

Chapter 1

The Need for World Federation

*For I dipt into the future, far as human eye could see,
Saw a Vision of the world, and all the wonder that would be;*

...

*Till the war-drum throb'd no longer, and
the battle-flags were furled
In the Parliament of man, the Federation of the world.
There the common sense of most shall hold
a fretful realm in awe,
And the kindly earth shall slumber, lapt in universal law.*

Alfred, Lord Tennyson,
Locksley Hall, 1842

Advancing technology has been the crucial factor in drawing together the global village. Two centuries ago, a traveller might have covered fifty miles in a day in a horse-drawn carriage. Nowadays, he or she can travel half way around the world in the same time by air. Two centuries ago, letters carried by sailing-ship might take a month to get from Europe to America; but now, messages travel at the speed of thought anywhere around the globe, by telephone, fax, or email - provided that the line isn't busy.

The result has been a staggering increase in the volume of international travel and trade. The number of international visitors to France each year is now about the same as the total population. People in the affluent modern world think nothing of going to Bali or Hawaii or the Bermudas for a holiday, or visiting Los Angeles to take their children to Disneyland, or popping over the Channel to do a bit of shopping in London. A man may have his breakfast in New York, and his dinner in Los Angeles, while his luggage sails serenely on, perhaps, to Osaka, Japan. A businessman will routinely fly off to a trade fair in Hamburg or Tokyo, and an academic will attend an international conference in Sicily or Singapore.

At any of these professional conferences or conventions, people from all over the globe meet on an equal footing. Outstanding talent may emerge in men and women of any race or creed. In the field of theoretical physics, for example, the Nobel-Prize winning leaders of the field have included a Jewish-American, Richard Feynman, and a Chinese-American, Chen-Ning Yang, as well as a Pakistani, Abdus Salam, and an Italian, Enrico Fermi. All are united in a single great enterprise, the advancement of human knowledge. All accept the same basic set of principles, and all speak the same jargon, expressed in the universal language called 'broken English'. The same situation holds in other academic or professional fields: medicine, or architecture, or even law.

The increasing speed of travel and communication is drawing people ever closer together into a single worldwide community, the aforesaid global village. At the same time, however, many difficult issues and problems are emerging which affect all of the villagers in common, and which really demand a common approach if they are to be tackled effectively. Hence the need for a 'village council'. Let us examine some of these issues more closely.

Peace and Security

As civilized nations have advanced in knowledge, the weapons of war have progressively become more powerful and more deadly. From bows and arrows to cannons and missiles, and from gunpowder to nuclear warheads, the destructive power available to the military machine has increased to almost unimaginable levels. At the height of the Cold War, the USA and the Soviet Union between them possessed some 50,000 nuclear warheads of various types, with a total explosive capacity equivalent to about four tons of TNT for every person on earth.¹ Considering that on average it took about one ton of TNT to kill somebody in World War II, it became at least a mathematical possibility that a full-scale nuclear war, with the consequent radioactive fallout and nuclear winter, might destroy all human life on earth. It would certainly have been the greatest single disaster ever to befall human civilization. We were faced with the grotesque possibility that a single technician at the touch of a button could literally destroy a city, and incinerate hundreds of thousands of other human beings. The joke has been carried a little too far, and for most reasonable people the idea of war between the superpowers has become unthinkable. As both Mikhail Gorbachev and Ronald Reagan agreed, “nuclear war cannot be won, and must never be fought”. The world would be a very much safer place if we could eliminate nuclear weapons entirely.

When Mikhail Gorbachev came to power in the Soviet Union, a new and hopeful era in international relations was begun. The Cold War was ended, and for the first time some nuclear weapons were actually removed or destroyed. Intermediate range missiles have been removed from Europe under the INF Treaty, and under the START Treaties the strategic nuclear forces of the US and the former USSR are due to be cut by a factor of two-thirds by the year 2003. The popular demands for nuclear disarmament have finally had some success.

It must be recognized, however, that this is not the end of the business. We cannot rid ourselves permanently of these weapons simply by throwing them away. As many people have pointed out, the atom bomb cannot be uninvented, and a nation can always build new ones if it wants to. At the present time, there is a continued danger of ‘horizontal proliferation’. India and Pakistan have just recently declared themselves openly as possessors of nuclear weapons, and Iraq, Iran and Libya have also attempted to acquire them. There have even been warnings that terrorist organizations might try to get hold of them. To guard against these possibilities, and to ensure their own security, each of the superpowers will feel obliged to keep a ‘minimum deterrent’ of a few hundred or a few thousand warheads. Even when the START Treaties are fully implemented, the remaining nuclear stockpiles will still amount to one ton of TNT equivalent for every human being on earth; and in times of renewed international tension, these stockpiles could well begin to grow again.

An example of this process was seen between the two World Wars. People were so sickened by the slaughter in the trenches of the First World War that they determined to “end war forever”. Some major disarmament agreements were signed, including the Washington Naval Agreement of 1922, which actually provided for the destruction of new battleships being completed on the slipways. Yet when Hitler rose to power in Germany, and the nations of Europe felt themselves under threat, they rushed to rearm once more. Thus disarmament is not by itself the answer to our problem, although it is a step in the right direction.

So how *can* we rid ourselves, once and for all, of the menace of nuclear arms? The answer to this question is the same for nuclear weapons as it is for any other sort of weapon, and has been known for centuries. The argument runs as follows.

First one must ask, why do nations feel a need for these weapons? Why do they spend

something approaching one trillion dollars annually on armaments?² This money is not spent frivolously or for no good reason. The first duty of any government is to provide for the security of the nation. Each country therefore feels obliged to purchase weapons and maintain its armed forces at a prudent level, in case some threat of war or some dispute should arise with another country.

To get rid of these weapons, one must first be able to guarantee the security of each nation without them. In other words, it must be *guaranteed* that if a dispute should arise between two or more nations, for any reason whatever, then it can be settled by peaceful means, without the use of weapons. Only then will the nations feel safe enough to lay down their arms.

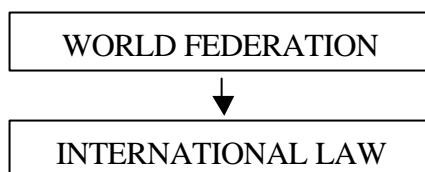
How can peaceful settlements be achieved in international disputes? Mechanisms are needed to provide conciliation and mediation services between the parties, in an attempt to bring them to an agreement amongst themselves. At the present time, such services are usually provided on an *ad hoc* basis, by a roving American Secretary of State for example. Henry Kissinger shuttled back and forth in an attempt to broker a peace deal between Israel and Egypt, and in 1997-1998 the U.S. negotiator Dennis Ross tried to keep the peace process alive between the Israelis and the Palestinians. In the last resort, however, if all mediation attempts fail and the protagonists still cannot reach an agreement, then a peaceful settlement can only be guaranteed by a process of *adjudication*. That is, some impartial court or tribunal must be set up which can judge between the nations in dispute, make a binding decision on the issue in question, and impose a peaceful settlement.

Hence one is led inevitably to postulate a complete framework of *international law*. A tribunal or *court* is needed, as outlined above, to arbitrate between nations in dispute; but the decisions of the court cannot be made in a vacuum, or at the whim of the tribunal members. They must be based upon an agreed set of principles or *laws*. These laws can only be established by some sort of international assembly or *parliament*. And in the last resort, if some nation should refuse to accept the judgement of the court, or simply invades the territory of somebody else, then there needs to be some sort of international police force or *security force* to enforce the law. We need to replace the “law of force” by the “force of law”.

Adding these elements together, one finds the outline of nothing less than a world government. The most natural form of such a government would be a loose association of the presently existing nation-states making up a *world federation*, somewhat along the lines of the present European Union.

This line of argument was strongly urged by Albert Einstein³: “*In my opinion the only salvation for civilization and the human race lies in the creation of a world government, with security of nations founded upon law. As long as sovereign states continue to have separate armaments and armament secrets, new world wars will be inevitable.*”

If a world federation can eventually be set up, and an effective system of international law established, then any need for nuclear weapons will have disappeared, and it will be possible to abolish them completely. In the long run, we can even look for the abolition of organized warfare itself. War is an archaic and primitive way of settling an argument, and should have no place in a civilized modern society. This happy state of affairs is not going to be reached overnight; but it is by no means an impossible dream. Already there are many instances of the increasing functional co-operation between nations which will help to bring it about.



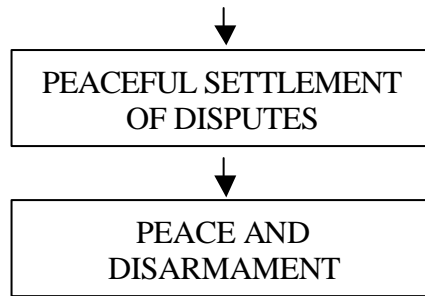


Figure 1. *The argument for world federation. In order to get rid of nuclear weapons permanently, one must be able to guarantee that international disputes can be settled peacefully. This requires an effective system of international law, which implies a world federation.*

It hardly needs saying that the present United Nations cannot fulfill this role. The foundation of the UN was a major step towards a system of common security, and its peacekeeping functions are of inestimable value. The Secretary-General also plays an important part as a mediator in many international conflicts. But the UN is not a world government, and was never intended as such. Ultimately, a much more powerful organization is needed to provide an adequate guarantee of international security.

The Environment

In recent years, people have become more and more aware that the resources of the earth are limited, and that our global environment is being degraded to an alarming degree. One of the first harbingers of danger was Rachel Carson, who warned in her book *The Silent Spring* that the use of toxic chemicals such as DDT in the countryside was causing widespread destruction of birds and wildlife. There has been a depressing litany of subsequent disasters.

The atmosphere is perhaps the most fragile component of the environment, because its total mass is relatively small. The fumes from power stations and factories are releasing oxides of sulphur and nitrogen into the air, which are washed out again in the form of 'acid rain'. This acid rain is killing aquatic life in ponds and lakes, killing trees in forests, and even crumbling the stone of buildings in our cities.

It has been discovered that chlorofluorocarbons (CFCs), which we have also been releasing into the atmosphere, have begun eating away the ozone layer. CFCs are inert gases used in air-conditioning and refrigeration systems, but when they drift up into the upper atmosphere they are activated by light from the Sun, and begin to catalyze the chemical reduction of ozone. As a result, the total amount of ozone is estimated to be falling by half a percent per annum. Since it is ozone which protects us from the ultraviolet rays of the Sun, we can expect to see a rising incidence of skin cancers and ecological damage as a result.

By burning coal and oil, and cutting down forests, we are also releasing carbon dioxide and other greenhouse gases at an alarming rate. The total amount of carbon dioxide in the atmosphere is rising steadily, and is expected to double in the next century. These greenhouse gases act as a thermal blanket, and tend to increase the average temperature, via the 'greenhouse effect'. The earth's mean surface temperature has increased by 0.5° C in the last century, and is predicted by the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change to rise by a further 1 to 3.5° C in the next century.⁴ This will cause glaciers and polar ice-caps to melt and contract, and the mean sea-level to rise by an estimated half a metre. There will

also be a substantial shift in weather patterns. Until recently, nobody would have dreamed that human activities could have such drastic effects on the weather systems of the entire earth.

The rivers, lakes and oceans of the world are vast, but we have also reached the limits of their resilience. Marine life seems particularly vulnerable. Several species of whales have been hunted to the verge of extinction, and all around the world stocks of fish are disappearing rapidly, as fishermen destroy their own livelihood by overfishing. The global catch of fish peaked at 89 million tonnes in 1989, and has since declined to 85 million tonnes in 1995.⁵

Pollution of rivers and coastal waters is a major problem. Some waterways are little better than open sewers. One finds faeces, plastic syringes and other rubbish bobbing in the waves off Bondi beach in Sydney, or Fire Island in New York. The Adriatic Sea suffers from 'red tides', detergent foam and other serious signs of pollution. The Aral Sea has halved in size due to diversion of its feedwaters.

Lastly, there is the soil under our feet. The earth is groaning under the task of supporting its human population. The forests are disappearing worldwide at the rate of 11 million hectares per year, an area the size of Belgium or Iowa. In arid areas particularly, the soil is being eroded due to over-farming or over-grazing. Topsoil is being lost 20 to 40 times faster than it is being replaced, and large areas of farmland are being reduced to desert. As a result, starvation is endemic in regions such as the Sahel, south of the Sahara.

To divert somewhat from the main line of argument, there can be little doubt that the root cause of most of these problems is over-population, combined with industrialization. Human numbers have increased to a point where most of the fertile land of the planet has been taken up for agriculture, leaving hardly any room for other species of wildlife to survive. One of the great, slow tragedies of modern times is the crowding of many animal species into extinction, never to be seen again. The human population is already 6 billion, and is projected to double again to between 12 and 15 billion people by the year 2100. No doubt it will be technically possible to flog the earth into supporting this huge population; but in the long run we should probably be aiming to reduce the population to (say) half its present level, instead. The living space per person is already restricted: in Japan, there are hotel 'rooms' where you cannot stand upright, but have to crawl inside like a rabbit. One recent study at Cornell University has estimated the population which the earth can comfortably sustain at 2 billion people.⁶

Action must be taken to halt and reverse these continuing disasters. Even Margaret Thatcher eventually turned 'green' enough to demand salvation for the ozone layer. The main point to emphasize here is that these environmental problems affect everybody alike, and demand a collective response. We all breathe the same air, and to halt the greenhouse effect we are all going to have to stop producing so much carbon dioxide. It does no good for a single person to give up driving his car to work if the rest of us continue burning fossil fuel as usual. Lester Brown, the head of the Worldwatch Institute, remarks: "Ozone depletion, climate change, and oceanic pollution simply cannot be solved at the national level. Indeed, a world in which countries go their own way may not be worth living in."⁷ Solutions to these worldwide problems can only be found by means of international agreements, with everybody acting in concert.

This is already happening to some extent. The International Whaling Commission, for instance, has set quotas on the numbers of whales that may be caught, and populations of some species such as right whales are already recovering. The Vienna Convention of 1985 and the Montreal Protocol of 1987 provide for the phasing-out of CFC production by industrialized countries, and their replacement by other gases. As a result, the tonnage of CFCs produced has already dropped to a third of what it used to be, and the problem of the ozone layer should eventually be resolved. But even if all CFC production were stopped

tomorrow, it would still take the best part of a century for ozone levels to return to normal.⁸

Other problems such as the greenhouse effect are going to be much more difficult to solve, and will require some painful and difficult decisions. According to the Rio Convention of 1992, the signatory nations agreed to stabilize their greenhouse gas emissions at 1990 levels by the year 2000; but hardly any country will achieve that target. Less ambitious targets were set at the Kyoto Summit in 1997, when the developed countries pledged to reduce their emissions by 5% below 1990 levels by the year 2012; but already doubts are beginning to surface whether these new targets will be met. The limitation of greenhouse gas emissions implies restrictions on the use of fossil fuels for power generation and transport, which could have severe effects on the economic life of the country, and limit economic growth. This is likely to generate serious opposition from industry.

One proposal has been the imposition of a 'carbon tax' on the use of fuels containing carbon. This would provide an economic incentive for people to limit their use of energy, or else switch to renewable energy sources. Industrial lobbyists argue, however, that such a tax would make fuel and electric power more expensive, and reduce the competitiveness of the country in international trade, as compared with other countries which do not have the tax. Thus the proposals for a carbon tax have so far been defeated everywhere.

This example illustrates how hard it is to implement difficult decisions under an international system of voluntary consensus. If one country introduces a carbon tax and another does not, the second country gains an unfair cost advantage in international trade, and the whole system breaks down. Once again, there is an urgent need for a properly organized international parliament, where knotty decisions of this sort can be fully debated, and binding regulations can be formulated which will apply equally to all nations. The present system of reaching voluntary agreements under UN auspices is inadequate. To make the 'hard yards' on environmental issues, our global village needs a more effective village council.

Another obvious function of a world federation would be to administer the 'global commons' for the benefit of all. These are the areas of mankind's environment which belong to no single nation, such as the oceans, the skies, and outer space, where every nation should enjoy similar rights and accept similar obligations. Eventually, no doubt, Antarctica should belong in the same category. Many international conventions have already been ratified concerning these areas, such as the international Law of the Sea, which was arrived at after many years of negotiations in the United Nations.

Trade, Development and Finance

The volume of international trade and finance has increased to a staggering extent over recent years. A household in Australia, for instance, might own a car made in Japan, a washing-machine made in Germany, and a personal computer made in Taiwan. Major corporations are all transnational nowadays in their operations and outlook: a company with headquarters in New York may be looking to build a plant and expand its business in Thailand or China, or wherever labour is cheapest. Businessmen (and women) have become, willy-nilly, citizens of the world who may be required at a moment's notice to fly overseas to attend a business meeting or convention. It used to be said that when Wall Street sneezes, the rest of the world catches cold, but now you have to keep an eye on the Nikkei index as well.

All around the world, the current trend is towards lower tariffs and decreased barriers to trade, with the aim of achieving greater efficiency and productivity, and greater prosperity for all. A world federation could contribute even more to this process by removing obstacles and promoting trade, and providing better regulation of it. An example is provided by the success of the European Community in promoting trade within the European region.

There are also several problems in international commerce which call for solution by some world authority. One of them is the huge increase in speculation on the international currency market, which has a destabilizing effect on world affairs. International transactions have reached an almost frightening level, so that the central banks have become almost powerless to control the tide of money. The foreign exchange transactions recorded by the Bank of International Settlements now amount to around \$1 trillion every single day. A single speculator on the New York market, dealing hundreds of millions of dollars at a time, can have a significant effect on the value of national currencies, and manipulate the market to his own advantage. Thus George Soros made his reputation and his fortune in 1992 when he defeated the Bank of England by betting against the British pound. Even the Federal Reserve Bank in America cannot control or withstand the market as a whole. One of the useful functions of a world federation might be to slow down and stabilize the speculative flow of money by imposing a small tax on international transactions. In the long run, the problem would be eliminated by the institution of a single global currency.

Another problem is that of tax evasion schemes such as 'transfer pricing', whereby corporations book their profits in some foreign tax haven rather than in the country where they were earned, in order to avoid paying their proper taxes at home. A world authority would be able to eliminate such abuses.

One serious political and moral dilemma is the so-called 'North-South' problem, or the ongoing transfer of resources from the underdeveloped Third World to the industrialized nations. The Third World nations of Latin America and Africa have borrowed many billions of dollars for development purposes, and now find themselves unable to repay the debt. Prices for commodities such as oil have fallen, and international interest rates have often risen, and so these countries are unable even to pay the interest on their loans. Like a family that has taken out too large a mortgage to buy a house, they are in a debt trap, and the consequence is poverty and hardship for their people. The nations of sub-Saharan Africa, excluding South Africa, currently owe some \$220 billion in external debt, about four times their annual export income. Nearly 20% of their export income goes to servicing the loans, and still they have fallen into arrears to the tune of about \$60 billion.⁹ In 1993, African governments paid \$402 million more to the International Monetary Fund than they received from it.¹⁰ From time to time large chunks of Third World debt have been written off, as in the Mexican debt crisis, but after a while the same problem always seems to recur.

Problems such as these transcend national boundaries. Powerful global institutions have already been created, such as the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund (IMF). The germ of a world currency has appeared in the Special Drawing Rights issued by the IMF. Regular financial conventions are held, leading to agreements such as the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT). It is only a natural extension of these developments to look for a world parliament to provide better oversight and regulation of international trade and finance. Then we could also undertake the difficult and thorny task of redirecting some small extra fraction of the world's resources towards development of the poorer countries, and relief for the millions living in wretchedness and poverty, or facing premature death from starvation or malnutrition.

Health, Education and Welfare

International organizations have a major role to play in welfare areas, as already witnessed by the invaluable work of UN agencies such as the World Health Organization (WHO), the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), and the UN Educational Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO).

The World Health Organization had its most famous triumph when it succeeded in eradicating smallpox from the world. The only remaining examples of the bacterium are held

in laboratories in England and Russia. The WHO also mounted a campaign to eradicate malaria by spraying the mosquitos which act as vectors for the disease. This program had much initial success, but was not completed, and malaria is now as prevalent as ever. New outbreaks of diseases such as hepatitis and tuberculosis have occurred as by-products of the drug culture; and AIDS has presented an entirely new and frightening public health problem. New international programs with increased resources are needed to control these diseases.

The Food and Agriculture Organization, along with many non-government organizations such as Oxfam and World Vision, form the bulwark against famine and land degradation in the Third World. They are always there when drought or famine strike in Somalia or Mozambique, struggling heroically to meet the crisis on a shoestring budget. It is crystal clear that the world community is failing to meet its obligations, however, when it requires the efforts of the pop-star Bob Geldof to raise enough money to save hundreds of thousands of Eritreans from death by starvation. The US aid budget has fallen to 0.2% of GNP, against the UN target figure of 0.7%. Many other nations are dropping towards a similar level. Once again, a more effective world organization with greater resources is urgently required to do a proper job in this area.

Justice

Year after year, stories of killings, rapes, torture, arbitrary imprisonment and other gross violations of individual rights and liberties fill the world news. Bosnia and Rwanda are merely the latest in an endless catalogue of atrocities.

The United Nations does its best to prevent these crimes against humanity. The Universal Declaration of Human Rights was adopted by the General Assembly in 1948, and a large number of international conventions have been agreed since then, as we shall see later. UN resolutions have repeatedly condemned abuses of human rights such as the apartheid régime in South Africa; but a country can always disregard a UN resolution with impunity, if it does not mind the moral opprobrium of its neighbours. South Africa and Israel did so for years. To act as an effective guardian of people's rights, a world judicial system is required, with the jurisdiction and authority to uphold at least an agreed minimum set of basic human rights and dignities.

At a more mundane level, there is a need for an international police force to control the rising tide of international crime. Drug-smuggling, terrorism, and international fraud are common problems, and even the ancient trade of piracy still occurs here and there. Organized international crime syndicates such as the Mafia and the Triads seem to be on the increase. A joint police force more effective than Interpol is required to combat these threats.

Science and Technology

Scientific research has already become a global enterprise, and a very expensive one at that. In many fields it is becoming impossible for any single nation, except perhaps the USA, to afford the facilities needed to remain at the cutting edge of international research.

This prohibitive increase in cost first occurred in the field of particle physics. The world's premier accelerator laboratory at the moment is the European Centre for Nuclear Research, CERN, located near Geneva. Its main accelerator cost some \$1.4 billion, and occupies a tunnel 27 kilometres in length hollowed out beneath the Jura mountains. The US at one stage set out to surpass CERN and build the next generation accelerator, dubbed the 'Superconducting Super Collider' (SSC) in a tunnel 50 kilometres in diameter near the town of Waxahachie in Texas. After spending \$1.5 billion and almost completing the tunnel

excavations, Congress discovered that the estimated total cost had risen to \$12 billion, and decided to cancel the whole project. Many man-years of effort were thus wasted, and the whole field was dealt a blow from which it has still not recovered. Any future accelerators, costing such enormous sums of money, can only be built as co-operative ventures between many different nations.

A similar situation is becoming evident in other areas of science. Small national facilities become obsolete and are closed down, in favour of a few larger and more expensive facilities made available for international use. In astronomy, the Europeans are co-operating again to build the European Southern Observatory on a mountain-top in Chile. In space science, the US and Russia are collaborating to save money, and the planned International Space Station will be a joint venture of many nations. Even in biology, the human genome project will involve extensive international collaboration.

It is time that a single international research council and funding agency was set up to decide which major building projects should be funded, and where they should be built. Then the money available could be spent more wisely, and the facilities could be spread more equitably among the contributing nations. The European 'Framework' programme for scientific research, which currently disposes of about \$4 billion per year, provides an example of what might be done.

Science involves universal truths, which transcend national boundaries. Good scientists are drawn from every race and creed, and they already form a very cohesive international community. At huge establishments like CERN, research workers from probably fifty different countries are present at any one time, all working together on their experiments. They already belong to a 'global village' of their own.

Conclusions

Most of our discussions have concentrated on the global difficulties and problems which need to be tackled by a 'village council'; but there are also many great opportunities for progress and advancement on offer. The potential benefits of world federation are huge. It may well take decades or even centuries for the full advantages to flow through, but in the long run we can look for the complete abolition of nuclear weapons, and even an end to the whole institution of large-scale organized warfare. The scarce resources and scientific expertise which are presently devoted to armaments can be redirected to more worthwhile ends. The global environment can be cleaned and repaired, and the human population stabilized at a sensible level, so that we can all live in pleasant and comfortable surroundings. The worst evils of absolute poverty and starvation in the Third World can be eliminated, and minimum levels of health, education and human rights can be established throughout the globe, giving room for millions of human beings to reach their full potential. These are not utopian pipe-dreams: the phenomenal advances of the nations of South-East Asia in recent decades have shown what can be done. International trade, travel, and business enterprises of all sorts would flourish as never before. Then we can look forward to a new era of peace and plenty, and to a new stage in the advance of human civilization.

The same bright picture of the future was painted by H.G. Wells more than seventy years ago in his great work *The Outline of History*:¹¹

"There can be little question that the attainment of a federation of all humanity, together with a sufficient measure of social justice, to ensure health, education, and a rough measure of equality of opportunity to most of the children born into the world, would mean such a release and increase of human energy as to open a new phase in human history."