

# A World Government: Will it Ever Happen?

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**Abstract** - From earliest days of formation to Homo sapiens this species had been known to have resorted to violent conflict between individuals, groups, tribes and later between states. The last phase had caused the highest volume of destruction as human casualties and the destruction of an environment order. Despite, the valuable effort taken by the United Nations, the human conflict stands at a highly explosive level mainly due to the never ending issues. There are two other more potentially dangerous threats. Several nations are in the possession of nuclear and chemical weapons and attempts by the UN and other non-governmental organizations such as the Pugwash Conference have not achieved much success on nuclear non-proliferation as well as to minimize threats from an extended chemical warfare. Second danger could be the danger of extension of conflict to the newly discovered arena of outer space.

Needless to say the vast majority of people are tired of these endless brutal killings and massive destructions. Will there be peace at least among nations? In this connection, there are certain views to justify the need for a world government in order to last world peace and order at the most. For instance, there is the liberalist approach which is primitively stood the possibility of the world government. Further, their views on world government is to be associated in particular with those idealists who believe that peace can never be achieved in a world divided into separate sovereign states. (Dunne, 2001).

It is this question which is particularly examined from a perspective of the wisdom of some philosophers and intellectuals. These include Arnold Toynbee, Bertrand Russell, Arthur C. Clarke and an entirely different personality, John Lennon the famous musician of the Beatles.

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## I. INTRODUCTION

From pre-historic times the world had been the arena for countless conflicts of human-beings. Some of them still persist of course made more destructive by developments of technology and management systems. These were conflicts between groups, civil wars for divisions of nations and the worse situation of wars between nations, sometimes as groups on each side of the conflict.

This paper will be limited to major wars between nations as of World War I and World War II, or wars for conflict of the state as of the war of Vietnam. Needless to say, majority of ordinary citizens of the world are fed-up of these as autocracies, except the people who control the manufacture of arms. Even the professional security personal is happier to be engaged in constructive and social activities rather than battle in jungles, deserts or, the sea or in towns.

Foley of warfare is evident if one analyses at even a basic level the situations what led to a war and what happened later. The Second World War is a good example. In Europe is started with German army occupying Poland, the Italians in Ethiopia and with Japan raiding the American naval base in the Pearl Harbor.

Did the soldiers or the ordinary human-beings on both sides know what they are fighting for? If someone asks the question "what is the Pearl Harbor?" what is the answer one can expect from an American, Japanese or from a person of any country? As Stated in the magazine Deutschland, sixty million people died and six million Jews were annihilated in that war. The nuclear waste from bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki created deformities for several generations.

What is the situation today between nations that killed each other people? The United Kingdom, France and the USA are the thickest allies of the

defeated Germans. Americans and the Japanese are also thickest allies. Nations such as the Soviets and the Chinese who were allies of the United Kingdom have fallen apart some extent.

When we consider the war in Vietnam, the USA and the Vietnamese are thick chums today. The question arises such peace could not have been achieved without sacrificing all the lives of the soldiers and the ordinary people who played no part in creating these situations. With the growth of human wisdom and greater openness affairs of nation formed due to development in communication, the world will have to accept a no conflict scenario. That is what some of the great thinkers have predicted.

## II. FORMATION VIEWS ON A WORLD GOVERNMENT

There had been several attempts in the somewhat distance past to open the eyes of the people to the possibility of forming a world government. The main objective behind this thinking had been to put an end to the many wars that the world had seen over centuries.

Francisco de Vitoria (1483 – 1546) had been a pioneer in this respect. As a teacher of International Law and Human Rights at the University of Salamanca in Spain, he had coined the term 'Republic of the World', to suggest such for the purpose of bringing peace among nations.

Hugo Grotius (1583 – 1648) had been an exponent of having a universal law for the whole world. In a book written in Latin in the year 1625, he had introduced this concept of a Universal Law.

Emmanuel Kant had not directly advocated a world federation. In a well known article, 'Perpetual Peace', written in 1795, he stated conditions under which wars can be eliminated in order to bring peace and prosperity to the world. He suggested the following three principles:

1. The civil constitution of every state should be Republican
2. The law of nations shall be founded on a Federation of Free States
3. The law of world citizenship shall be limited to conditions of Universal Hospitality

In 1845, Joseph Smith, an American Mormon theologian formulated the concept of rule by the

'World Government', and organized a council of fifty persons to bring this idea to the attention of other humans.

Karl Krause, a German philosopher in an essay, 'The Archetype of Humanity', written in 1811, predicted that the world will eventually have five regional federations of Europe, Asia, America, Africa and Australia. Alfred Tennyson, the English poet in 1842, through the poem "Locksley Hall" had thus expounded his dream for a world government

*"For I dipt into the future, far as human eye could see,  
Saw a Vision of the world, and all the wonder that would be...*

*Till the war-drum throb'd no longer and the battle-flags  
were fur'd*

*In the Parliament of man, the Federation of the world.*

*There the common sense of most shall hold a fretful realm  
in awe,*

*And the kindly earth shall slumber, lapt in universal law."*

In the 19<sup>th</sup> century, Baha'u'llah founder of the Bahá'í faith, called for the establishment of a federation of world nations. Shoghi Effendi, the great grandson of Baha'u'llah and guardian spiritual leader of the Baha'i community stated as follows;

"The unity of the human race, as envisaged by Baha'u'llah, implies the establishment of a world commonwealth in which all nations, races, creeds and classes are closely and permanently united, and in which the autonomy of its state members and the personal freedom and initiative of the individuals that compose them are definitely and completely safeguarded."

Coming to the closer era of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, we analyse works of four persons who can be described as seers of modern times.

Arnold Joseph Toynbee (April 14, 1889 - October 22, 1975), British historian whose twelve-volume analysis of the rise and fall of civilisations, A Study of History, 1934 - 1961, (also known as History of the World) was very popular in its time.

Toynbee, a prolific author, was the nephew of a great economic historian, Arnold Toynbee, with whom he is sometimes confused. Born in London, Arnold J was educated at Winchester College and Balliol College, Oxford. He worked for the Foreign Office during both World War I and World War II.

He was Director of Studies at the Royal Institute of International Affairs (1925-1955) and Research Professor of International History at the University of London.

Toynbee was interested in the seeming repetition of patterns in history and later in the origins of civilisation. It was in this context that he read Spengler's *Decline of the West* and although there is some superficial similarity both men describe the rise, flowering and decline of civilisations, their work moved in different directions. Toynbee agreed with Spengler that there were strong parallels between their situation in Europe and the ancient Greco-Roman civilization. Toynbee saw his own views as being more scientific and empirical than Spengler's, he described himself as a "meta historian" whose "intelligible field of study" was civilization.

In his *Study of History* Toynbee describes the rise and decline of 23 civilisations. His over-arching analysis was the place of moral and religious challenge, and response to such challenge, as the reason for the robustness or decline of a civilisation. He described parallel life cycles of growth, dissolution, a time of troubles, a universal state, and a final collapse leading to a new genesis. Although he found the uniformity of the patterns, particularly of disintegration, sufficiently regular to reduce to graphs, and even though he formulated definite laws of development such as "challenge and response," Toynbee insisted that the cyclical pattern could and should be broken.

Toynbee had correctly predicted that Europe will transform from a number of quarrelling nations, into a single entity to be known as '*The European Union*'. However, his thinking had been this unity would be due to decay and not growth:

Toynbee's books, huge in scale, achieved wide prominence but he was more admired by the History reading public than by fellow historians, who criticised him for contorting information to fit his alleged patterns of history.

Next, Bertrand Russell, who in 1950, five years after the end of WW II, had talked about a world government in an article called 'The Future of Mankind'.

According to him, one of the following three possibilities would occur.

1. The end of human life, perhaps of all life in our planet.
2. A reversion to barbarism after a catastrophic diminution of the population of the globe.
3. A unification of the world under a single government, possessing a monopoly of all major weapons of war.

He further stated that the third possibility could occur by the victory of a world war by the United States, or by Russia, or by agreement. Russell, of course feels that some sort of force may be required to achieve this goal. He talks of few steps that may have to be taken to achieve a world government. The first would be for the USA and the British Commonwealth to form a military alliance. The second step will be for this alliance to threaten any power that does not wish to join with outlawry. His thinking is when super powers join the other nations will soon follow. He felt that there will be no room for poverty in a united world.

Arthur C. Clarke who had been declared by Rajiv Gandhi a late Indian Prime Minister, as a 'modern seer of science' had held the view that a world government would emerge due to the global communication system that had been set up. It is worthwhile recording here the account of the function to sign the agreement on the setting up of Intelsat I, the first commercial satellite, popularly known as the Early Bird.

#### A. Agreement on Early Bird August 1964

There was this remarkable event that would have a great impact on human affairs. It was called up by William Rogers, US Secretary of State and attended by Mamie Eisenhower, Arthur, representatives from several countries, NASA, T&T and other organizations. President Eisenhower had been the first person whose had been transmitted to earth from a satellite.

Welcoming those message present Rogers said, "we are here to sign a constitutional instrument, a permanent charter, for man's first international cooperation in space". I doubt that even the most optimistic prophets, even Arthur C. Clarke, would have predicted in August 1964 that on the seventh anniversary of the establishment of the international arrangements for Intelsat, we would be gathered here to sign the definitive arrangements for eighty nations, an organization

which already has in global satellite systems interconnecting people of six continents.

In his address, Arthur made some profound statements that will go into history books. "I believe that communications satellites can unite mankind." He stressed that USA turned a great country due to two inventions made 100 years back, namely railroads and telegraph. What the railroads and telegraph did a century ago, jets and communication satellites are doing to the entire world.

"For today, whether you intend it or not, whether you wish it or not – you have signed far more than just another intergovernmental agreement."

**"You have just signed a first draft of the Articles of Federation of the United States of Earth."**

Another Englishman who dreamt about one world in the last century was John Lennon, the member of the then famous musical group Beatles. Following are some lines of the assassinated legendary musician who wrote the song "Imagine" and released in 1971.

*"Imagine there's no countries  
It isn't hard to do  
Nothing to kill or die for  
And no religion too  
Imagine all the people living life in peace  
You, may say  
I'm a dreamer, but I'm not the only one  
I hope someday you'll join us  
And the world will be as one"*

### III. DISCUSSIONS

Liberalistic and realistic perspective

The issue of universality is a fundamental question in international relations whether or not the world government is possible. For the majority who believe it is, certain requirements are seen necessary that a successful world government must assure a minimum of economic well being and must enhance the rules of international law for the guarantee of security of individuals and states as a whole. The discussion on world government based on above a philosophical and an aesthetic argument is categorically justified whether a world government is desirable or possible in order to achieve world peace? Both concerns can be

discussed in a level that the desirability and the possibility of the world government is to achieve the world peace and unite human regardless differences. The ultimate purpose of this line of thinking is to demonstrate there is certain possibility in shifting a new paradigm from a diverse sovereign complexity to a united sovereignty or other means from a war scenario to peace scenario.

The idea of globalization based on liberalist views is optimistic and the way forward to form a world government. According to them the globalization has resulted in growing interdependence between states, and has led to the construction of international organizations as cooperation has become a necessary to regulate their common affairs (McGrew, 2002). Further, liberalism is argued that states are rational and acknowledge the fact that cooperation is rationally preferable to conflict, and hence based on this (mutual benefits), it is conceivable that states may be willing to give up certain aspects of their sovereignty in order to maintain peace and cooperation. Meantime, realism could be justified that the possibility of world government by globalization means is unrealistic and the globalized states are as a result of global integrity and mutual beneficiary and not necessarily the purpose for forming a world government.

Looking at the evaluation of political systems from a liberalist perspective, Carl Coon explains that at one time, the highest governing authority was the head of a family. Later it became the head of a village and then it became tribal and eventually city states. Thus the next dimension is more desirable by emerging a single world power or a government that is to tackle issues alone related to an individual state sovereign complexity. However, the liberalism is not given a clear explanation for the possibility of a world government in a realistic manner. But meantime, the realism is highly critical on the liberalistic political evaluation that leads for a single world power or a monopoly style of the world government which is unrealistic and utopia.

### III. ISSUES OF INTERNATIONAL ORGANISATIONS

The international organizations are nothing new; their growth in number after the World War II and expansion into more and more areas of international relations show their significance and

relevance in the international sphere today. Despite, international organizations such as UN, EU, IMF, and WTO clearly serve a purpose of cooperation among states then, it is highly unlikely that its purpose is to act as a step towards a world government.

Meanwhile, states are still unwilling to give up important sovereign rights, particularly with regard to their armed forces but also with domestic policy making, organizations do not have the power to adequately punish those states which refuse to join them or destroy their decisions. It is this lack of power and the unwillingness of states to relinquish it to a higher authority which will always prevent the establishment of a world government. Further, improving state relations and cooperation by no means confirms the establishment of a world government in the future.

#### V. CONCLUSION

Despite, there are certain concerns that are fully disagreed and undermine the initiative of the world government, yet the idea of a world government is inevitable in order to achieve the global peace and security. Thus the concerns in forming the world government given by great intellectuals are noteworthy and will be seen as significant in the future discourse. Meanwhile, the political necessity in order to form a world government is also understood as significant since the ended of world two major wars and precisely realities from the ongoing conflicts across the globe at 21<sup>st</sup> century. Therefore, the formation of a world government could be seen as an opportunity and may view as a new world order to achieve a sustainable world peace under an umbrella of a united power. Or other means the global government which should likely be happened in the future global arena in order to overcome certain unsolved contemporary challenges and issues faced by divided states and peoples in international relations.

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