

A World Security Community of democratic nations

A/Prof. Chris Hamer, working group coordinator

How might we realistically develop an effective model to build and maintain global peace and security? Following the template established by the European Union, this proposal considers the transformation of NATO into a World Security Community (WSC) with a global mission. Any nation meeting a set of agreed criteria to qualify as a democracy could join WSC as a member. Its structure and procedures should include new mechanisms for preventing conflict and reconstruction of failed states, in collaboration with the new Peacebuilding Commission at the UN. Acting strictly in conjunction with the Security Council, the new Community would form a powerful new force for peace in the world.

The world is confronted by some urgent and intractable global problems, chief among them the persistent threats of nuclear annihilation, and continued global warming. A democratic world federation or global parliament, where representatives could sit down and discuss what needs to be done, and implement their decisions through binding laws and regulations, would offer an effective structure to deal with these challenges. Achieving that objective is an enormous task, however, and must probably remain a long-term objective for the time being.

The European Union is the most outstanding example of nations willingly surrendering elements of sovereignty and uniting for the common good. Jean Monnet and his colleagues found the right strategy for Europe, starting from a smaller group of ‘progressive’ states and evolving step by step, and Treaty by Treaty, towards the ultimate goal of a European Federation.

Our proposal is designed to be the first step in a similar process at the global level. We propose the transformation of NATO into a World Security Community (WSC) with a global mission, first to guarantee the security and freedom of all its members, and then to act as their peacebuilding and peacekeeping arm in the wider world, under the aegis of the UN. This would be merely a natural continuation of current trends. NATO lost its original purpose

with the collapse of the Soviet Union, and has slowly been adopting a new global role in line with our proposal.

The key elements of our proposal are as follows:

- 1. The WSC should be opened** to membership from any nation that qualifies as a democracy according to a certain set of agreed criteria – with the Copenhagen criteria currently used by the European Union offering a potential template.
- 2. The WSC should adopt** a new decision-making system, preferably at all levels. A qualified-majority voting system, following the European example, has been proposed by senior military officials previously. The present system of consensus decision-making has become increasingly cumbersome with 29 NATO members.
- 3. The organisation should include** prototype organs of democratic governance, again following the European example. NATO already has a Parliamentary Assembly, which could serve as the starting point for an eventual elected parliament. A new court should be established to arbitrate any intractable dispute between member states, and to serve as the prototype of an eventual system of binding world law.

4. It should channel a fraction of its funds to new peacebuilding facilities, to help prevent future conflicts, and reconstruct failed states after previous conflicts.

5. It should also allocate funds to foster development in less developed member states under the principle of ‘solidarity’. The OECD could possibly be included as a second arm of the Community to undertake this role.

6. An explicit declaration should be made that the WSC will only undertake military intervention in external states if authorised to do so by the UN Security Council. This is mandatory under international law, and is essential in order that the new Community not be perceived as a threat by non-member states.

NATO is the world’s most powerful defence alliance, but at present it is an exclusive club for North Americans and Europeans. Opening it up to all democratic nations would represent a major improvement in global governance to prevent the global catastrophic risk of war.

The WSC would provide an ironclad guarantee of security to its growing list of members. Because it would be open to all democratic nations, it would gradually expand by attraction, not coercion, until such time as all nations choose to join it. At this point war would

become unthinkable, just as war between France and Germany has become unthinkable. It would allow members to pool their defence resources and achieve efficiencies, while gaining access to expanding resources as the WSC grows.

Because it would act outside of its borders only with UN approval, it would not threaten non-members. Non-members would indeed have the option of joining WSC once they satisfy suitable criteria. Short of that, they would benefit from the peacekeeping and peacebuilding missions that WSC would provide under the aegis of the United Nations. WSC would provide a powerful means of enforcement for the resolutions of the Security Council, working in collaboration with non-members.

In case China and Russia chose not to join the Community (and meet the required criteria), the WSC would respect them as equal partners in the UN Security Council in promoting peace and security outside of WSC borders.

The challenges this proposal

would face are the same challenges as any multilateral scheme for global governance, namely national sovereignty, fear of tyranny, and the lack of a sense of community.

Every nation is reluctant to surrender part of its sovereignty to a global institution. European members of NATO have already become dependent upon that

organization for their defence and are familiar with multilateral integration within the European Union, so they should be more amenable to the proposal. The major sticking point will be getting agreement from the United States. Multilateralism is currently unfashionable in that country, but there is nevertheless a strong constituency for it, particularly when it comes to defence.

A second obstacle to address is the fear of tyranny, in that many people associate the idea of global governance with images of colonialism or men in jackboots and swastikas. Strict adherence to the principle of democracy, defined by a clear set of criteria, should allay any such fears.

Any system of governance ultimately rests on the sense of community among its citizens. A

wave of populism and nationalism is rising across the world, undermining international solidarity. But a counter-movement is emerging as well, as illustrated by President Macron's convening of the Paris Peace Forum and his Foreign Minister's call for a "goodwill coalition" suggesting that Europe should align itself more closely with other powerful democracies like India, Australia and Mexico. Meanwhile, as shown by interest from Sweden and Finland, NATO remains an attractive institution for the security it offers.

Like any scheme, this proposal would require robust advocacy. For this, we envisage the establishment of a **Coalition for a World Security Community**, aiming to muster support from civil society organisations similar to the Coalition for the International Criminal Court.

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