

**Key Points from the Book**

by John J. Davenport  
Professor of Philosophy, Fordham University;  
Davenport@fordham.edu

**The problems to be solved (a partial list)**

- Democracies are under increasing threats from Russia and China, including cyberattacks and massive propaganda campaigns aimed at destroying faith in mainstream fact-checked news. The assault on elections, journalists, and anyone criticizing China will get worse without larger new deterrents.
- Efforts to cultivate friendly relations with Russia and China since 1989 and work through the UN Security Council to tackle global problems have mostly failed. Instead, Russia and China have become more aggressive: Putin has seized Crimea, stoked an ethnic conflict in Eastern Ukraine, and helped Assad kill half a million people to win his genocidal war in Syria. Putin has sent troops and money to keep a brutal dictator in power in Venezuela, making a mockery of the Monroe Doctrine.
- Free trade with Russia and China since 1989 have only made possible the rising success of their new paradigm – *soft despotism*, which combines economic growth with dictatorial rule, including total state control of most significant medias. Thus we have enabled a new kind of anti-democratic force.
- The trilemma of mass atrocities: what should we do when they occur or are imminent?
  - (A) We do nothing, letting people be slaughtered and/or driven away en masse (e.g. at least 500,000 killed in Darfur and other regions of Sudan; 900,000 Rohingya from Myanmar).
  - (B) A small 'coalition of the willing' intervenes with air power but no long-term presence for reconstruction and stabilization (e.g. protection of Benghazi in Libya), leading to chaos later.
  - (C) A small coalition intervenes and stays for long-term reconstruction, but these few nations suffer too many casualties and costs resulting in burnout (e.g. Iraq, Afghanistan) – the quagmire fear.

**The solution: a league of democracies that can**

- create a united front against rising dictatorships and soft despotism, credibly threatening them with ruinous trade sanctions or even kinetic force in response to attacks on elections, cyberwar, hostage-taking strategies, and support for genocidal or totalitarian leaders like Assad and Kim Jong Un.
- unite the military and economic power of 30-40 democratic nations around the world (at the outset), controlling more than 80% of the world's wealth and military capacities.
- improve on NATO with binding majority decisions and new members from around Asia and the global South, making clear that the new League is *not western-dominated* (India as largest member). – because the Democratic League would eventually replace NATO, Russia might one day join.
- get democracies out from under the control of Russia and China in the UN Security Council.
- provide strong incentives for non-democratic regimes to choose democratic reforms (e.g. Venezuela)
- ensure that every member nation contributes *its fair share* of money, arms, and troops so that
  - (A) humanitarian interventions to stop mass atrocities, prevent civil wars, and turn back military coups would be undertaken by *a very wide and permanent, reliable coalition* of top volunteer troops with sufficient support for reconstruction that fix the roots of the problems;
  - (B) the burden is small on every member nation, yet pressures on domestic militaries are reduced;
  - (C) eventually the mere threat of League action would be sufficient to prevent mass atrocities.

**Global Public Goods and Public Harms:**

The global problems that the UN and inter-state treaty regimes are unable to solve go far beyond mass atrocities, shared security from invasion, and protection of democracies from cyberattacks and resurgent dictatorships. We need a working system of global governance that can also address

- new threats from terrorist groups Boku Haram, Al Shabab, or Al Qaeda-inspired movements that take over territory in failing states when civil war breaks out, e.g. Syria, northern Nigeria, Somalia;
- the proliferation of chemical, biological, and even nuclear weapons materials; sales of traditional weapons (planes, missiles, bombs, guns) rising at twice the rate of inflation;
- new arms races that will cost trillions, including in cyberattacks of numerous kinds, armed satellites, new drones and robotic weaponry, microwave, laser, and nanotech weapons;
- discoordination in the immigration systems and procedures for asylum among democratic states, most of which are rushing to be the least accessible receiver of refugees (a game of chicken);
- a race to the bottom in regulation of ever-stronger multinational corporations and tax rates, as tax havens and offshore accounts increase inequality and corruption and fund terrorism across the world;
- massive instabilities in the world financial system, where enormous amounts of capital can move quickly between nations in response to any shock or perceived danger, and thus economic failures in any major nation can trigger cascading failures across whole regions or even the entire world;
- uncertainties in global food supply that are driving food-importing nations to land grabs in developing nations (especially in Africa, where China and others are buying up a lot of land);
- the threat of quick spreads in pandemic diseases that are making a global plague more likely;
- environmental degradation that threatens of all of humanity, from the loss of tropical rainforests and their biodiversity to the spread of deserts and global climate change;
- general protection of basic human rights, including by resisting oppressive entrenched dictatorships.

Global CAPs: All of these areas involve *collective actions problems* between nations such as games of 'chicken' (for intervention to stop mass atrocities and action to stop pandemics) to 'assurance games' and 'prisoners dilemmas' (with arms races and regulatory races to the bottom). Many such mutually self-defeating dynamics can only be solved by a strong enforcement system over nations – not mere network governance. The UNSC lacks such coordinative power because it is only an IGO.

- this is analogous to the problems between 13 US states described in the *Federalist Papers* (1788).
- but the proposed solution is not a world government; it only includes some nations in all regions.

### **The Proposed Structure for a League of Democracies that would be far superior to the UN**

- Standing armed forces made up entirely of volunteers from the member nations – including an elite 'Humanitarian Guard' for rapid reaction to crises and a 'Humanitarian Reserve' for nation-building and reconstruction efforts – at the disposal of the League's Council and chief executive.
- A directly elected Democratic Council, with voting weight of each member *partly* proportional to population, limited by upper and lower thresholds to avoid very large imbalances (no vetoes).  
-- e.g. between 1 and 8 councilors per nation in the Democratic Council of the league.
- A directly elected chief executive and League Parliament (lower house) with voting weight largely proportional to population in each nation – an incentive for India and eventually also China.
- A bill of Basic Democratic Rights and uniform standards for entrance of new member nations.
- An Associate Member category for nations on the way to democratic transformation.
- Potentially up to 50 founding member states from all continents, with potential to grow by another 30-40 nations within 20 years; as in the EU (but not UN), prospective membership motives reform.
- Mandatory contributions based on population and wealth, and binding requirements to abide by financial and trade sanctions imposed on other nations by the League's collective decisions.
- A Friendly Partner nation status for trade regimes, and capacity to partner with UN peace enforcement missions and peacekeeping forces helping to secure peace treaties.
- A process for arbitrating secession disputes or pleas for regional autonomy with enforcement.
- Capacity to prevent kleptocratic dictators from selling their nations' resources and borrowing on national credit. Capacity to address money-laundering and environmental issues in the future.