

Achieving Peace Through Global Cooperation In the Modern Era

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As a research social scientist, I come at the effort to define “peace” from a social scientific perspective. What follows is the result for me.

Humans at all scales from individuals, to families, to extended families, to bands to tribes, to city states, to nation states, to federations of nations, to the global community of nations are by nature both competitive and cooperative. The competitive side is supported by individualistic values and the self-interested perspective. The cooperative side is supported by social values and the community benefit perspective. But the human orientation to competition is the default mode since it serves biological survival at the most fundamental level.

Peace is the social condition at any and all scales that arises when humans commit to conduct their relations with cooperation taking precedence over competition. Because competition at all scales is the default mode for humans, peace at all social scales is always fragile. Culture must be strong enough to sustain the cooperative/peaceful perspective. At the scale of bands and tribes, which has been the condition for modern humans for 96% of their history as a species, personal rather than impersonal relations are the norm, and culture is generally strong enough to require cooperation and therefore to sustain peace internally. For most of humanity, it is only in the last 3000 years that complex society from city states to global federations of nations has arisen. With this development, human relations have become more and more impersonal in character – others known more as tolerated strangers/acquaintances than as relatives and friends. In this context, it is easy for human groups to revert to the default competitive orientation, and the effort of culture to encourage humans to commit to cooperation at these expansive social scales becomes more difficult.

Modern complex society faces many global scale challenges that can defeat humanity’s ability to sustain itself in the civilized condition unless these challenges are addressed promptly and globally. But we lack the level of commitment to cooperate needed to address and resolve these global challenges. This insufficient commitment by nations to integrate and support social cooperation over competition at the global scale is the underlying reason that sustainable international peace is so difficult to achieve. Accordingly, modern nation states must stop protecting their competitively oriented sovereignty and integrate into a true global federation of nations that is empowered to govern on issues of global concern. A federal structure leaves a great deal of autonomy to each nation to address national level matters. Under

a federal umbrella, there is no more need to fear a “One World Order” at the global level than there is at the integrated municipal, state and national levels, which humans in modern complex societies have come to pretty much universally accept.

A fully reformed United Nations could become the efficient and effective global governing entity that is much needed. Serious, comprehensive and current proposals by experts to accomplish this transformation of the UN are available. Unfortunately these proposals are little known by the publics in the nations of the world. A great need exists to support the global outreach for the work of these experts. The World Federalist Movement exists in the main to promote this goal [www.wfm-igp.org]. The Institute for Global Policy [“igp”] is the organization allied with the World Federalist Organization that explores options for reform of the UN. In this regard, the website of the IGP offers a summary of the work of Joseph E. Swartzberg, Transforming the United Nations System (UN Univ. Pr) 2013.

All interested in promoting world peace through a world governmental entity that is capable of requiring and maintaining the needed level of international cooperation among nations should support the World Federalist Movement and proposals for UN reform like that of Swartzberg.