

Changes to Attain Democratic World Governance

by Edward Rawson¹

Summary

The Arab Spring is, for me, the largest disruption of dictators and spread of democratic-oriented demonstrations since 1848. It has inspired people in countries led by dictators or royal families and in corrupt “democracies” throughout the world. It has also inspired countries that have either adopted genuine democracy or made concessions because of public pressure. The demonstrations that have taken place on Wall Street, in other US cities and much of the rest of the world, with perhaps the exception of Bahrain and Iran, have produced more power for citizens from Morocco to Burma. Egypt, Tunisia and Libya are definitely on the path towards modern democracy, but unlike Tunisia, democratic governance has yet to be properly established in Egypt and Libya. Significant changes for Syria will hopefully soon follow along with complete democracy for Burma. Even the wealth of many Arab countries could not satisfy those seeking democracy. Saudi Arabia, which has recently been making generous grants to its people, thought it wise to initiate voting power for women.

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By 2050, the number of dictatorships will likely decrease. The largest of those non-democracies is China, for which it is much more difficult to make a prediction. However, many of the country's citizens are not happy with the dominant communist party's governance, and many of the elite, especially those who have been educated in the US, are familiar with democracy. There is also North Korea, whose future is unclear; but the North Koreans are becoming more aware of how their standard of living has no comparison with the unprecedented development of their southern neighbor and should welcome any opportunity which would produce a modest standard of living, based roughly on what they deserve. Assuming that Kim Jung Un secures real power and someone could convince him of the benefits of democracy (presumably studied while in school in Switzerland), he could become the savior of North Korea, with the help of the United States, China and others in the Six Party Talks (realizing however, this is a very remote possibility). There are several approaches to the problem of how our globalizing world will eventually reach permanent peace and prosperity. Namely, through the United Nations, G20 and religious and other charities which will be covered in the sections which follow.

How Democracy is Developing

Today we lived in an irrevocably integrated Internet world with problems that no nation alone can solve alone. The major obstacles to attaining world governance are poverty in the failing nations, countries that have yet to reach Western standards, and Islamists who might become the first power in the new democracies. In most of the world, Protestants and the Catholics reached agreement for mutual respect many centuries ago; we can only hope that the Arab countries can do the same with Christians. If one studies the composition of our globe, it can be determined that countries with stabilized democracies have an acceptable standard of living. Countries that are failing are unable

to properly deal with disease, contraception and corruption. Developed countries have poverty, but they also have programs to deal with it, which largely keeps it under control, although there are exceptions.

There are some examples of how contraception has helped produce prosperity. One reason that China has become prosperous is the one child policy. Japan has benefited from small families. I can recall going to a dinner party, where there was a Japanese mother who was concerned because she would be going home with four children which was above the accepted average in that country. Another example is South Korea, where I was shortly after the war. I had invited a government official and his wife to an event at my hotel, but only he came. I expressed regret that his wife was not with him and he responded that she was pregnant. When I congratulated him, he replied, *Mr. Kim got drunk one night and another child is coming.*

As people become accustomed to the benefits and comforts of middle class life, they begin to realize that war is no longer a solution. Another reason for change is that women are increasingly becoming part of the overall work force. No nation has fought a major war that has been successful since WWII except for Dessert Storm/Kuwait, which had less than 30 conflict deaths and minimal expense for the US. It was a quick war and Saudi Arabia/other countries paid most of the cost. The US encouraged uprisings by the Iraqi Shiites but, unfortunately, Saddam Hussein was allowed to brutally suppress them. Shiites in Iraq still distrust the U.S. An example of a changed viewpoint due to attaining relative prosperity is the refusal of the semi-autonomous Kurds to allow US troops to invade Iraq through their territory.

A principal obstacle for world governance is the illusion that countries have sovereignty. For me, nations do not have

sovereignty unless they are self sufficient. Practically the only people that are self sufficient are native tribes in Brazil and islands protected by India.

The UN, its Affiliates, the ICC and Development to Help Create Country Candidates for Democracy

The United Nations has considerably expanded and attained importance after the end of the Cold War, which had hampered its development. Today it is unlikely that an established country would declare war without the approval of the UN Security Council. It has a variety of different activities and programs as well as three main affiliates. One of its most important services is peacekeeping, and its troops have proved that they can help and maintain peace for various disputes between countries. The World Health Organization has been a leader in dealing with epidemics and has helped to create and operate programs to improve health and eliminate diseases. UNESCO has established a record of historic and unique places which has helped countries where tourism is a major source of income. Other activities sponsored by UNESCO are human rights, alleviation of poverty, science and contributions to the building of peace. When there is a shortage of food, the World Food Program (WFP) calls on UN members to supply the needed food. The creation of international food reserves is now under consideration. The UN's major obstacles today are: it is dependent on members paying assessments and the 5 permanent members of the Security Council have the right to veto, which cannot be overridden. The recent vetoes by Russia and China of Security Council resolutions that condemned the violence in Syria are an example of how the veto weakens the UN system. Also, the one-country one-vote policy has resulted in the General Assembly only having limited power. However, two plans based on a realistic division of power are under serious consideration. If either of these proposals becomes acceptable, the General Assembly would have a more

serious role in any future world governance. Another important organization, which has already proven essential, is the International Criminal Court. It has warrants out for dictators/war lords and other persons. Any leader who disregards human rights and other areas essential for a peaceful, prosperous country are in danger of receiving a warrant and tried by the International Criminal Court.

Poverty

Poverty can be divided into three broad categories: The first is in developed countries, where it is kept largely under control through access to free health care, free education, subsidized housing and, in the US, little to no income tax. The second category is the rural poor who scrape by often on inefficient farms, which results in limited ability to produce quality crops and a decent price for their production. In some countries, because of their inability to properly raise their children, their offspring become de-facto indentured servants to other countries' elite, and their welfare is often neglected. The third, in quite a few cases, are the impoverished populations, many who become migrants from poor African countries and to a lesser degree from Asia and Central America/Mexico.

The three main obstacles to overcoming poverty are corruption, limited health services and a failing or indifferent government. The most impressive progress has been by groups of major NGO's, particularly those which concentrate on health, such as Hope, the Gates Foundation, and Medecins Sans Frontieres. If it were not for these charities, Haiti would probably be a starving, warring and rapidly failing country, as Somalia has been. And most interestingly, millions of people in the last couple of decades have acquired access to safe water, and as a result the beneficiaries have enough stamina to earn a decent living.

Sanitation

The lack of modern plumbing and waste disposal causes many diseases, especially in developing countries. Programs to adopt Western systems of cleanliness/sanitation are an important adjunct to Bill Gates' campaign to eradicate diseases through vaccination. The need for proper sanitation is getting better recognition. For example, future Indian wives demand that one of the first things they get is a decent toilet.

Corruption

Corruption is something which is hard to pin down and is widespread. No one knows when or where it will be exposed. Not too long ago there was a big earthquake in China and many of the schools and other government buildings collapsed because they had been built by bribed contractors. The first female President of Liberia fired two of her top officials because they were involved in corruption scandals. Sometimes all that is needed are sufficient salaries for underpaid civil servants so they do not feel the necessity to be corrupt. Organized workers can usually help in getting better wages and countries are beginning to recognize they have a right to demand them. Finally, inefficient systems produce corruption. My example, which is not strictly corruption, is a friend who had been trying to clear some goods through customs. Eventually his agent told him to meet him at the customs office shortly before lunch. They sat quietly in the hall opposite the office where his papers were supposedly being processed. Eventually everybody went to lunch and his agent grabbed him, pushed him into the office and had him sign several papers. Two weeks later his goods arrived.

Current / Future Activities are Facilitating a Basic World Governance

The most amazing progress towards world governance has been creation of a globalized world and the worldwide expansion of communications. Practically every major company, as well as many minor ones, look to international connections as their future source of growth. Global organizations and rules have been established to control their operations, including the World Trade Organization and Law of the Sea. It is interesting that the last was established without the US being a member. The oldest global regulator that I know of is the postal union which determines the amount of money a country should get for international delivery services. Hopefully, global financial transactions will soon be under a worldwide system. Pilots and airport staff must be able to communicate in English. Disposal of shipping waste is determined under the Law of the Sea. Finally, the spread of smartphones and drastic reduction in costs for international calls has meant that today a person can call practically any place in the world. Another means of communication has been the rapid expansion of Internet, Twitter, Facebook, Youtube and other social media. We no longer have to wait for information; for example, the Iranian demonstrators as well as the protesters created by the Arab Spring took pictures of brutalities with their cell phones, which were then immediately distributed throughout the world.

The momentum of the Arab Spring no longer is restricted to Muslim countries. During the last half of 2011, three different nations have seen major changes beyond their control: Burma, Russia and maybe North Korea. The President of the first (a former Junta leader) unexpectedly (probably in part because of pressure from China and as well as the concerns of ASEAN) started liberalizing his country. He initiated dialog with the leader of the opposing party who had just finished forced house arrest and allowed meetings and demonstrations. He, also under pressure from environmentalists, canceled a dam that was being built to mainly produce hydro power for China. He also welcomed a visit by Hillary Clinton. The second nation is Russia, where

demonstrations and parliamentary votes turned against Putin and the continuation of his 12-year rule of Russia is no longer a sure thing. The last country is North Korea, which has chosen Kim Jong Un, the youngest son of Kim Jong Ill (who died of a heart attack) to succeed him as new leader of the country. The first problem he should concentrate on is how to get the privileged elite, particularly the military who traditionally managed the government, to create a decent standard of living for a population on the brink of starvation. The way to do this, which is most unlikely, would be for contact to be made immediately with Kim Jong Un and offer him full support with food, global trade and means for new ventures in return for North Korea giving all citizens a right to vote on basic aspects of governance. The new leader spent a couple of years in a boarding school in Switzerland, where he took a course on how the Swiss government is run. Personally I think North Korea is a real tragedy. When I was in Korea, shortly after the Armistice, the only major export that North Korea had was rice. On the other hand, the North had hydroelectric power, coal, gold, copper and other assets which today are barely operating. There is some possibility that the country could become a de-facto part of China, which North Korea has been depending on for food and the destination for most of its exports. One thing is certain, because of the smuggling via cell phones of pictures of life in South Korea into the North, the population is becoming aware that their country's standard of living is way below their Southern neighbor and that they have become deeply dependent on China.

Conclusion

If our world is ever to attain permanent peace and prosperity, it will be because of current and future widespread changes. There is too wide a gap between the various classes of society. The protesters, which started with the Arab Spring, have spread worldwide and the middle class is increasing rapidly, particularly

Africa and Latin America. The demonstrators are taking the lead in seeking a more equalized standard of living. How it will all end is not possible to determine at this time, but one thing is clear; the future of democracy is expanding worldwide.

However, there is one obstacle, which may take time to reconcile. Specifically, in Tunisia and Egypt, the majority vote has gone to the Islamist Muslims who may attempt to introduce Sharia Law and other countries might follow. It took many years for the Catholics and Protestants to reconcile with each other. Hopefully, the radical Muslims will eventually see the futility of trying to marginalize Christians.

One thing that makes me optimistic of the potential for world governance is the greater awareness of other people and how they live in the various countries of the world. There has also been a major increase in students studying abroad. Every year millions of people seek new homesteads, and their culture has an impact on the countries they settle in. Other groups which are exposed to different cultures are airline staff and medical tourism. The laws that govern our lives will become more international and some form of global governance becomes essential for the permanent peace and prosperity we all want.

Final Observation

Ever since the founding of the World Federalist Movement in the US and elsewhere, with the establishment of United World Federalist in 1947, I have read books, papers and attended meetings pertaining to what the democratic structure of the system should be and what has been agreed upon to establish permanent peace and prosperity. The information which I have been exposed to is both useful and essential. However, the time has come for projects to do away with poverty and create a middle class and to have greater focus on how we do this. We

must always be prepared for possible setbacks. It took almost 50 years to establish the European Union and could easily take 50 more years before its concept has proved to be feasible and necessary. In the early stages of the 21st century, debt problems, weakness of the Euro, though unlikely, could bring about a breakup of the EU. They must always do their best to make sure this does not happen.