

Outline of Professor Ronald Glossop's

World Federation?: A Critical Analysis of Federal World Government

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1. In the last 5,000 years, we have moved from city-states and their empires to nation-states and their empires. In the last 100 years, we have been in the international age. We are gradually experiencing the age of globalism: thinking of people as world citizens. We need to develop humatriotism in addition to patriotism.
2. Analogy with the U.S.: before 1787, the 13 colonies were independent sovereign states. They developed the Continental Congress and the Articles of Confederation in order to coordinate their fight against the British in the American Revolution. James Madison, Alexander Hamilton, and Benjamin Franklin supported a single federal government. But weren't the American colonies much more alike than the present nations of the world (same language, religious background, political and economic background)?
3. After the Second World War, many thought that the confederal UN was not that different from the confederal League of Nations. The Cold War prevented much discussion about a world federal government. After the Korean War, world federalists were often viewed as utopian and "soft on communism."
4. Governments fulfill five basic functions:
 - a. Maintain law and order. In democracies, legislators work out compromises to enact laws that are acceptable to the majority. Elections decide who will be the legislators. The legal system requires police, lawyers, judges, and jailers.
 - b. National defense. With an effective world federal government, national governments would not have to maintain military forces to protect their national security.
 - c. Provide goods and services that are not taken care of by private businesses, such as building bridges, harbors, roads, parks, dams, education, fire and police, mail, waste removal, water treatment, and printing money.
 - d. Protect people by regulating food, drugs, and dangerous substances.
 - e. Providing help to victims of natural disasters, relief for the poor, disabled, unemployed.
5. Democracy involves regular elections by secret ballots but the votes of legislatures must be open to know if they should be re-elected. The powers of the government are limited by a written constitution. Freedoms of speech, press, assembly, and education must be guaranteed. Peaceful change is possible through the ballot box. Governments do not have to be overthrown by armed force.
6. A federal world government is needed to preserve law and order for the world community. This would require a world constitution, a world legislature, a world executive, a world court, and world prisons. The problem is deciding whether the number of representatives should be based on national wealth, power, or population. World laws would apply to individuals, not to nations. Individual violators of world law would be brought to justice. National governments would not need to maintain armies to protect their people from other nations. National governments would only need that amount of force to

keep law and order within their nation. Instead of counting tanks and nuclear weapons to determine how a conflict might be resolved, a world government would count votes in a world parliament.

7. A federation is a system where certain powers and areas of authority are delegated to a central government while states keep certain other powers and areas of authority under their control. Opponents of world government focus their attack on a unitary world-state instead of on a world federation.
8. Differences between a confederation and a federation:
 - a. In a confederation, each member state retains all of its sovereignty and complete control of its armed forces. International conflicts are settled on the basis of force, threats, or diplomacy. In a federation, member states retain some authority while transferring other powers to the central world federation.
 - b. In a confederation, members can withdraw at any time. In a federation, members are committed to remaining in the union.
 - c. In a confederation, individuals have no right to interact directly with the confederation. In a federation, individuals can interact directly with the federal government.
 - d. Federations can make laws and can arrest individuals who violate those laws while confederations can do neither. The UN International Court of Justice only deals with national governments.
 - e. In a confederation, primary loyalty is expected to be to the national government. In a federation, primary loyalty is to the federation.
 - f. Funding for the confederation comes from voluntary contributions by member states. A federation has its own sources of funds from fees and taxation.
9. Governments make civil law and guarantee civil rights. Natural law serves as a basis for criticizing civil laws and even for refusing to obey them.
10. International law is a set of evolving rules about how nations should behave and interact with each other. Sometimes it is based on custom and sometimes embodied in treaties and conventions. International law is based on the principle of national sovereignty. Even if most nations have signed a treaty, those that have not are not obligated to follow it.
11. The UN General Assembly can only adopt resolutions which recommend that its members take certain actions. The UN International Court of Justice will not hear a case unless the national governments involved agree to accept its jurisdiction. The UN Security Council can act against an aggressor nation but the Security Council has often been ineffective because of the veto of the permanent members.
12. World law is the kind of law that would exist under a world government.
13. From a war system to a peace system: The main argument for creating a world federation is to replace the current system of international law where nations resolve their differences by coercive diplomacy, threats, and war with a new system of world laws. Struggles for power would become political and judicial rather than military. Nations now have militaries and weapons of mass destruction because negotiating means bargaining from strength. But this only leads to arms races. Since war is the court of last resort, nations must be ready to engage in it. Under a world federation, violators of world law would be arrested and punished as individuals. Therefore, there is no reason why the world federation would need nuclear weapons.

14. Six auxiliary arguments for creating a world federation:

- a. **in order to manage the globally interdependent world economy.** The current system involves tariffs and subsidies. What is needed is a world federal government to supervise a system of worldwide free trade. A world federal government could pass laws to prevent mistreatment of workers and the environment. A world currency could be established to prevent speculative gambling on the international money market. A world federation could regulate transnational corporations. Currently, corporations make more money if they do not follow pollution controls, safety controls, or pay high wages and taxes. But a world federation could see that all businesses around the world had to follow the same rules about protecting workers and the environment.
- b. **in order to avoid ecological disaster.** Depletion of the ozone layer, air pollution, oceanic pollution, and global warming affect everyone on Earth regardless of what nation the pollution may come from. A world federation could bring polluters to justice. A world federation could buy land from Brazil and other countries in order to create world forest preserves and world animal preserves.
- c. **in order to govern the oceans, Antarctica, and outer space.** The oceans make up 70% of the Earth's surface. But not every nation has ratified the UN Convention on the Law of the Sea.
- d. **in order to deal better with gross violations of human rights.** Most violations of human rights are by national governments against their own citizens, especially ethnic minority groups. A world constitution should contain a Universal Bill of Rights.
- e. **in order to control organized international crime such as drug trafficking.** A world federation would be a better system to deal with such crimes than the present system of treaties and informal cooperation.
- f. **in order to promote and support a sense of world community.** Under the present international system, most people are taught to respect their national flag, sing their national anthem, honor their national heroes, learn their national history, pledge allegiance to their national government, and be ready to serve in their national armed forces. Under a world federation, a pledge of allegiance to the world, a world flag, and a world anthem could be adopted. In order to promote global communication, a universal auxiliary language such as Esperanto could be promoted.

15. **Critics of Federal World Government argue that:**

- a. Governments do not always keep the peace. There have been many civil wars that are as destructive as international wars.

WORLD FEDERALIST REPOSE: Governments serve a vital social function; anarchy has not worked. Even though governments are not always successful in keeping the peace, that does not mean that anarchy is the solution. The goal is to promote just governments that promote peace. Furthermore, world federalists are not advocating any type of world government, only a stable democratic world federation. A democratic world federation would change the way in which conflicts are settled: from threats of violence and war to political contests and courts. Since

democratic governments on the local, state, and national levels have been successful in resolving conflicts nonviolently, we should extend democracy to the global level.

- b. Force cannot be abolished in international disputes. Conflicts will always be resolved by force.

WORLD FEDERALIST RESPONSE: This view is contrary to the history of civilization.

Governments have generally provided law and order. Democratic governments have generally been stable and have provided security and individual freedom. Human groups resort to violence when there is no alternative way of working out conflicts. People fight wars because of loyalty to their group and because of the perception that violence is the best way to promote the welfare of their group. When the welfare of their group is promoted by voting and by law enforcement, much violence will cease.

- c. Contrary to the analogy of the U.S. federal government, federation does not put an end to war. The U.S. Civil War was one of the bloodiest in history. Furthermore, the American colonies simply exchanged one common loyalty (the British Crown) for another. They also had a common religious, political, and language tradition. How can the nations of the world form a federation with so many different languages, religions, and ideologies? Many nations have no history of democracy.

WORLD FEDERALIST RESPONSE: Even though there are some dissimilarities between federating the U.S. in the 18th century and creating a world federation, there are some similarities. Before 1789, there were trade disputes, territorial disputes, violent conflict, boycotts, and refusal to accept each others' currency between the independent colonies before a federal constitution united them. They created a federal constitution because they realized that their confederation was not solving their mutual problems.

- d. Many countries co-exist with each other without a government over them; for example, the U.S. and Canada.
- e. Some groups are less likely to fight wars with each other if they are not under the same government; for example, the Swiss, Swedes, and Norwegians.

WORLD FEDERALIST RESPONSE: When the Swiss states were in a confederal relation for 300 years, they fought many minor wars and five religious wars. But when they created a federation in 1848, the wars stopped. The case of the U.S. and Switzerland could mean that confederation is a stepping stone to federation. Perhaps the confederal U.N. is a stepping stone to a world federation.

- f. Trying to create a world federation might cause more war. Inis Claude argues that "unification in the absence of unity may function not as a cure for but as a cause of disorder."

WORLD FEDERALIST RESPONSE: A democratic world federation could come about this way: Every independent nation would be eligible and may join at will. The world constitution would go into effect when 5/6s of all nations that contain at least 5/6s of the world population (including the 12 nations with the largest populations), then all nations would disarm. But if a nation refused to join the federation and disarm, then the nations that joined the federation would delay their total

disarmament to a point where they collectively possessed 3 or 4 times more than the uncooperative nations. Uncooperative nations would be isolated and their leaders would eventually be replaced.

- g. Even if a world federation is desirable, there is no way it could be implemented. The idea of world federation is totally utopian and unrealistic. How could a superpower accept a world government which it does not dominate? Furthermore, the nuclear nations would never give up their nuclear arsenals to a world government.

WORLD FEDERALIST RESPONSE: Even the leaders of major nations should see that it is to their long-term advantage to hold individuals accountable to world laws instead of maintaining military superiority while other nations become rich by producing consumer goods. They should also realize that their nations can be threatened by environmental dangers just as much as by military threats by other countries. The fear of a world federation is unfounded as long as the world constitution has a Bill of Rights for all national governments and for all individuals.

- h. The world lacks the sense of community which is necessary for a world government. Most people identify themselves by their nationality. Most people do not care what happens in other countries unless it has an impact on their occupation or on their nation. Most people in richer countries are not concerned with mass starvation or the suffering of people in other countries. Most people are not concerned about the number of war casualties from other countries but only concerned about the number of war casualties from their own country. In difficult economic times, many people say, "Let's stop foreign aid" or "Let's take care of our own people first."

WORLD FEDERALIST RESPONSE: A sense of world community is already developing rapidly because of capitalism, technology, travel, and global communication.

- i. The breakup of the Soviet Union and of Yugoslavia show the importance of ethnic nationalism. Instead of more centralization, we need more decentralization. Why shouldn't the Basques, the Catalans, the Welsh, the Scots, and the Kurds have their own countries? It is the large countries that cause wars, pollution, poverty, malnutrition, economic instability, and political chaos. Therefore, state power can be lessened only by dividing countries into smaller units, not by uniting them into a world federation.

WORLD FEDERALIST RESPONSE: A world federation would better protect ethnic and cultural identities than the present international system. Under a world federation, the developing nations would have a means of protecting themselves from cultural domination. Under the present international system, nations cannot afford to allow separatist groups to have their own autonomy. But under a world federation, Spain would not need the Basques or Catalans or their territory.

- j. Most people in the world have experienced their national independence only in the last fifty years. The newly-independent countries of Africa and Asia (which had been former British, French, German, Italian, and Dutch colonies) would hardly be willing to give up their hard-won independence to join a world federation.
- k. Contrary to the assumption of world federalists that a government with the power to enforce the law is the key to peace, some critics argue that a successful community is one where it is not necessary to use coercion. Social order cannot be reduced to law enforcement.

WORLD FEDERALIST RESPONSE: Changing political structures is very difficult but not impossible. The world is now very different than it was during the Second World War and the Cold War. Because of a different world, Japan, Germany, Brazil, India, Nigeria, and Egypt should be considered as permanent members of the U.N. Security Council.

- l. How would a world federation deal with mass resistance? How would a world government deal with rebellious states? Would it resort to war rather than trying to arrest and imprison large groups of rebels?

WORLD FEDERALIST RESPONSE: World federalists do not advocate a non-democratic coercive world government. Rather, peaceful and gradual change can be made on the basis of public debate and voting. In the current U.N. General Assembly, the voting only concerns recommendations. Since the U.S. currently pays 22% of the U.N. budget, the U.N. General Assembly knows that it cannot displease the U.S. too much or it will lose 22% of its budget and its main physical facilities. Under the current U.N., a few militarily powerful nations prevent the world community from acting in the best interest of the world. A world federation would foster humatriotism by having a world flag, world anthem, world pledges, and international holidays.

- m. That sometimes government brings oppression by concentrating power in the hands of small group of people. A world government could lead to a world dictator. Since two-thirds of all countries have experienced some kind of military coup, what is to prevent this from happening in a world federation? After all, Adolf Hitler came to power in Germany in a legal way under a democratic constitution.

WORLD FEDERALIST RESPONSE: World federalists maintain that anyone who violates world laws, even heads of state, should be arrested. Gradually, governors of the southern U.S. states realized that they could be arrested after 1954 if they did not desegregate their schools.

Hitler almost acquired nuclear weapons. If he had, he would have instituted a world dictatorship. If the U.S. could develop a system of checks and balances and a system of divided powers so that a dictator would not come to power, then a similar system could be created on the global level. A world parliament could be bicameral: one house based on population and the other national governments or geographic regions. The world executive could be a five-person council with limited terms, each from different regions of the world and each rotating as chair.

- n. There is a danger that a world federation might erode the human rights that some people now enjoy. According to Pat Robertson, a world government would restrict Americans' constitutional right to keep and bear arms. He also believes that a world government would prevent conservative Christians from speaking out against other religions, communists, and homosexuals.

WORLD FEDERALIST RESPONSE: A world federation would need a Commission and a Court for human rights.

- o. Even if a world government brings peace, law, and order, it might not be so good that all rebellion and violence be eliminated. Freedom is more important than peace and public order. Sometimes the

possibility of violent revolution is needed to stop too much power from being concentrated in the hands of rulers. A violent revolution is better than letting a few people oppress the many.

- p. Concerning a world police force: where will the members of this force come from? How will they communicate with each other? What would motivate anyone to join such a force? Would members of this force be willing to arrest their own national citizens? Where would they be stationed? What would keep them from being bored? How would they be paid? How can they be kept under the control of the world executive?

WORLD FEDERALIST RESPONSE: There could be four independent police forces with contingents from each stationed throughout the world so that no force would be identified with any geographical region.

- q. A world federation would be too remote from ordinary people and will not be responsive to their problems. Large national governments are too impersonal and cumbersome. A world government would be even more bureaucratic.

WORLD FEDERALIST RESPONSE: Federation is based on the principle of subsidiarity: deal with problems at the lowest level they can be addressed. Local and national governments would continue to deal with problems. Worldwide television would inform the people around the world of the deliberations of the world federal government. Individuals could communicate to their world representatives by telephone, computers, and local meetings.

The bigness and remoteness of the bureaucracies of many large national governments is actually due to the absence of a world federal government. Many of the powers of the U.S. federal government are based on the need to engage in military and economic wars with other countries. A world federal government would guarantee peace and worldwide trade with laws to protect the environment and workers. A world federal government would eliminate many of the existing tasks of national governments.

- r. Differences in cultures, traditions, and institutions are so great that any set of uniform rules would damage cultural diversity. A world federation would impose a worldwide uniformity on everyone.

WORLD FEDERALIST RESPONSE: The six official U.N. languages (English, French, Spanish, Russian, Chinese, and Arabic) are dominant because of the military and economic power of the countries which have used them. There needs to be a universal auxiliary language such as Esperanto which everyone would learn as their second language.

- s. Some critics argue that a world federation would be a Communist scheme for equalizing wealth around the world. Since 80% of the world's population live in poor countries, a world federation based on democratic principles would adopt policies which would result in the transfer of wealth from rich countries to the poor ones. A world federation will mean global socialism.

WORLD FEDERALIST RESPONSE: Once huge military expenditures are eliminated, it will be possible to raise the standard of living in the poorer countries without harming the standard of living in the richer countries. The pressures of immigration would cease.

- t. Some other critics argue that a world federation is merely an institutional device to keep the status quo and keep poor countries perpetually poor. A world federation will mean unrestrained global capitalism.

WORLD FEDERALIST RESPONSE: This can be avoided if a world federation is truly democratic with sufficient protection of minorities and those with unpopular opinions. The voting arrangements in a democratic world federation must allow “the haves” to protect their property while allowing the “have nots” to gradually gain equality of opportunity.

Under Richard Hudson’s Binding Triad proposal, a vote in the U.N. General Assembly would become a world law if it is passed by 2/3 of the U.N. members that contain at least 51% of the world’s population and contributing at least 51% of the U.N. budget. The second and third leg of the triad would have a cap of 15%.

- u. There are already conflicts between state governments and national federations over jurisdiction. Another layer of government will only make this situation more complex.

WORLD FEDERALIST RESPONSE: Questions of jurisdiction would be settled by world courts.

- v. A world federation is unnecessary. The United Nations, regional organizations, and nongovernmental organizations (such as Amnesty International, the Sierra Club, and Greenpeace) are doing a good job solving the world’s problems. The UN is better than a world government because it relies on persuasion, influence, and regulatory devices instead of coercion and law enforcement.

WORLD FEDERALIST RESPONSE: If confederation is so good, why isn’t it used within nations? The answer is that nations have learned that confederation does not solve problems as federation does. Furthermore, the confederal U.N. is working well in some situations since the end of the Cold War but it is not working well everywhere and for everyone. The U.N. is working for the short-term interests of the United States for not for the U.S. in the long run.

Truman, Eisenhower, and Churchill supported “world peace through world laws.” Between 1941 and 1950, 22 state legislatures in the U.S. adopted resolutions urging U.S. participation in a world federation. The Korean War and the Cold War ended enthusiasm for world federation.

- w. Concerning the auxiliary arguments for world federation, critics usually argue that it is better to address these problems one at a time rather than to try to create a new world federation to deal with them.

WORLD FEDERALIST RESPONSE: If separate efforts to deal with separate problems is so good, why is it not used by local, state, and national governments? They have discovered that centralized policies and law-enforcing institutions work better.

1. If there were global regulations of business, national governments would not be able to enact tariffs or provide subsidies to help their newly developing businesses. A world federation would put control of the world economy into the hands of a very small group of people.

2. It would be dangerous to have some global authority that could set universal environmental restrictions on businesses all over the world. Uniform regulations for multinational corporations would no longer permit less-developed countries to attract businesses through special concessions.
3. It would be a mistake to create a world bureaucracy to control the oceans, Antarctica, and outer space. What works best is open competition, not regulation.
4. The problem with uniform global laws concerning human rights is that there are different ideas about which rights should be protected. The U.S. has not ratified the International Covenant on Economic, Social, and Cultural Rights which concerns the right to work, the right to an adequate standard of living, the right to be free of hunger, and the right to the enjoyment of physical and mental health. Would a world federation require the U.S. and other countries that have not ratified this treaty to guarantee these rights? Since different part of the world have different views of what human rights are, it is best not to have a world government.

WORLD FEDERALIST RESPONSE: Differences about human rights can be worked out better with a world parliament and world courts than in the present system of power politics.

5. International crime can be solved by national governments. Centralization of enforcement is not necessary.

WORLD FEDERALIST RESPONSE: International crime can best be dealt with by having world laws, world police, world courts, and world jails.

6. World federalists want to force a “global consciousness” on everyone around the world. According to Pat Robertson and other critics, there is already too much of this kind of global education in U.S. schools. Robertson claims that children are being indoctrinated as world citizens who should have reverence for the Earth, the environment, animals, and for people of all ethnic, religious, and sexual orientations. National loyalty and religious values would be submerged into a universal relativism where no behaviors or moral standards are regarded as any better or worse than any other.
7. There has been a popular movement in the U.S., especially among conservative Christians, against one-world government. Many of the ideas of this movement are in Pat Robertson’s book 1991 The New World Order. Robertson claims that there has been a secret conspiracy to control the world by the Order of the Illuminati, the Communist League, the Rothschild family, the Rockefellers, and the Carnegie and Ford Foundations. He claims that these groups have called for the elimination of private property, the elimination of national governments, and the elimination of Christianity. Robertson claims that this evil conspiracy is actively opposing God and religion. The debate between fundamentalist Christians and secularists since the time of the Enlightenment is whether humans can create a kingdom of God on earth without God’s direct assistance or intervention. Robertson claims that a “man-made new world order” is not Christ’s will for humanity. World government is therefore the Kingdom of the Anti-Christ.

16. **Getting to a Democratic World Federation**

The main problem is to determine how many votes each country or region should have in a world parliament. Another problem is to determine how representatives in a world parliament will be elected or selected.

It seems that a system based on both population and percentage of GWP would be needed so as not to alienate either the rich or the poor countries.

One way to create a world federal government is to transform the existing confederal United Nations into a federal United Nations. Another possibility is to create a new organization alongside the U.N. such as the “World Peace Authority” or the “World Disarmament and World Development Organization.”

Another way to develop a world federation would be to create regional federations that could later unite into a world federation. But this might lead to a new level of intense economic, military, and cultural competition and conflict. (But would Israel ever join a Middle East federation? Would India and Pakistan ever join a South Asian federation? Would Mexico join a North American federation or a Latin American federation?)

Another possibility is for the industrialized democratic countries to federate and then allow other countries to join when they become democratic. But this proposal could arouse resentment among the rest of the world because the core countries of such a federation are white, rich, and Christian. If non-democratic countries are not allowed in the federation at the beginning when the world constitution is being developed, then this federation would really not be very democratic. If the industrialized democratic countries form a federation, then the nondemocratic countries could form a separate federation. The world would then be divided into two separate groups instead of being united under one set of world laws.

Individuals and nongovernmental groups could create a world constitution. But a world federation will not become a reality unless the powerful national governments want it to become a reality.

17. **Summary and Observations**

It is in the long-term interests of the United States to work for world federation. Eventually China or a group of nations will challenge U.S. dominance. A new cold war could start.

It may take 25 or 250 years but the world community will eventually create a world federation. If a world federation should be created, then we should work to remove obstacles which are preventing its creation.