 2019, and in the United States, where the quarterly profits of corporations were 50% higher in 2022 than during the eight years before the pandemic.

These businesses have been able to profiteer from inflation because they do not face enough competition. In Canada's food sector, five supermarket chains control most food distribution, and at least three seized the opportunity to increase their prices. Industry-wide, their average margins are 75% higher and their net incomes are 120% higher than they were before the pandemic.

If companies knew they would be taxed heavily on their windfall profiteering, they would be less likely to do it. Prime Minister Justin Trudeau's government has promised a 3% surtax on banks with profits greater than \$1 billion, and the NDP has called for a 15% tax on larger companies with higher-than-normal profit margins. In the U.S., Bernie Sanders has called for a 95% windfall profits tax. In Portugal, parliament has approved a 33% tax on windfall profits by energy companies and food retailers, and the Czechs are proposing a 60% excess-profits tax on energy companies. The European Union wants to raise 140 billion euros by taxing the windfall earnings of energy companies to help households and businesses pay their massive gas and electricity bills. To stop future profiteering, governments need to use anti-trust regulations to break up oligopolies.

3. End the affordable-housing crisis

Between 2021 and 2022, apartment rents in Canada rose by an average 11%, from \$1,676 to almost \$2,000 a month. Rental inflation was 37% in London, 30% in Calgary, 19% in Vancouver

and 17% in Toronto. In these cities, tenants are paying \$600 to \$1,000 more every month. In the United States, mortgage costs have risen by 18.8%, rents by 17.6%. For many mortgage-holders, the higher interest rates are really hurting.

I have suggested solutions to the housing crisis here and here, so I won't repeat myself. Among other things, we need to control the spread of short-term rentals, and we need a massive increase in affordable home-building. Increased interest rates will make this harder.

4. Reduce our dependency on oil

The solution here is to speed up the transition to sustainable transportation. If you drive an electric car, or if you get around by foot, bike or public transit without need for a car, the price of oil has much less impact. The annual increase in the carbon tax, reaching \$170 per tonne by 2030, is essential as a persuasive mechanism. The federal government could advance the 2035 ban on the sale of new gasoline vehicles to 2030 and phase out heavy-duty vehicles by 2035, in collaboration with the U.S.





5. Give workers the pay they need to keep up

Once inflation had set in, workers needed wage increases to keep up, and employers who couldn't find staff offered more pay, contributing a sixth supposed cause: wages-push inflation. Since 2017, prices in Canada have risen by 20%, however, so low- and middle-income workers whose wages have not increased are actually contributing to reduced demand. Central banks often blame the inflation on workers' wage demands, rather than the five other causes, which is where it belongs.

Nearly two-thirds of Canadian workers' wages are falling behind the rate of inflation, according to a report by the Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives (CCPA); the economist Robert Reich has shown that most U.S. the purchasing power of workers' paycheques is also shrinking. The CCPA report found that public-sector workers' wages over the past two years grew by less than the rate of inflation. Last year, healthcare and social-assistance workers got 2.1%, educational workers got 1.6%, and public administration workers got only 1.5%. Underpaid workers are actually dampening inflationary pressure, since their lack of income means they consume less. For the lowest-paid workers, this means less food, less heat and more risk of eviction. It can't be right to seek to tame inflation by placing the burden on those who are least able to carry it.

6. Invest in immigration, childcare and seniors' care

Canada has a record number of job vacancies, causing employers to increase wages to attract

workers. The solution is to expand the labour market, by increasing immigration beyond the current record level of 450,000 a year, including more investments in training opportunities while accelerating the construction of affordable housing and expanding affordable childcare and seniors' care, enabling more parents and caregivers to return to work.

7. Help low-income families

Businesses can pass their increased costs on, but families can't. The lower your income, the more you suffer. Canada has doubled the GST rebate for 11 million low-income families and individuals and offered \$500 in rent relief. The U.K. is giving £1,200 each to eight million vulnerable families. Italy is paying up to 5,000 euros to help low-income people cope. In Canada, most federal income supports are indexed to inflation, but provincially, while most minimum wages are indexed, most child, seniors' and social-assistance benefits are not. Only in Quebec are all five major supports for low-income citizens indexed. In Alberta, the Northwest Territories and Nunavut, none are.

Why do central bankers insist on raising interest rates? Is it because their economists have been trained in neoclassical economics, which teaches that the market always knows best and government intervention is to be discouraged? And yet raising interest rates is an intervention. Or is it because raising interest rates happens to bring more profits to bankers and investors, who have the most power, and dump the pain on low-income workers and families, who have the least? There's a lot to untangle here.

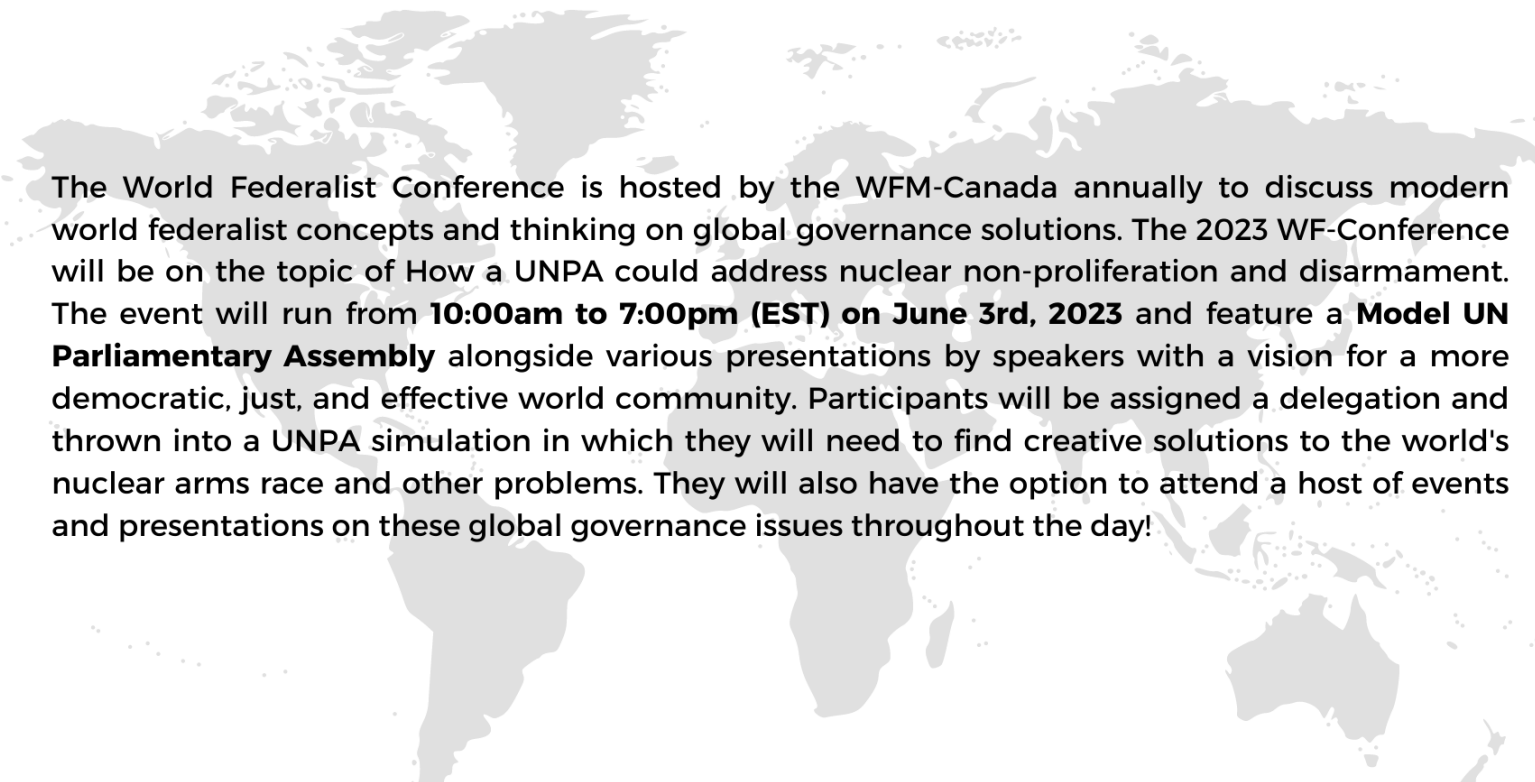
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