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Integrate Democracies First

Contribution to GTI Forum [An Earth Constitution: Has the Time Come?](#)

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For the purposes of this discussion, I think we can all agree that Earthland requires a world government, some form of democratic world federation. The world faces some ever more critical problems and challenges, chief among them climate change and the elimination of nuclear weapons. Clearly, the whole world has to work together to solve problems like these, and that is precisely why we need a world government.

A government is established, after all, to take care of the common needs and problems of a society at any level, whether local, national, regional, or (finally) global.

The difficult problem is, how do we get there? The world federalist movement has been grappling with this problem ever since World War II, but no final answer has emerged. Various possibilities have been raised:

- (1) **Constitutional Convention.** Go straight to the final destination. The Earth Constitution espoused by [Glen Martin](#) is an example of what might be adopted.
- (2) **Reform of the UN.** Andreas Bummel's project for a United Nations Parliamentary Assembly would be a first step in that direction.
- (3) **Integration of Democracies.** This is the route I would like to discuss here.
- (4) **The regional route.** Wait until regional federations have been established first, and then go to the global level. See, e.g., the campaign in Latin America of Democracia Global.

Since nobody knows which route will eventually prove successful, world federalists should support all these campaigns wherever they can.

Having said that, I believe that integration of democracies is the best path. Democracy has to be a basic principle of any world federation, to avoid any possibility of world tyranny or autocracy.

Everyone has read dystopian visions of world government, such as *Brave New World* or *1984*, and according to surveys, about a third of the population will instinctively reject any idea of world government out of hand, equating it with images of jackboots and swastikas, i.e., world tyranny. So we need to exclude any possibility of that very carefully.

Unfortunately, the principles of universality and democracy necessary for world federation are not compatible at present. Roughly speaking, a third of nations are rated fully free by [Freedom House](#), a third are partly free, and another third are not free. This is arguably the root cause of our lack of progress up until now.

In these circumstances, Europe has shown us the way. World War II was the fifth major war between France and Germany in 200 years and resulted in approximately 55 million deaths. European thinkers determined that these disasters must stop, and European federation was the answer. Jean Monnet and his collaborators adopted a far-sighted strategy: start small (the original six members) and with a limited objective (the European Coal and Steel Community, which united the industries seen as the sinews of war), and then build stage by stage and Treaty by Treaty towards the European Union we see today. The final objective of European federation has still not been reached, but at least we can be reasonably confident that there will never again be a war between France and Germany! The Schuman Declaration, a founding document of the EU in 1950, declared that "Europe will not be built all at once, or according to a single plan."

If we follow this strategy on the global scale, how should we proceed? Who should be the members of the initial community, and what should be their objective? The initial members should clearly consist of the nations that already accept the basic principle of democracy and are willing to take part. And the objective of the initial Community should be common security given current circumstances.

Democracy in the world has been going slowly backwards for fifteen years, according to the [Global Peace Index](#). Meanwhile, autocracy has been on the rise. In particular, China under Xi Jinping has been showing an increasingly aggressive attitude, fortifying islets in the South China Sea in defiance of international law, extinguishing democracy in Hong Kong, and threatening to overthrow the democratic government of Taiwan, by force if necessary.

To deter and resist these threats, the democratic nations of the world obviously need to work more closely together, and ideally they should form a global alliance of democracies. That provides a need and an opportunity to form a World Security Community of democratic nations. A group of us have formed a transnational working group to try to bring this about: the [Coalition for a World Security Community of Democratic Nations](#).

We hope to see progress on these issues at President Biden's proposed Summit for Democracy in December. He has called for a global Summit for Democracy to "renew the spirit and shared purpose of the nations of the free world" and "will bring together the world's democracies to strengthen our democratic institutions, honestly confront nations that are backsliding, and forge a common agenda."

This could result in at least the first moves towards a new security community of democracies such as we have been discussing. This community would not only be strong enough to effectively deter any major aggression from China, but it could be a positive first step towards a brighter global future, following the European template.

About the Author



Chris Hamer is Honorary Associate Professor in theoretical physics at the University of New South Wales. He is the founder of the World Citizens Association of Australia and is currently president of Scientists for Global Responsibility (Australia) and the Coalition for a World Security Community of Democratic Nations. He has long been interested in the problem of eliminating nuclear weapons and in the ideal of democratic world federation as the only effective means to resolve this and other pressing global problems such as climate change. He is the author of *A Global Parliament: Principles of World Federation*. He holds a PhD from the California Institute of Technology.

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