

THE POST-HEGEMONIC WORLD ORDER: THE CASE FOR PERPETUAL PEACE

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Abstract: Tensions and rivalries are proliferating in the contemporary world as an unprecedented rate. There are many signs that human civilization faces a real possibility of a new global conflict. Some observers even claim that the Third World War has already begun. There are few other times in human history when the need to bring order and peace to the troubled world has been more urgent than it is today. The creation of the new world order is the main subject of this article.

The article examines four major perspectives on world order: Western, Chinese, Russia, and Islamic. The analysis shows that none of these perspectives offer a possibility to create an enduring global order. The creation of such order requires a solution of the problem of difference. This problem is a result of the clashes of differences that appear to be intrinsic to reality. The study shows that clashes among differences are not inevitable, and that the problem of differences is resolvable. The article outlines the approach that makes possible to solve the problem of difference and attain perpetual peace.

Key words: World order, perpetual peace, the problem of difference, exclusion, the process of creation, reason, American hegemony, NATO, and the war in Ukraine,

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Introduction

Over the last several decades the world has experienced unprecedented changes. The collapse of communism and the disintegration of the Soviet Union have ended the bi-polar world order that existed since WWII. The global economic growth has dramatically changed the global economic landscape. The centers of world production have shifted from the Atlantic basin to the global East and South. The countries that have increased their economic potential in recent decades now seek to use this potential to boost their status in international politics. The example of China is the most dramatic illustration of these transformations. Capitalizing on its economic success, China is now using its wealth to strengthen its military power and enhance its political role in world affairs.

The current world order is increasingly incapable of accommodating these developments. This failure is the source of enormous strain that is disrupting the world today. The world is in flux. It experiences growing tensions that generate conflicts and wars. The widening chaos results in much destruction and loss of human life. Every day brings news about the on-going hostilities around the world. The scenes from the Middle East, Ukraine, and other regions are painful reminders that the world is tottering on the brink of disaster. The need to bring order to the world is getting increasingly urgent.

There is a growing realization that the current world order has outlived itself and needs to be changed. Even the countries that have overseen the maintaining of the world order in recent

decades have become vocal proponents of changing it. President Biden and other high-level officials of the American government have made repeated statements to the effect that the order that existed since WWII “has lost its steam” and that the world needs a reset.¹ The current international situation creates a powerful momentum for peace. Calls for establishing a new world order are on the rise.

This is not the first time that human civilization faces situations that bring chaos and instability to our troubled world and pose a threat to human survival. Similar situations have occurred many times in the past. Every time that such perturbations took place, they created a powerful momentum for bringing peace and stability, not just for a moment, but for an indefinite future. Every major world calamity revived the hope of eliminating violence, destruction, and wars; every time it reinvigorated the desire to attain a perpetual peace that would ensure the survival of human civilization.

The idea of perpetual peace inspired philosopher Immanuel Kant to write the book *Perpetual Peace: A Philosophical Sketch* that discussed the possibility of such peace.² The book appeared at the end of the 18th century when the turmoil that followed the French Revolution still raged in Europe. Inspired, and undoubtedly frightened, by the tumultuous events on the continent, Kant offered his vision and reflections on conditions that could make peace permanent. It was perhaps the first and the most enduring liberal statement on a possibility of perpetual peace.

The book has had a considerable impact over the years. It has been widely read and become one of a classic. It has influenced political leaders, policy makers, and intellectuals. Yet despite its success, it has failed to serve as a practical guide for humanity. All efforts to achieve perpetual peace have resulted in disappointments and frustrations. Time and again, perpetual peace has proven to be elusive. These failures, however, have not extinguished the hope for permanent peace. On the contrary, it has persisted over the years and has become even stronger. Dreams of peace continue to provide inspire and motivate humanity in its search for an order that will end wars and violence.

The goal of this study is to explore the possibility of realizing the hope for perpetual peace. The traumatic experience of the past several decades has revived the search for order. The conditions of the contemporary world are certainly very different from what they were in the past. The current proposals for solving the problem of peace and stability reflect the new realities and experiences acquired in the years since the last major world cataclysm.

¹ Zachary B. Wolf, “Analysis: Biden Acknowledges the Old World Order Needs a Refresh | CNN Politics,” *CNN*, September 19, 2023. <https://www.cnn.com/2023/09/19/politics/un-speech-biden-what-matters/index.html>; РБК. “Байден заявил, что человечеству нужен новый мировой порядок,” October 21, 2023, <https://www.rbc.ru/politics/21/10/2023/6533f5439a7947315d46cad4>; “Kremlin Says U.S. Can’t Build ‘new World Order’ That Biden Spoke Of,” *Reuters*, October 23, 2023, <https://www.reuters.com/world/kremlin-says-us-cant-build-new-world-order-that-biden-spoke-2023-10-23/>.

² Immanuel Kant, *Perpetual peace, and other essays on politics, history, and morals*, (Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing Company, 1983).

There are currently several major perspectives on world order. One of these perspectives comes from the United States and the West more generally. China and Russia that have been very critical of the Western approach to world order have put forward their own proposals. Finally, this study will also consider the Islamic perspective. In contrast to other three proposals, this perspective does not come from a specific country. It emerges from various contributions by Islamic thinkers, scholars, and politicians.

These perspectives are very different from each other. They offer their unique insights and original ideas. Each relies on unique historical experiences and cultural heritage that have shaped these perspectives. In this sense, each perspective is valuable as it reflects some important aspect of the complex reality of our world, and each deserves careful consideration.

The essay will provide a brief overview of these perspectives, focusing on their most significant features. There is one issue that this study will focus on in discussing these perspectives. This issue is directly related to the problem of world order. At its heart, the problem of world order is essentially the problem of difference. Human civilization has a persistent tendency to view differences as a threat. As a result, differences are often shunned and suppressed. The exclusion of differences is the source of tensions, conflicts, and wars. The conclusion that follows is that ending cycles of violence and creating enduring world order requires the elimination of exclusion and the solution of the problem of difference. In pursuing this line of argument, the study will outline the solution of the problem of difference. It will argue that such solution will require the elimination of exclusion. Understanding the source of exclusion will help in solving the problem of difference.

Finally, this study will also present its own perspective on the world order. The goal of this perspective is to end cycles of violence and wars. It will outline the path toward achieving this goal and the establishment of an enduring world order that will ensure the survival of human civilization. This essay will argue that the establishment of the new world order will require the creation of a new practice and its application in international relations. It will outline the main features of this practice, as well as the main conditions that will sustain it and the new world order. The concluding section will summarize the main points and arguments presented in this study.

Current Perspectives on World Order

The Liberal Perspective

The liberal world order is a relatively new phenomenon. It originated over three decades ago when the disintegration of the Soviet Union and its Warsaw Pact organization created a new global reality. This dramatic development marked the end of the bipolar international system that had existed since the end of WWII and had divided the world between two superpowers—the United States and the Soviet Union—each surrounded by a network of allies and satellites.

Since the collapse of the Soviet Union at the end of the Cold War, the United States has tried to shape a new world order. According to its vision, the world would no longer be divided. The hegemony of the United States and its allies would ensure unity and enforce order. The United States would be the ultimate arbiter in world affairs; it would enforce values, rules, and norms to maintain order in the world.

The new world order that has emerged in the early 1990s is undoubtedly liberal. It is based on liberal values, norms, and rules. It has its roots in liberalism and relies on liberal theory and practice. The liberal international order has a pre-history that reaches into the experiences of building international systems in the past. It continues the “400-year preponderance of Western ‘rules.’”³ As Julian Lindley-Frenc cogently observes in his article “China, the West, and the Future Global Order”:

Perhaps the greatest influence initially, and paradoxically, was the British Empire for two reasons: it was the most powerful of the European empires, and it spawned the United States of America. For all its many imperfections, the imperial international order was grounded in an early idea of law and can trace its roots back to Magna Carta and the slow emergence of liberal parliamentary democracy with the American Revolution of 1776–1783, which was in many ways a continuation of the English Civil War of 1642–1649.⁴

The British Empire was the first attempt to create a liberal world order. The creation of the transatlantic community—the very idea of the “West”—originated on board of the USS *Augusta* in 1941 when Great Britain and the United States made a commitment to fight jointly in WWII. The history behind the current quest for Western hegemony is certainly very deep.

The experience in building liberal international order also includes the creation of global institutions in the aftermath of the Second World War. This institutional development gave rise to international political and economic organizations that played an important role during the post-war period. These organizations that include the United Nations and its agencies, the World Bank, the World Trade Organization, GATT, WHO, and many others have helped to anchor the post-war global order and remain the pillars that support the drive for hegemony today. For American and Western leaders, these institutions remain essential. Although President Biden has acknowledged the need to re-orient the current world order, he still considers these institutions and agencies, as he has stressed multiple times in his public statements, “an enduring bedrock of our progress.”⁵ Finally, the military-political alliances created by the West in the post-war years have acquired particular importance in the current quest for hegemony. NATO has not only retained its role but is to significantly expand it on a global scale.

The current liberal perspective on the global order has emerged under the conditions of new political and economic realities: the rise of China, the emergence of the global South as an important factor in global affairs, the war in Ukraine, the growing influence of the Islamic world, and others. These new developments require new approaches and modifications of old practices.

³ Julian Lindley-Frenc and Franco Algeri, “China, the West, and the Future Global Order,” *Prism*, vol. 10, no. 1, National Defense University Press (September 30, 2022), p. 75.

⁴ Lindley-Frenc, “China, the West, and the Future Global Order,” p. 76.

⁵ Wolf, “Analysis: Biden Acknowledges the Old World Order Needs a Refresh.”

As President Biden has colorfully expressed it, the world order that has been in place over the last 50 years has “sort of run out of steam” and a new one was needed.⁶

As an important sign of change, the meaning of the term “West” that used to be a collective designation for the members of the transatlantic community forged by the United States is now under revision. In Western discourse it is rapidly losing its relevance as a geographic attribution. The “West” has morphed into what Western theorists now call the international “community of democratic states” that includes not only traditional countries of the West but also Japan, Republic of China, South Korea, Australia, and states in Indo-Pacific region.

The new liberal international order is not primarily about politics and economics. The interests and policies of the international community led by the United States has spread to global security, rule of law, human rights, protection of the environment and climate change, as well as values and norms related to gender equality, racial justice, the rights of sexual and transgender minorities, and others. The “community of democratic states” is to pursue policies that would realize these commitments around the world through the exercise of soft or hard power.

The most important item on the agenda of the international community led by the United States and its European allies is maintaining law and order globally and prevent what they broadly define as “extreme state behavior” in violation of international rules and norms. For example, the “community of democratic states” portrays Russia’s security operations in Ukraine as precisely such example of extreme behavior. In response to Russia’s policies, members of the Western alliance are mobilizing their vast resources in support of Ukraine. Their commitment to the war in Ukraine sends a powerful message to all real or even potential detractors: those who violate rules and norms that the “democratic community” chooses to defend will pay the price. Maintaining global health and preventing massive epidemics, such as COVID-19, is another important item on the Western agenda. Other areas that are used by the liberal world order to promote its global leadership and control include environmental degradation and climate change, the protection of the habitat of humanity, and the new industrial revolution that will shift global economy in the direction of renewable and rechargeable sources of energy.

The United States is the indisputable leader in the transition to the new liberal world order.⁷ President Biden has called on Americans to view the current conditions in the world as “an opportunity to do things, if we’re bold enough and have enough confidence in ourselves, to unite the world in ways that it never has been.”⁸ As Biden has emphasized on numerous

⁶ “Kremlin Says U.S. Can’t Build ‘new World Order’ That Biden Spoke Of.” *Reuters*, October 23, 2023, sec. World, <https://www.reuters.com/world/kremlin-says-us-cant-build-new-world-order-that-biden-spoke-2023-10-23/>.

⁷ Oona A. Hathaway, “For the Rest of the World, the U.S. President Has Always Been Above the Law,” *Foreign Affairs*, July 16, 2024. <https://www.foreignaffairs.com/united-states/rest-world-us-president-has-always-been-above-law>.

⁸ “Kremlin Says U.S. Can’t Build ‘new World Order’ That Biden Spoke Of,” *Reuters*, October 23, 2023, sec. World. <https://www.reuters.com/world/kremlin-says-us-cant-build-new-world-order-that-biden-spoke-2023-10-23/>.

occasions, American leadership, Biden has emphasized on several occasions, will remain very important. In Biden's words, it is "what holds the world together." American alliances "are what keep us, America, safe. American values are what make us a partner that other nations want to work with."⁹

Biden's statements leave no doubt that the liberal world order will be hegemonic. The United States will play the crucial role in formulating and implementing policies of the "alliance of democracies" that will sustain the new order. Speaking about the current conditions in the world at the Business Roundtables quarterly meeting on March 21, 2023, Biden unequivocally emphasized the role of the United States in creating the new liberal world order. "Now is a time," Biden pointed out, "when things are shifting . . . There's going to be a new world order out there, and we've got to lead it. And we've got to unite the rest of the free world in doing it."¹⁰

Jens Stoltenberg, secretary general of the NATO alliance, expresses very similar views. In his article "What NATO Means to the World" published by *Foreign Affairs* on the eve of the recent NATO summit in Washington Stoltenberg outlined NATO's vision. The most important part of this vision is that NATO's security concerns will no longer be confined to the defense of the transatlantic community or Europe. A renewed and stronger NATO will be vastly expanding its role well beyond Europe. Support for Ukraine is a part of this plan. Speaking for the entire alliance, Stoltenberg writes: "We will work hand in hand with our partners in the Indo-Pacific on shared security concerns." These are not just words. NATO is taking concrete and long-term steps as part of its preparation for responding to new global challenges. The alliance will continue to urge its members to increase their military budgets even above the required 2% of GDP. This year European allies and Canada have increased their military spending by 18%--the highest increase since the end of the Cold War.

The West no longer even tries to disguise its hegemonic claims. On the contrary, Western leaders are increasingly open about them. In his article, for example, Stoltenberg uses strong words that look like vaguely disguised threats directed at China, its leadership, and particularly President Xi. The alliance, he writes, is fully prepared for "enduring competition with China," and not just in the Pacific or over Taiwan. Disregarding the fact that China tries to maintain its neutral status on the war in Ukraine, Stoltenberg accuses President Xi personally as being double-faced in this war. While the Chinese leader, Stoltenberg alleges, hypocritically tries to convince the world "that he is pushing for peace" in Ukraine, in reality "he is fueling the conflict" by secretly supporting Russia and providing it with high-end technologies, including semiconductors and microelectronics that the Kremlin uses in producing missiles, tanks, and

⁹ "Biden says US 'holds world together' as he condemns Putin and Hamas," *Al Jazeera*, October 20, 2023, <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2023/10/20/biden-says-us-holds-world-together-as-he-condemns-putin-and-hamas>.

¹⁰ McKenzie Sadeghi, "Fact check: Biden's 'new world order' reference tied to Ukraine, not conspiracy theory," *USA Today*, April 1, 2022, <https://www.usatoday.com/story/news/factcheck/2022/03/25/fact-check-biden-did-not-admit-new-world-order-conspiracy/7156937001/>.

aircraft. Stoltenberg warns President Xi that he cannot have it both ways and at some point, China's support for Russia "will incur an inevitable cost."¹¹

The strident attitude that is often expressed in statements by leaders of the West leave little doubt that their goal in the future world order is nothing short of hegemony backed up by preeminent political and military superiority. They express their firm belief in the supremacy of their values. In their view, only Western rules and norms can bring the world peace and security. Their resolution to promote and protect these rules and norms is firm; and they are willing to they express their commitment to using their vast resources to this end.

The Chinese Perspective

Just a few decades China's role in international politics was relatively modest. Today, China's role in world politics rivals that of the United States. The spectacular economic growth that China has experienced in recent time has turned China into the largest global producers of goods. This economic progress has fueled the growth of China's military power and enhanced its political role and diplomatic prestige throughout the world. Due to the growing global importance of China, the country's perspective on new world order attracts much attention.

Widespread discussions of the future world order and China's role in it are taking place in China. They involve government leaders and officials, intellectuals, academics, and even ordinary Chinese citizens. The Chinese ruling hierarchy encourages and sets the tone for these discussions. President Xi Jinping has personally taken an active part in discussing and promoting the new vision for China's role in the world. Such high-profile involvement underscores the importance of the subject. Speaking at a domestic national security seminar in early 2017, President Xi articulated in no uncertain terms that his country's aspirations to take on a leadership role in creating the new global order that he describes as the "post-Western era."¹²

China has also undertaken important practical initiatives to bolster its leadership role. In his presentation at the High-Level Meeting of the CPC in Dialogue with World Political Parties in March of 2023, President Xi introduced the Global Civilization Initiative (GCI) that outlined China's broad vision for the world. The vision stressed China's commitment to promote "common, comprehensive, cooperative and sustainable security." The proposed approach is to be comprehensive and take into consideration legitimate security concerns of all nations. It assigns high priority to pursuit of peaceful resolutions in disputes and conflicts over differences among nations through dialogue and consultations, rather than by force.¹³ China has also

¹¹ Jens Stoltenberg, "What NATO Means to the World," *Foreign Affairs*, July 3, 2024. <https://www.foreignaffairs.com/europe/what-nato-means-world>.

¹² Alison Kaufman, "China's Discourse of 'Civilization': Visions of Past, Present, and Future." *The Asan Forum* (blog), February 19, 2018. <https://theasanforum.org/chinas-discourse-of-civilization-visions-of-past-present-and-future/>.

¹³ "Initiatives Proposed by China, Fruitful Outcomes Shared by World," the site of the Embassy of the People's Republic of China in Samoa, May 22, 2023, http://ws.china-embassy.gov.cn/eng/xwdt/202305/t20230522_11081047.htm.

introduced several other initiatives as part of its efforts on behalf of the new world order. In 2021 during the General Debate of the UN 76th session, the Chinese government announced its Global Development Initiative (GDI). The introduction of the Global Security Initiative (GSI) followed in 2022.

These initiatives indicate that China's policies go well beyond mere ordering international relations. The inclusion of the word "civilization" in the formulation of GCI signals a much broader range of the plans that the government of China has presented to the world.¹⁴ They reflect the belief that the new world order will require more than just reshuffling power relations and current economic arrangements. Chinese leadership emphasizes the need for fundamental conceptual changes that are to affect all nations. Its ultimate objective is to create a global civilization that is deemed to be essential for ending the chaos and instability that currently plague the global community. In its view, only a global civilization will be able to sustain an enduring world order.

Perhaps the most important feature of the Chinese approach is its total rejection of what many Chinese see as America's drive to establish its global hegemony. To counter American hegemonic drive, the Chinese propose a new conceptual approach that emphasizes polycentrism, multipolarity, and regionalism. The practical implications of this approach are not entirely clear. One thing is certain: the Chinese side sees the norms, rules, and values that the United States promotes as universal principles as disruptive and counterproductive. In Chinese view, the norms of international behavior advocated by the United States are not universal. They are products of Western civilization and culture. They reflect Western experience and interests. China sees Western tradition as exclusionary, Eurocentric, and colonialist. As proponents of the Chinese perspective emphasize, this tradition has always sought to subdue and exploit other nation. From the Chinese perspective, the insistence by the United States and the West on the alleged universality of the rules and norms they advocate has no justification. The actual practice of implementing these rules and norms represents undue interference into internal affairs of other countries; as such, they are a major source of conflicts and instability, rather than peace and order, in the contemporary world.

According to the Chinese perspective, the new world order must emphasize the importance of traditions and historical experiences of all countries. The government of China constantly points to the fact that China is the oldest civilization in today's world. It has accumulated much experience during the 5000 years of its uninterrupted existence. China's tradition represents a valuable resource for China and the world.

In recent years, China has also begun to promote its own vision as an alternative to Western worldview and the legacy of the Enlightenment. In the center of this vision is the concept of Tianxia. Zhao Tingyang, a prominent member of the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences, has done a great deal to popularize this concept. In his book *The Tianxia system: A Philosophy for the World Institution*, published originally in 2005, he argues that the problem in

¹⁴ "Initiatives Proposed by China, Fruitful Outcomes Shared by World." the Embassy of the People's Republic of China in Chinese Embassy in the Independent State of Samoa, May 22, 2023, http://ws.china-embassy.gov.cn/eng/xwdt/202305/t20230522_11081047.htm; Ryan Ho Kilpatrick. "China's 'Xivilizing' Mission," *China Media Project* (blog), May 4, 2023. <https://chinamediaproject.org/2023/05/04/chinas-xivilizing-mission/>; Kaufman, "China's Discourse of 'Civilization': Visions of Past, Present, and Future."

contemporary world politics is not “failed states” but a “failed world.”¹⁵ The book criticizes the tendency that is popular in the West to see the chaos and instability that reign in international relations today primarily in terms of politics or economics. The West considers that the solution of the current problems lies in economic and political changes. By contrast, Zhao maintains that world chaos is primarily a result of a conceptual problem. “[To] order the world,” he writes, “we need to first create new world concepts which will lead to new world structures.”¹⁶ Zhao argues that the Chinese cultural heritage offers a solution to this conceptual problem. He specifically focuses on Tianxia—a concept that shaped China’s self-understanding and imperial governance for over two millennia. Tianxia has recently reemerged in public discussions both in and outside China. Symptomatically, Wang Gungwu, the premier historian of overseas Chinese, chose the title “Tianxia and Empire” for his inaugural Tsai Lecture at Harvard.¹⁷

The literal meaning of Tianxia is “all under Heaven.” The term is polysemantic. It is about physical space and geography; but it also relates to the metaphysical realm of culture and values. Its meaning may be interpreted as “people,” but also as “institutions.”¹⁸ As Zhao argues, Tianxia is not just about the material realm. It is primarily a way of looking at the world and its problems from a universal perspective, thinking through the world in an all-inclusive way, rather than viewing it from some national or cultural subjective perspective.¹⁹ Looking at the world “from everywhere,” Zhao argues, is the way to have a “complete and perfect” understanding of problems. In his view, this approach leads to solutions that will be universally inclusive and acceptable; they will promote peace and harmony in the world. For Zhao, Tianxia reflects what he sees as “magnanimity” of China’s thought that reconciles the difference between one’s own self and “the Other.”²⁰

The above discussion provides only a general outline of the Chinese perspective, which is quite extensive. The details and complexities of the Chinese perspective are certainly beyond the scope of the current work. The important point is that China insists on the importance of its own tradition for creating the post-hegemonic world order. Officials of the Chinese government fully support this view. They constantly emphasize the importance of the heritage of Chinese civilization as an important source of solutions for contemporary problems. President Xi is very vocal in promoting the value of the Chinese tradition and culture. As Alison Kaufman observes,

¹⁵ Tingyang Zhao, *All under Heaven: The Tianxia System for a Possible World Order*. Translated by Joseph E. Harroff, 2021; Zhao, Tingyang. (2005) *The Tianxia system: A Philosophy for the World* Institution (Nanjing: J iangsu Jiaoyu Chubanshe, 2005).

¹⁶ William A. Callahan, “Chinese Visions of World Order: Post-Hegemonic or a New Hegemony?” *International Studies Review*, vol. 10, no. 4 (December 2008), pp. 749–61, p. 751, <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1468-2486.2008.00830.x>.

¹⁷ Callahan, “Chinese Visions,” p. 750.

¹⁸ Callahan, “Chinese Visions,” p. 751

¹⁹ Callahan, “Chinese Visions,” pp. 750-51.

²⁰ Callahan, “Chinese Visions,” pp, 751-52.

Xi “has essentially raised ‘traditional’ culture to the same or nearly the same status as socialist civilization when he said that ‘to cultivate and disseminate the core socialist values we must take traditional Chinese culture as the base.’”²¹ Other prominent government officials reiterate the same theme. Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi is also on record stating that the rich cultural heritage makes China about the only nation that is up to the task of taming the chaos that currently reigns in world politics. In a speech he made in 2017, he stated:

Since its founding, our party [the CCP] has closely combined both the wellbeing of the Chinese people and the wellbeing of the people of the world, and has been aware of the importance of the spirit of internationalism. This is the important distinction between our party and the political parties of other nations . . . It originates from the profound heritage of [Chinese] traditional culture. The Chinese nation has a long history of more than 5,000 years. It has created a brilliant Chinese civilization, formed a peaceful ideal of universal love, anti-aggression, benevolence, and goodneighborliness, a harmonious concept of valuing peace and harmony in diversity, and a keen sense that the greatest ideal is to create a world truly shared by all. These unique cultural values nourish the roots of China’s diplomacy concept and cultivate the Chinese wisdom for dealing with contemporary international relationships²²

The Russian Perspective

The collapse of communism and the disintegration of the Soviet Union removed the most important competitor (and often a partner) of the West in maintaining the world order established after the end of WWII. The sudden disappearance of the long-time rival created an impression that the solution of the problem of enduring and stable world order and a perpetual peace was finally within reach. Many commentators, particularly in the West, proclaimed the dawn of a new era when wars and international calamities would become obsolete. In his popular book *The End of History and the Last Man* Francis Fukuyama proclaimed that the triumph of liberalism would resolve all contradictions in the world; history would finally come to an end.²³

Following the breakup of the Soviet empire, Russia appeared to be sailing along with the prevailing winds. Many policymakers, observers, and commentators, both inside and outside Russia, had an expectation that after the demise of communism Russia would simply join the West and become part of the liberal world order under the hegemony of the United States. There were even persistent widely circulated rumors and speculations that Russia would partner with the West and become a member of NATO.

Yet all these speculations and expectations have finally come to a naught. At the beginning of the new millennium Russia staged a sudden and dramatic reversal of its pervious

²¹ Kaufman, “China’s Discourse of ‘Civilization’: Visions of Past, Present, and Future.”

²² Kaufman, “China’s Discourse of ‘Civilization’: Visions of Past, Present, and Future.”

²³ Francis Fukuyama, *The End of History and the Last Man* (New York: Free Press, 1992).

course. The relations between Russia and the West began to deteriorate. The gaps that opened between the two sides grew to the point where the onset of a new Cold War became a distinct possibility. Russian leaders grew increasingly suspicious of Western intentions and plans vis-à-vis their country. The Russian government that initially accepted NATO's expansion to the east came to view any further expansion east as a potential threat. Russia warned the West against extending NATO beyond the point it reached by the new millennium. As Russia drifted away from the West, it has begun to turn increasingly away from the Western liberal tradition and more toward the country's own traditional and cultural values.

Western explanations of this turn focus primarily on the Russian political elites and the Orthodox Church. They argue that the needs to consolidate and strengthen their hold on the country has prompted the Russian government and policy makers to close ranks and ally themselves with the Russian Orthodox Church (ROC). For its own part, the ROC has joined the alliance to protect its dominant position in Russian society against challenges presented by other religious denominations that have been spreading their influence in post-Soviet Russia. John Witte, for example, describes the strategy of the ROC as a "theological war." Witte sees this war as the principal factor that has led to the emphasis on Russia's heritage and the revival of its cultural and spiritual tradition. Witte is not the only one who subscribes to this theory of conspiracy of the elites and the church. Other Western politicians and academics also attribute Russia's drift away from the West to the rise of President Putin whose ascension to power has been, in their view, orchestrated by the Federal Security Service (FSB), the Russian Orthodox Church, and the new political class.

While there is undoubtedly some truth to these arguments, they do not tell the whole story. Such explanations for Russia's turn against the West appear to be more convenient than convincing. The trend toward traditionalism had emerged before Putin succeeded President Yeltsin who, many believe, was strongly pro-Western. For example, the emphasis on "traditional religion" as part of the public discourse appeared in 1997, when Yeltsin was still Russia's president. It emerged as the interpretation of the preamble to Russia's "Law on Freedom of Conscience and Religious Associations."²⁴

The general context of Russian experience during the period from the collapse of the Soviet Union and the rise of Putin, helps to gain a more comprehensive understanding of reason for the reversal of Russia's initial course toward the West. The fall of communism was a very traumatic event. It created a profound spiritual crisis in Russia. Many Russians felt disoriented. The ground seemed to be disappearing from under their feet as if "the time was out of joint." Many values and norms by which they lived in the Soviet Union seemed no longer applicable in the new reality. The new ones coming from the West appeared to be totally alien.

This existential crisis was the main prism through which Russian people viewed the political and social turmoil that was raging in their country: the war in Chechnya, centrifugal pressures coming from Russia's peripheral regions, secessionism, economic collapse, and much, much else. For many Russians, the decline of Russia's position in the world and in their region was part of the general malaise that threatened their very existence as a nation. They felt that the

²⁴ Elena A. Stepanova, "'Everything Good against Everything Bad': Traditional Values in the Search for New Russian National Idea," *Zeitschrift Für Religion, Gesellschaft Und Politik*, vol. 7, no. 1 (June 17, 2022), pp. 97–118, p. 99, <https://doi.org/10.1007/s41682-022-00123-2>.

country that had won a remarkable victory over Germany only half a century prior to the collapse of communism appeared to be rapidly approaching its total extinction. For many Russians, this experience resulted in a profound existential need to regain their dignity and confidence in their future. From the depths of their existential despair, they reached for salvation to their past: their heritage, culture, tradition, and spirituality.

No doubt that the government and the church have taken advantage of this spontaneous popular response to the moral crisis. However, the fact that they did does not deny the authenticity of the crisis and the response by the Russian people to the dire circumstances of life that they experienced. Neither should one view the role of the government and the ROC as mere manipulators of the public opinion. Many policy makers, government officials, and church dignitaries experiences similar feelings. Their response to the crisis they witnessed was little different than that by ordinary Russians. Many of them also took pride in their country and felt profound grief at the sight of its decline. There are many indications that the revival of Russian traditionalism has been a result of the consensus that emerged in the country and that involved the government, the elites, the ROC, and the Russian people. They all believed that only Russian cultural and spiritual tradition could serve as the foundation of the continued existence of Russian statehood (*gosudarstvennost'*). Much of the Russian public felt that only a return to Russia's heritage can give Russians back their dignity, pride, and self-respect.

One of the areas particularly affected by the reversal of Russia's course is the country's changing vision of its place and role in the contemporary world. This vision has led to the formulation of the Russian perspective on new world order. The war in Ukraine has also had a profound impact in this respect. There is much in this perspective that is still vague, but one aspect of it is very clear. Like China's perspective, the Russian perspective on world order rejects the idea that this order must be defined by Western values and norms. Russia sees American hegemony as a threat to Russia's existence as a sovereign nation and to peace and stability in the world in general. Russia's insistence on multipolarity, polycentrism, and regionalism as very important principles in the future world order is a clear rejection of the Western vision of the future world order.

The Russian perspective does not offer many details as to what polycentrism and multipolarity may mean in practical terms. Many academics see in these concepts the intention to divide the world into spheres of influence. Whether this interpretation is correct or not is debatable. There is a clear indication, however, that Russia deploys polycentrism and multipolarity as an alternative to Western hegemony. Like China, Russia also claims that its own tradition, experience, values and norms are important and relevant to the creation of the new world order.

The emphasis on the Russian tradition and spirituality reflects the important influence of the ROC. The ROC is certainly not the only platform where discussions of the role of tradition and morality as the basis of the Russian state have been taking place. There have been broad public discussions of these topics in academic circles, public media, social networks, and by ordinary citizens. The ROC has been important in initiating these discussions. The ROC's contributions have been influential in shaping these discussions and defining their tone. From

around 2000 references to tradition in combinations and derivations began to appear regularly in written and oral statements coming from the church, its leaders and dignitaries.²⁵

In his statement to the presidium of the Russian Academy of Education in 2009, Patriarch Kirill, for example, emphasized the importance of morality. He referred to morality as an “inner bond,” “a column,” a fundamental principle, and the sole power that could ensure “the systemic and holistic perception of being.”²⁶ He argued that primary role of the church was to protect and maintain the moral fabric of Russian society by formulating the universal system of moral norms. According to Kirill, this system should also represent a global moral consensus that would express the essence of the moral nature of all human beings. This consensus was to be built through dialogue between various churches and religious organizations that focus on moral and spiritual development of humanity.

A significant aspect of the discourse on moral values promoted by the ROC is the opposition to the role of the West in the world. The discourse represents the West as a constant global threat to genuine morality. The relevance of this anti-Western attitude to the problem of world order is obvious. Building on world trends of religious and spiritual revival, the ROC sees itself and Russia as a leading force in the moral and religious renaissance that is taking place in the world. According to Metropolitan Hilarion, the ROC’s efforts in upholding universal morality puts it in a position to offer its own experience as “an inspiring example of spiritual and moral revival also for Western countries.”²⁷ In pursuing this course, the ROC has established connections with international conservative religious organizations and churches, including Roman Catholic Church, that oppose policies of liberal globalists in promoting their views on gender culture, same-sex marriage, the LGBTQ rights, gestational surrogacy, in-vitro fertilization, abortion, and others. The Russian government approves and supports the ROC’s efforts in forging these alliances.²⁸

In promoting the discourse on Russia’s heritage, the ROC sees its contribution primarily in elaborating and supplying theological, ethical, and philosophical arguments for rebuilding moral consciousness, both in Russia and in the world. The ROC also works hard to broaden the

²⁵ Stepanova, p. 100; Alexander Agadjanian, Alexander. 2017. Tradition, morality and community: elaborating orthodox identity in Putin’s Russia. *Religion, State & Society*, vol. 45, no. 1 (2017), pp. 39–60. <https://doi.org/10.1080/09637494.2016.1272893>.

²⁶ Kirill, Slovo Sviateishego Patriarkha Kirilla na zasedanii prezidiuma Rossiiskoi akademii obrazovaniia [Statement of His Holiness Patriarch Kirill at the meeting of Presidium of Russian Academy of Education], *Russkaia Pravoslavnaia Tserkov’*. Ofitsial’nyi sait Moskovskogo Patriarkhata, 2009, <http://www.patriarchia.ru/db/text/934483.html>.

²⁷ Hilarion, Mitropolit Volokolamsky, “Rozhdestvo – eto prazdnik ne tol’ko radosti, no i nadezdy [Metropolitan of Volokolamsk Hilarion. Christmas as the festival not only of joy, but also of hope], *Russkaia Pravoslavnaia Tserkov’* Ofitsial’nyi sait Moskovskogo Patriarkhata. 2013, <http://www.patriarchia.ru/db/text/3484436.html>.

²⁸ Stepanova, “Everything Good against Everything Bad,” p. 103. Agadjanian, “Tradition, morality and community: elaborating orthodox identity in Putin’s Russia.”

discussion of the moral agenda in the public domain. In words of Patriarch Kirill, “the concern for spiritual needs, based moreover on traditional morality, ought to return to the public realm.” “The upholding of moral standards,” he continues, “must become a social cause.”²⁹ In the view of the church, the government and the political class have an important role in defending Russian tradition and moral values. As church dignitaries have argued, the withdrawal of the government of Russia from upholding moral principles has created a fertile ground for numerous attacks on Russia’s spiritual foundation, moral and religious feelings of its citizens, and, indeed, on Russian statehood.

The ROC strongly opposes the promotion of multiplicity of moral codes and moral relativism. It argues that a universal moral code should be based on absolute moral norms. These norms cannot and should not be a result of compromises between different ethical concepts but a jointly formulated universal morality code with its roots in the moral nature of humanity. As Patriarch Kirill has noted in one of his speeches,

With all the differences in cultures and traditions, we all have a common moral feeling, which God has put into us, each of us has a voice of conscience, which we Christians call the voice of God. The doctrines of various religions could differ significantly, but as soon as we move to the level of . . . moral values, most religious traditions demonstrate a coincidence of views (Kirill 2018).³⁰

The Russian government assigns high priority to the promotion of traditional values. It considers the defense of Russia’s heritage to be a matter of national security. It has included a broad agenda for “protecting traditional spiritual and moral foundation of Russian society” in the decree “On Strategy of National Security of Russian Federation” signed into law in 2021. The decree builds on the federal law “On Security” that was adopted in 2014. Both documents relate the moral agenda to the future world order. The decree underscores the important connection between “the problem of moral leadership and the creation of the attractive ideological foundation of the future world order.” In addition, the decree also indicates that the new world order should pursue the “redistribution of the global potential for development, the formation of the new architecture, rules and principles of world order” as a way of combatting “geopolitical instability and the deterioration of contradictions and conflicts among states.” To achieve these goals, the Russian perspective seeks “regional integration of economic systems and the development of multilateral cooperation in the framework of the Big Eurasian Partnership.” The perspective specifically emphasizes the importance that a comprehensive partnership with China

²⁹ Kirill, His Holiness Kirill, Patriarch of Moscow and All Russia, *Freedom and Responsibility: A Search for Harmony—Human Rights and Personal Dignity* (London: Darton, Longman & Todd; Moscow: Publishing House of the Moscow Patriarchate, 2011), p. 91; Stepanova, p. 101.

³⁰ Kirill, “Doklad Sviateishego Patriarkha Kirilla na otkrytii XXVI Mezhdunarodnykh Rozhdestvenskikh obrazovatel’nykh chtenii [The report of His Holiness Patriarch Kirill at the opening of XXVI International Christmas Readings]. Russkaia Pravoslavnaia Tserkov’. Ofitsial’nyi sait Moskovskogo Patriarkhata. 2018, <http://www.patriarchia.ru/db/text/5136032.html>.

and the special strategic partnership with India are to play in creating “reliable mechanisms for ensuring regional stability and security on a non-bloc basis.” The decree also lists the support for regional and subregional integration in Latin America and Africa among the priorities of the Russian agenda for the new world order.

The fact that the Russian government prioritizes the protection of traditional values and norms in the decree on national security strategy of 2021 clearly shows the importance of this issue for the government. In the government’s view, these values and norms reflect the importance of Russia’s historical experience. Just as the country’s material development, they also form “the foundation of Russian society”; they preserve and strengthen Russia’s sovereignty.”³¹ To underscore this point, the decree states that spreading “alien ideals and values” destroys the “foundation of cultural sovereignty” of Russia and “undermines . . . [its] political stability and statehood.” The decree specifically mentions the United States and its allies, transnational corporations, Western NGOs, as well as extremist and terrorist organization, as the sources of attacks against traditional Russian values.³²

The protection of the Russian tradition is the main theme of another and narrower decree, adopted in 2022, that outlines government policies for “protecting and strengthening traditional Russian spiritual and moral values.”³³ The decree defines traditional values as “moral beacons that shape the worldview of Russian citizens passed from generation to generation [and] that constitute the foundation of all-Russian civic identity and the unified cultural space of the country.” Although the decree mentions other religions as integral parts of Russian tradition, it nevertheless stresses the particular and unique role of the Orthodox Church in “establishing and strengthening Russia’s traditional values.” Finally, the decree provides a long list of absolute values that it considers essential to Russian tradition. The list is quite extensive. It includes life, dignity, human rights and freedoms, patriotism, civic consciousness, service to Russia and a sense of responsibility for its destiny, high moral ideals, family, creative work, priority of spiritual needs over material needs, humanism, benevolence, justice, collectivism, mutual help and respect, historical memory and continuity from generation to generation, and the unity among the people of Russia.³⁴ As the list shows, there seems to be no underlying principle in making these selections. The list creates an impression of being quite eclectic, unsystematic, and ad hoc.

³¹ Указ Президента РФ от 02.07.2021 N 400 "О Стратегии национальной безопасности Российской Федерации" | ГАРАНТ.

³² Указ Президента РФ от 02.07.2021 N 400 "О Стратегии национальной безопасности Российской Федерации" | ГАРАНТ

³³ Указ Президента РФ от 09.11.2022 N 809 "Об утверждении Основ государственной политики по сохранению и укреплению традиционных российских духовно-нравственных ценностей" | ГАРАНТ

³⁴ Указ Президента РФ от 09.11.2022 N 809 "Об утверждении Основ государственной политики по сохранению и укреплению традиционных российских духовнонравственных ценностей."

The Islamic Perspective

There are several reasons why the Islamic perspective on world order has not received as much attention as the other three perspectives. Few people outside academic circles even know that it exists. First, in contrast to other perspectives on world order, the Islamic perspective does not come from a specific, clearly identifiable source like the state or a group of states. Rather, it emerges from various academic contributions and statements from Islamic politicians, public figures, religious leaders, and scholars. Also, the publicity related to the Islamic world over the past two decades has largely been negative. Islam has been in the focus of world politics for much of the post-Cold War era. During that time, the “Islamic threat” and “the war on terror” dominated the global security agenda; much of it was centered on Islam. The bombing of the World Trade Center, the proliferation of Islamic militant organizations around the world, including the Islamic State (ISIS), the Islamic Jihad organizations, the Hamas, the Hezbollah, and many others has brought much attention to Islamic militants and captured media headlines. The public around the world has watched in horror brazen acts of violence staged by Islamic terrorists. This negative publicity has largely shaped our perceptions, or rather misperceptions, of Islam and its vision on world order. The broad public, particularly in the West, largely sees the Islamic world as a source of chaos, instability, and a threat to peace and order. Few people have any expectations that anything constructive may come from the Islamic world and, consequently, have no interest in exploring what Islam has to offer.

Another reason for the negative perception, or rather misperception, of the Islamic world is largely due to the way that in the mind of the public, particularly in the West, the so-called “political Islam” has become conflated with Islamic religion and culture. For many people, the two have become practically synonymous. These misperceptions and negative publicity are the main reason why the Islamic perspective has not received the attention that it deserves. This outcome is not an accident. Nor is it merely a result of ignorance on behalf of the public, although the impact of ignorance cannot be completely discounted. Rather, it is a result of a calculated design—a conscious objective pursued by the “political Islam” with great determination. The objective has been and is to set the Muslim world against the alleged arch enemy—the great Devil, as they often refer to the West and the United States. Unfortunately, “political Islamists” have largely succeeded in their plans. Many people have unwittingly fallen for this insidious ploy and have even helped it to succeed. To a significant degree, the Islamic militants and terrorists have been able to distort our views of Islam and its perspective on world order. For all the above reasons, the Islamic perspective has had little public exposure. Yet it offers important insights that may prove to be no less valuable in solving the problem of world order than the other three perspectives. It certainly deserves careful consideration.

The Islamic perspective on world order rests on the religion of Islam. The core of Islamic religion is the recognition of the unity of reality—its oneness. For many Islamic believers, Islam offers a living dimension of the Oneness of Allah.³⁵ According to the Islamic tradition, reality has two dimensions: physical and spiritual. This differentiation, however, does

³⁵ Ratna Roshida Razak, “Spirituality for Human Civilization in the 21st Century: A Conceptual Review,” SSRN Scholarly Papers. Rochester, NY, May 22, 2020. <https://doi.org/10.2139/ssrn.3607655>.

not imply dualism. In the teaching of Islam, the physical and the spiritual dimension are not separate from each other, but rather are integrally related. Reality is one. This oneness follows from the core Islamic belief that there is only one Allah.³⁶ As a practical guide, Islam instructs people to act in accordance with this fundamental belief. The solution to human problems is in the affirmation and practical realization of the principle of oneness. In the view of many Islamic thinkers, only the realization of this principle can put an end to chaos and bring stability, harmony, and peace to humanity.

As has already been mentioned, Islam distinguishes two dimensions of reality. Although both dimensions—physical and spiritual—are important, the spiritual dimension represents a higher order since it connects the physical/material reality to Allah and makes the transcendence of the physical reality possible.³⁷ Roshida Razak offers an explanation popular in the Islamic tradition. Human civilization, she maintains, should not be concerned primarily with “material wealth and living in a luxurious society,” but also with maintaining “human, social and natural resources.” To contribute to the development of civilization, “material resources must strike a spiritual balance and be used for more important purposes, which is to cultivate harmony, elevate and educate the life of society, and promote access to knowledge for all.”³⁸

The Islamic tradition sees the problem of world order essentially in terms of the problem of difference. In the Islamic perspective, clashes of differences are the source of tensions, conflicts, wars and destruction. Disruptions of order in the world largely result from the failure to solve the problem of difference that, according to Islam, is problem of human relations and interactions. The Islamic perspective outlines its approach to solving this problem.

The Islamic perspective also sees the failure to solve the problem of difference as the source of the abuse of nature by humans and the degradation of the environment. The unsolved problem of difference is the cause of the separation between humans and nature. Since humans have traditionally viewed nature as alien and hostile, they have sought to conquer and subdue it. This attitude is the main reason that led to the environmental crisis that humanity faces today and that poses a threat to the survival of human civilization.

Islamic anthropology sees humans as complex beings. Human nature, according to the teaching of Islam, incorporates several dimensions: physical, intellectual, and spiritual. The spiritual dimension, according to Islam, is particularly important. The spiritual sphere embodies the principle of oneness that is fundamental to Islam. Spirituality is ultimately about human connection to the universal source of human existence. The spiritual sphere is the one where humans who strive to connect to the source of their existence can come together and attain unity. The purpose of the spiritual sphere is “to cultivate harmony, elevate and educate the life of society, and promote access to knowledge for all.”³⁹

³⁶ Razak, “Spirituality for Human Civilization.”

³⁷ Razak, “Spirituality for Human Civilization in the 21St Century.”

³⁸ Razak, “Spirituality for Human Civilization in the 21St Century,” pp. 2-3, <https://doi.org/10.2139/ssrn.3607655>

³⁹ Razak, Ratna Roshida. “Spirituality for Human Civilization in the 21St Century.”

The Islamic perspective sees dialogue as the practical method for bringing differences together and attaining unity. The spiritual sphere makes possible interactions among humans with different cultural backgrounds. All humans strive to make their life meaningful. In their striving to acquire meaning, humans try to connect their own existence to its universal source. This common striving is what brings people together and makes possible interactions among them in the form of dialogue. Cultural differences, particularly religious differences, are very important in this respect. They make dialogue possible; there is no dialogue without differences. Dialogue fosters empathy, harmony, and amicable relations.

Dialogue arises as an inevitable result of interactions that involve cultural and particularly religious differences. It is a natural form for such interactions. The basis for dialogue is “a presumption of the equal worth of the Other.” In the words of Mohammad Khatami, president of the Islamic Republic of Iran, interactions among differences that recognize each other’s worth “enrich all participants to their mutual benefit.” Dialogues “provide grounds for human creativity to flourish.”⁴⁰ They promote “peaceful cohabitation among diverse religious factions.”⁴¹ The unity attained in dialogue does not eliminate differences. On the contrary, the unity conserves differences. Thus, the Islamic perspective offers a positive approach to differences; it sees differences, not commonalities, as the source of unity, creation, and mutually enriching harmony.

According to the Islamic perspective, the realization of the principle of unity in the future world order also requires the creation of a common planetary civilization that would unite all humans. Only a planetary civilization can provide conditions that are necessary for the survival of humanity. This view rejects the Western view expressed by Samuel Huntington who argued that cultural differences are irreducible and incommensurable. Based on this thesis, Huntington prophesied that the end of the Cold War would result in new world conflicts that will result from cultural differences among civilizations.⁴² Although Huntington’s perspective has been widely criticized on many points, his main thesis continues to shape the views of Western policy makers. The West uses Huntington’s thesis to describe the nature of its clash with Russia in Ukraine.

Islamic thinkers do not equate culture and civilization. They see them as belonging to two different orders. As a construct, civilization, in their view, is much broader than culture. It provides a formal frame in which cultures exist. But this frame includes aspects other than culture. For example, civilization includes political and economic system, institutions, modes of social organization, and much else. A civilization may include several cultures. In the Islamic perspective, the creation of one common global civilization is more than a desired possibility. In

⁴⁰ Fabio Petito, Fabio. “Dialogue of Civilizations as an Alternative Model for World Order.” *Civilizational Dialogue and World Order*, 2009, 47–67, p. 50.

⁴¹ Souaad Muhammad Abbas, Nabeela Falak, Muhammad Kamran Khan, Muhammad Younas, Tooba Riaz, and Muhammad Asif. “ISLAMIC PERSPECTIVE OF DIALOGUE AMONG CIVILIZATIONS FOR GLOBAL PEACE AND CO-EXISTENCE.” *Russian Law Journal*, vol. 11, no. 12S (2023), pp. 513–19.

⁴² Samuel P. Huntington, “The Clash of Civilizations?” *Foreign Affairs*, vol. 72, no. 3 (Summer 1993), pp. 22–49. <https://doi.org/10.2307/20045621>.

fact, it is a necessity that ensures global order and human progress. Islamic theorists are certainly aware of the fact that differences are ineluctable and incommensurable. However, in their view, this fact does not constitute an obstacle to the rise of a common planetary civilization. On the contrary, it makes the rise of such civilization necessary and even inevitable. Just like dialogue creates a frame in which all participants recognize each other's worth and makes interactions among differences possible and productive, a planetary civilization "is a prerequisite for human progress." According to Islamic thinkers, it creates a sustainable environment that makes interactions of different cultures and religions possible and that is, in turn, sustained by such interactions.⁴³

Critical Observations

All major perspectives on world order discussed above offer their unique and valuable insights. All of them are products of very different and in many ways unique experiences. Each of these experiences reflects a very real and essential aspect of multidimensional reality. For this reason, each of these perspectives is important. However, experiences that have shaped these perspectives are unique and, for this reason, are limited. They are all essential but insufficient. They do not represent an objective view of reality since objectivity requires a view that is inclusive and comprehensive.

The liberal perspective emphasizes that the new world order must rely on reason and rationality. The important point that the Chinese perspective makes is that the future world order must rely on a comprehensive approach that makes possible to view world problems from all sides and directions, both local and global. The central organizing principle of the Chinese perspective is the concept of Tianxia. As the Chinese perspective claims, the Tianxia approach makes possible to examine problems comprehensively from all points of view and all directions, both local and global. The Chinese perspective also contrasts its approach with the tendency to view reality in ways that are specific to individual nations or cultures. According to the Chinese perspective, its Tianxia approach (a view "from everywhere") makes possible complete and universal view of problems. Only such approach, the claim is, can lead to solutions that will be universally inclusive and lead to peace and harmony. In a way, the Tianxia approach represents the Chinese solution of the problem of difference. The Russian perspective stresses the importance of universal morality in the new world order. The Islamic perspective offers several valuable insights. One is its emphasis on differences and the essential role of constructive interactions among different cultures and religions. Another important point is the emphasis on the role of dialogue in creating a common frame that fosters creativity and harmony that the Islamic perspective sees as the essential condition for solving world problems. Finally, the Islamic perspective, more clearly than other perspectives, articulates the importance of creating a planetary civilization for promoting global peace, order, and harmony.

The solution of the problem of world order can only work if it is universal. It must include all possible perspectives. The examination of all current major perspectives shows that

⁴³ Ali A. Allawi, *The Crisis of Islamic Civilization* (London: Yale University Press: 2009); Razak, "Spirituality for Human Civilization in the 21st Century"; John W. Fisher, *Spiritual Health: Its Nature and Place in the School Curriculum*. UoM Custom Book Centre, 2010.

none of them is universal. They all view reality through the prism of constructs that they have created based on their unique experiences that are limited and subjective. Such view is inevitably exclusionary. None of these perspectives tries to take into consideration the valuable insights offered by the other perspectives. Each of them views reality from a human point of view that is inevitably exclusionary. It excludes, for example, views of reality from perspectives other than human. All the current major perspectives on world order originate in human constructs. They are all anthropocentric. As such, they are exclusionary, subjective, and arbitrary. They, for example, exclude each other. As a result, none of them offers a solution to the problem of difference; and none of them offers a viable possibility for establishing a universal world order.

Although the liberals claim that the West is transitioning to a global community, thus suggesting that the West has solved the problem of difference and can organize a global order, liberals cannot solve the problem of difference even in their own countries. The current turmoil in America and other countries of the West, for example, is a proof of this failure. If leaders of the West cannot solve the problem of difference in their own countries, how can they resolve conflicts caused by differences on the global scale?

The perspectives on world order proposed by China and Russia stress polycentrism and multipolarity. China, for example, argues forcefully against Western hegemony in international relations. However, researchers point out that there is a tendency toward hegemony in its own perspective in which “imperial China’s hierarchical governance is updated for the twenty-first century.”⁴⁴ The 5000 years of China’s history offer abundant evidence that contradicts the claims that Chinese civilization “has formed a peaceful ideal of universal love, anti-aggression, benevolence, and goodneighborliness;” and that its “harmonious concept of valuing peace and harmony in diversity” offers a solution of the problem of world order.⁴⁵ The systematic mistreatment of internal dissenters and ethnic minorities tells a different story. It reveals the Chinese failure to solve the problem of difference.

According to the Russian perspective, the new world order should rely on absolute moral values built by God into the structure of the universe and “embedded into the human nature.”⁴⁶ The Russian perspective stresses that the formulation of universal moral principles should not be the result of a compromise between different ethical concepts. Rather, the basis for their formulation should be a dialogue in which all religions should participate as equal partners. However, while recognizing the importance and equality of all religions practiced in Russia—Christianity, Islam, Buddhism, Judaism, and others—the Russian government singles out the Russian Orthodoxy and points to a very special role of the Russian Orthodox Church in the formulation and establishment of Russia’s traditional values.⁴⁷ The Russian perspective also

⁴⁴ Callahan, “Chinese Visions of World Order.”

⁴⁵ Kaufman, “China’s Discourse of ‘Civilization’: Visions of Past, Present, and Future.”

⁴⁶ Stepanova, “Everything Good against Everything Bad,” p. 100

⁴⁷ Указ Президента РФ от 09.11.2022 N 809 "Об утверждении Основ государственной политики по сохранению и укреплению традиционных российских духовнонравственных ценностей" |

singles out ethnic Russians among all ethnic groups that live in the Russian Federation. As this perspective stresses, ethnic Russians occupy a very special place in the history and evolution of the Russian state as the “state-forming people”;⁴⁸ they are the pillar that supports Russia.

The Islamic perspective emphasizes, more so than other perspectives, the importance of cultural and religious differences. It also speaks eloquently about the need for a dialogue based on “the presumption of equal worth of the Other.” Only such dialogue can, according to this perspective, foster empathy, harmony, and amicable relations. Yet, the Islamic perspective singles out Islam from other world religions as unique in offering “a living dimension of the Oneness of Allah,” thus privileging Islam over other religions.⁴⁹ Also, the Islamic perspective emphasizes the miraculous way in which interactions of differences in dialogue can produce harmony. However, it provides no details of how interactions of differences work their wonder in dialogue. According to the Islamic perspective, this miracle happens as participants strive to contemplate the mysterious oneness of Allah. Shrouded in the veil of religious mysticism, the entire process is simply inaccessible to rational understanding and cannot be applied universally. As a result, this very important part of the Islamic perspective can hardly serve as a practical guide for solving the problem of difference. For all practical purposes, the Islamic perspective also fails to solve the problem of difference and, consequently, its value in creating the new world order is limited.

The solution of the problem of difference requires a universal approach. None of the current major perspectives on world order offers such universal approach. Therefore, none of them can solve the problem of difference. All they offer are various palliatives. But amelioration is not a solution. It can at best reduce tensions, but not eliminate conflicts that will continue to smolder. Palliatives do not work under extreme conditions. They collapse when tensions become hard to manage, as is the case in the world today.

The world is now tottering on the brink of an abyss. Policy makers rely on palliatives in trying to prevent a disaster. This situation cannot continue forever. The world is at an inflection point where a collapse becomes increasingly a real possibility. Every day brings unwelcome news about growing dangers of military confrontations among major world powers. With no solution of the problem of world order in sight, the major rivals are preparing for conflicts. War appears to be the only way to settle their differences. As a result, the principal competitors try to build new alliances, boost their military spending and create more powerful weapon systems. Rather than look for alternatives, they persist in their ways. They continue to view differences as a threat, rather than the source of innovation that offers new possibilities, new solutions, and new resources. The denigration of differences and the preference for commonalities can only lead to stasis, stagnation, and an eventual disintegration.

These critical observations do not represent an exhaustive critique of the current perspectives on world order. Their purpose is merely to show that none of these perspectives is universal and none of them solves the problem of difference. As has been indicated earlier, there

⁴⁸ Nikolai. Bugay, “Russians as State-Nation: Problems, Details, Results,” *Historical and Social-Educational Ideas*, vol. 8 (November 12, 2016), pp. 30–42, p. 40, <https://doi.org/10.17748/2075-9908-2016-8-5/1-30-42>.

⁴⁹ Razak, “Spirituality for Human Civilization in the 21st Century.”

can be no enduring world order without the solution of the problem of difference. Without such solution, efforts to bring order to the world will inevitably rely on force, which makes the world vulnerable to instabilities and its survival uncertain.

The Solution of the Problem of Difference

The Universal Perspective on Differences

As the above discussion of the current major perspectives on world order shows, none of these perspectives is capable to bring order to our troubled world. They are all limited and subjective. They cannot solve the problem of difference, which is the key to achieving an enduring peace. The discussion also shows that only a universal approach that includes all possible perspectives can solve the problem of difference, end the chaos that reigns today, and bring order.

The formulation of a universal perspective on differences must start with the universe. Our universe is unique. It is all there is. All attempts to prove otherwise have so far failed. Since our universe is all there is, nothing can come into it from outside because there is nothing outside our universe. Also, nothing can disappear from our universe because there is nowhere to disappear. Therefore, everything must be conserved. Conservation is ubiquitous throughout the universe; it operates on all levels of organization of reality: from particles and atoms, to molecules, nebulas, galaxies, planets, and stars, to life forms, the mind, societies and civilizations. There is absolutely nothing in our universe, including the universe itself, where conservation would not be relevant.⁵⁰

Conservation requires resources. In the universe of finite objects resources are always limited. Therefore, access to new resources is the only path to conservation. Gaining access to new resources requires new possibilities. Differences are the only source of new possibilities. When particles combine into atoms or when atoms form molecules, they acquire a broader range of possibilities, or degrees of freedom. By combining with each other, differences create new levels of organization that offer new possibilities and, thus, access to new resources that are essential for their conservation.⁵¹ Inclusion of differences plays a very important role in the process of creating new and increasingly more powerful levels of organization that sustains our universe and all that is in it.⁵² Since the process of creation is universal, inclusion must also be universal. Any exclusion, no matter how small, disrupts the process of creation and makes the emergence of a more

⁵⁰ Gennady Shkliarevsky, "Conservation, Creation, and Evolution: Revising the Darwinian Project," *Journal of Evolutionary Science*, vol. 1, issue 2 (2019), pp. 1-30.

⁵¹ Gennady Shkliarevsky, "The Universal Evolution and the Origin of Life," SSRN Scholarly Paper, Rochester, NY: Social Science Research Network, April 11, 2021. <https://doi.org/10.2139/ssrn.3824365>.

⁵² Gennady Shkliarevsky, "Revising the Cosmic Story." *ArXiv:2012.12749 [Physics]*, December 23, 2020. <http://arxiv.org/abs/2012.12749>.

powerful level of organization impossible. Without the powerful level of organization, no new possibilities will arise, and conservation will be unthinkable.

Inclusion of differences is not their mere aggregation. Inclusion involves combining differences and possibilities they offer. To retain their properties, differences must remain autonomous even though they become part of a new whole. Their autonomy makes them distinct and equal parts of a new level of organization. Thus, universal inclusion and equality are essential conditions that make the creation of new and more powerful levels of organization possible. The relationship between the process of creation, on one hand, and universal inclusion and equality, on the other, is reciprocal. They sustain each other. The process of creation works on universal inclusion and equality that make this process of creation possible

The view of differences from the perspective that focuses on the process of creation provides a truly universal view of differences. In this view, differences play a vital role in sustaining the universe. Their interactions create new and increasingly more powerful levels of organization that propels the evolution. For what is the evolution if not a succession of new and more powerful levels of organization? The evolution sustains the universe and all that exists in it.

To summarize, conservation requires the process of creation. This process works on universal inclusion and equality. It creates new levels of organization that provides access to new resources that are crucial for sustaining the universe. Differences are a vital part of this process. Their integration makes possible the rise of new and increasingly more powerful levels of organization. This entire process requires the inclusion of all differences, or universal inclusion.

The conclusion that follows from the above discussion is that clashes of differences are not endemic and inevitable. Differences involved in the process of creation do not clash; they are integrated with each other. Integration conserves and enriches them for the benefit of all. In other words, the problem of difference (the clashes of differences) is not fundamental. Clashes of differences are epiphenomenal. They do not occur under all conditions. They certainly do not occur in the process of creation. On the contrary, this process provides a fertile ground for constructive and mutually enriching interactions among differences. Such interactions are impossible outside the process of creation. Without the process of creation, interactions among differences can only result in clashes.

Only universal inclusion can create new and increasingly more powerful levels of organization. Any exclusion makes the rise of such levels of organization impossible. Without understanding the process of creation and the constructive role that differences play in it, we cannot appreciate the importance of differences and universal inclusion. Failure to appreciate the importance of universal inclusion make exclusion and suppression of differences possible and even desirable. This failure is the source of the problem of difference. Therefore, the only way to solve the problem of difference and establish an enduring peace and order is to eliminate exclusion.

Empowering Reason

Although the influence of liberalism is in decline, it still dominates human civilization. In the course of the long history of liberalism, liberals have come to realize that exclusion has a

destructive and harmful effects on society. Liberals have committed themselves to the elimination of exclusion. They introduced many initiatives and policies that seek to achieve this goal. Yet despite their efforts, liberals have failed to fulfill their commitment and achieve their goal.

The failure of liberals to end exclusion is truly puzzling. After all, liberalism relies on reason as the organizing principle of its theory and practice. Reason and human mind represent the most powerful level of organization of reality that exists in our universe. The power of reason is infinite. The human mind can create an infinite number of new and increasingly more powerful levels of organization. There is nothing in our entire universe that even approximates this power. The failure of liberals to eliminate exclusion indicates that their theory and practice have not unlocked the full potential of reason's power, which means that the liberal perspective on reason is limited. The limitation disempowers reason and prevents the realization of its full potential.

Reason is a product of the evolution. The evolution represents a succession of new and increasingly more powerful levels of organization. Human reason is the heir to all the possibilities and power of the levels of organization that preceded its emergence. Moreover, human reason has also inherited the power of the process of creation that propels the evolution. Yet despite this importance of the process of creation, it is not central to liberal theory and practice. Liberals have not grasped and understood the connection between reason and the process of creation. As a result, their conception of reason is not universal; it is exclusionary and subjective. It cannot unlock the full potential of reason. As the history of liberalism shows, without accessing the full potential of reason, the elimination of exclusion and the solution of the problem of difference are impossible. Without such solution, world order will always be unstable and constantly plagued by tensions, conflicts, and wars.

There is one important conclusion that follows from the above discussion: the only way to solve the problem of difference is to fully empower reason. Such empowerment can only result from a universal view of reason—one that includes all possible perspectives on reason. There is only one way to gain such universal view: we must embrace the process of creation and make it the central organizing principle of our practice. Only by embracing the process of creation and making the central organizing principle of our interactions with reality, our reason can fulfill its infinite potential.⁵³ We must empower our reason.

The liberal failure to solve the problem of difference is a result of exclusionary, limited, and subjective perspective on reason. Liberals approach reason from a human point of view that excludes all other possible views of reason. The universal process of creation that is at the heart of the evolution includes all these possible points of view. By embracing this process, we gain access to all these points of view. We acquire a universal perspective on reason. By making the process of creation the main organizing principle of our practice, we unlock the full potential of reason. Such social practice will provide the ground for constructive interactions among differences. By fostering such interactions of differences, the practice will make possible the integration of differences and the

⁵³ For more on the process of creation see Gennady Shkliarevsky, "Understanding the Process of Creation: A New Approach," *Management: Journal of Sustainable Business and Management Solutions in Emerging Economies*, vol. 22, no. 3 (October 31, 2017), pp. 1–13, <https://doi.org/10.7595/management.fon.2017.0021>.

emergence of their new combinations. The creation of new combinations will give rise to new and increasingly more powerful levels of organization that will provide access to new resources and make the survival and continued evolution of our civilization possible. It will also prevent clashes of differences that make peace impossible.

Our civilization has always been and remains anthropocentric. So long as we approach reality from the human perspective, our view of reality cannot be universal and objective since anthropocentrism excludes all possible perspectives on reality other than human. Practices based on subjective views of reality are profoundly flawed. No objective assessment of reality is possible on the basis of subjective views. Subjective approaches create problems that cannot be solved. We must liberate our reason from the limitations of anthropocentrism. Abandoning anthropocentrism will empower our reason and unlock its unlimited potential. Only by empowering reason we can solve the problems we face today and problems that will arise in the future.

None of the perspectives on world order considered in this article solves the problem of difference. Therefore, none of them offers a realistic path toward create a stable world order and attaining perpetual peace. They do not and cannot succeed in their task because they fail to unlock the infinite potential of reason. Reason represents the most powerful level of organization of reality. Its power is infinite. No problem can resist this power. We cannot create an enduring world order and attain perpetual peace without fully empowering reason.

None of the current perspective fulfills this task. The flaw of the Western perspective is its reliance of a limited and subjective view of reason. The Chinese perspective fails to overcome its subjective bias. The Russian and the Islamic perspective simply do not render their perspectives intelligible because they rely on tradition, religion, and mysticism, rather than on fully empowered reason. None of these perspectives succeeds in unlicking the infinite potential of reason. As a result, they do not solve the problem of difference—the essential condition for establishing an enduring world order and attaining perpetual peace.

The New Practice and World Order

At the present time, prospects for creating a just world order that all nations could embrace are very distant; and attaining perpetual peace is all but an impossibility. The disagreements that divide the principal actors on the world arena are very serious and can lead to more confrontations and wars. All rivals are arming themselves at an accelerated pace. This race for more arms is a sure sign that they expect more violent conflicts in the future. Our civilization experiences major problems in bringing order to the world that is in dire need of peace and cooperation.

As this article argues, the difficulties that human civilization faces in attaining these goals are a result of the failure to solve the problem of difference. This failure is not unique to our time. During its long and turbulent history, human civilization experienced many difficult periods of fundamental transformations. Each major period in this evolution had its own distinct foundation with its own organizing principles. Although these principles differ from each other, there is one feature that they all share: they have been created by humans. They all reveal a persistent tendency in our civilization to view reality through the prism of human constructs. From its emergence to the present day, human civilization has been and remains anthropocentric. We have always viewed reality from a human point

of view. Such human-centered orientation is inevitably exclusionary since it excludes non-human perspectives. The inevitable result of such orientation is limited, subjective, and arbitrary views of reality.

Objectivity requires the inclusion of all possible views and perspectives. Due to its exclusionary nature, anthropocentric approaches do not offer the possibility of viewing reality objectively. Anthropocentrism is profoundly flawed. It makes impossible to recognize the importance of the process of creation and to realize its central role in our relationship with reality. This fundamental flaw makes practices based on anthropocentrism woefully inadequate. The consequences of this inadequacy are dire. The currently dominant liberal practice, for example, is exclusionary and breeds multiple forms of exclusion. The exclusion of differences is the most important one. It is the main reason why human civilization experiences constant tensions, conflicts, confrontations, and wars. This is why we face difficulties in creating a new world order that would be inclusive and universally acceptable; this is why we cannot attain perpetual peace.

This study has argued that the solution of the problem of difference is in empowering reason. The empowerment of reason requires the embracing of the process of creation and making it the main organizing principle of our practice. The process of creation is not a human construct. This process had existed long before the rise of humanity and civilization. Humans have not created it; on the contrary, this process has created humanity. The perspective that uses the process of creation as its central organizing principle does not privilege human points of view. It eschews anthropocentrism. Its inclusive approach is universal; as such, it makes objective view of reality possible.

The process of creation propels the evolution. It is the source of all possibilities that the evolution has realized or will realize. The combined power of these possibilities is enormous. If we embrace the process of creation and make it the central organizing principle of our life, we will gain access to this enormous power. Control over the process of creation will empower our reason. The fully empowered human mind will be able to create an infinite number of new and increasingly more powerful levels of organization that will give rise to new ideas and solutions.

The survival of our civilization critically depends on objective views of reality. Objectivity requires inclusion of all possible perspectives and all points of view. The process of creation is universal. It works on universal inclusion. Such universal inclusion is a distinct feature of the practice that uses the process of creation as its organizing principle. By using universal inclusion, the new practice will satisfy one important criterion of objectivity.

The requirement to view reality from all possible points of view also requires the capacity to observe the observing—the way we view reality—to avoid subjective biases. All current theories of knowledge have not solved the problem of subjective bias that is also known as the problem of self-referentiality.⁵⁴ As a result of the failure to solve this problem, humans always observe reality from the point that has been constructed by humans. This fact inevitably makes observation subjective; such observation will reflect the ineluctable subjective bias. Choosing additional points of observation does not solve

⁵⁴ Gennady Shkliarevsky, "The Paradox of Observing, Autopoiesis, and the Future of Social Sciences," *Systems Research and Behavioral Science*, vol. 24, no. 3, pp. 323 – 32.

the problem, but merely leads to what Niklas Luhmann has termed an “infinite regress.” Each new point from which an observer tries to observe the bias will be no less self-referential and no less susceptible to subjectivity than its predecessor.⁵⁵

The practice that uses the process of creation as its main organizing principle makes possible to avoid “infinite regress,” thus satisfying another important condition of objectivity. The process of creation is a system. As a system, it is no different from other systems in one important respect: it also requires stabilization and, therefore, regulation. As has been explained elsewhere, the balance between equilibration and the production of disequilibrium, or between equilibrium and disequilibrium, plays an essential role in the process of creation.⁵⁶ Integration of differences involves equilibration. However, the integration of differences also creates a new and more powerful level of organization that is a source of disequilibrium. Thus, as equilibrium increases, so does disequilibrium. The balance between the two makes the process of creation possible.

Regulation is a reflective function. It offers a possibility of reflection on the entire system it regulates. The point of balance in the process of creation offers a possibility of reflecting on the entire process of observing, not just the object of observation. This point is not a human choice or human creation. It is intrinsic to the process. Thus, the perspective that uses the process of creation as its main organizing principle offers a comprehensive view of reality that includes observing in its frame of observation and thus eliminates the possibility of a human bias. As this article shows, despite its claims to the contrary, the Chinese Tianxia approach fails to resolve this issue.

The new practice is about the creation of new and increasingly more powerful levels of organization. Creating such new levels of organization will be the main objective of the new practice. It will be central to the way that the new practice will approach problems and seek solutions. More powerful levels of organization will give rise to more powerful solutions.

Since the process of creation works on universal inclusion, the new practice will foster a new attitude toward inclusion and differences. It will not view differences as a threat, as is the case with current practices, but rather as an opportunity create. In this view, all differences are important. They all have intrinsic value as each represents a particular aspect of multisided reality. Each difference makes its unique contribution to the emergence of new levels of organization. Any exclusion is incompatible with the new practice since exclusion disrupts the process of creation and makes the rise of new levels of organization impossible.

The new practice is incompatible with the domination of hierarchical interactions, as is the case in contemporary practices. Hierarchical interactions involve vertical subordination; its main modes of operation represent variations of the command-control approach. The process of creation requires interaction of differences as equals. Creation relies on non-hierarchical interactions. New levels of organization can only emerge when differences combine their properties. Such combinations conserve differences. Differences retain their autonomy in new totalities that they create. The role of hierarchical interactions is very different. Hierarchical

⁵⁵ Gennady Shkliarevsky, “The Paradox of Observing, Autopoiesis, and the Future of Social Sciences,” *Systems Research and Behavioral Science* 24(3), pp. 323 – 32; Niklas Luhmann, *Social Systems* (Stanford, California: Stanford University Press, 1995), p. 479.

⁵⁶ Shkliarevsky, “The Paradox of Observing.”

interactions conserve and optimize the new levels of organization that non-hierarchical interactions have created. The process of creation requires both hierarchical and non-hierarchical interactions. The balance between the two types of interactions is essential for the process of creation.

The hierarchical interactions are the dominant mode of interactions in the contemporary civilization. This domination explains many inefficiencies that plague our civilization and disrupt its progress. Since the new practice uses the process of creation as its model, maintaining the balance between hierarchical and non-hierarchical interactions will be important for its efficient operation. The requirement of universal inclusion and equality makes the new practice also incompatible with elite rule. Elites rely on exclusion; exclusion is their reason for existence. Since the new practice is incompatible with exclusion, it will also end elite rule.

The current turmoil around the world reflects the widespread dissatisfaction among ordinary citizens who increasingly believe that they are ignored, marginalized, and have little impact on political process. This attitude dominates the countries run by authoritarian regimes. However, they also prevail in Western nations ruled by liberal elites. Many ordinary citizens in the West are increasingly disillusioned in the existing democratic institutions. They are unhappy because they feel excluded and ignored. There is even a special term—“the deficit of democracy”—that captures the frustration and disillusionment with the current state of democracy in the West. The term has a wide circulation both in popular discourse and scholarly literature. The level of frustration with modern democracies is so high that many ordinary citizens believe that true democracy and freedom are impossible.

The new practice works on universal inclusion, equality, and empowerment. These three principles are fundamental to democratic rule. The fact that the new practice will be based on these principles makes it truly democratic. When applied to international relations, the new practice will create a world order that would be truly democratic. This world order will be incompatible with any kind of hegemonic approach in organizing international relations. The new world order will realize the promise of liberation, democracy, and freedom for all world nations.

The contemporary civilization increasingly relies on knowledge production that plays a particularly important role in advancing our society. The progress of our economy, science, and technology has seriously declined in recent decades.⁵⁷ To a very significant degree, this decline is due to the domination of hierarchies, elites, and vested interests. This domination disrupts the process of creation; it favors old ideas and approaches. With its emphasis on universal inclusion, equality, and empowerment, the new practice will promote the creation of new and increasingly more powerful levels of organization that will give rise to new ideas, theories, approaches, and technologies. This change will accelerate our knowledge production and make it more efficient.

The world order based on the new practice will embody the main features and principles of this practice. Just like the new practice, this world order will use the process of creation as its main organizing principle. Its primary goal will be to create conditions for productive interactions that will lead to the emergence of new and increasingly more powerful levels of organization. These levels of organization will give rise to new ideas, theories, and approaches

⁵⁷ Gennady Shkliarevsky, “Is Our Research Productivity in Decline? A New Approach in Resolving the Controversy,” *SSRN*, (March 2, 2022), <https://ssrn.com/abstract=4048160> or <http://dx.doi.org/10.2139/ssrn.4048160>

that will provide solutions for current and future problems, thus ensuring the survival and the continued progress of human civilization. This world order will be universally inclusive and empowering. It will be truly democratic as it will put an end to exclusion and inequality.

The inclusive nature of the new practice makes it compatible with all current major perspectives on new world order. In fact, it incorporates the valuable points advanced by these perspectives. These points reflect important experiences that cannot be ignored. Their inclusion is vital for creating new levels of organization. The world order that integrates these differences will certainly be more powerful than each individual perspective. Due to the integration of these differences, the new world order will be able to offer more possibilities and approaches that will be sufficiently powerful to solve the problems we face today and those that will arise in the future. It will also offer access to new resources that are essential for survival and evolution of the new world order. As a result of its inclusive nature, many nations and cultures will find the new world order acceptable since it speaks to their traditions, values, and interests.

The new practice does not simply bring together the major current perspectives. It coordinates, integrates, and enriches them. It provides an incentive for all participants. The new world order will serve their interests. The universally inclusive practice will create the bonds that will tie them together.

Just like the liberal perspective, the new practice also recognizes the importance of the emphasis on reason. After all, reason represents the most powerful level of organization of reality that exists in our universe. Reason can create an infinite number of new and increasingly more powerful levels of organization that will sprout new possibilities, ideas, and approaches. While recognizing the importance of the emphasis on reason that is the central point of the liberal perspective, the new practice shows that the liberal conception of reason is anthropocentric, i.e., it views reason from a human perspective. This approach is exclusionary. It excludes other possible non-human perspectives on reason. It sets limits to reason that make an objective view of reality impossible.

As has been argued elsewhere,⁵⁸ reason is a product of the universal evolution. It has inherited the power of this evolution. It has access to all possibilities in the levels of organization that have led to the emergence of reason and consciousness. The combined combinatorial power of these levels of organization is enormous. However, reason has also inherited the power of the process of creation that can create an infinite number of new and increasingly more powerful levels of organization. The fact that liberals cannot solve many important problems that we face today indicates that they have not unlocked the enormous power that reason has to offer. The only way to access this enormous source of power is to embrace the universal process of creation that has made the evolution possible. By embracing the process of creation as its central organizing principle, the new practice unlocks the enormous power of this process and empowers reason.

The emphasis on creation and on the importance of differences represents a valuable insight of the Islamic perspective. According to this perspective, creation results from interactions of differences. Dialogue provides the frame where creation takes place. As important as this intuition is, the Islamic perspective nevertheless fails to solve the problem of difference. It does not offer a rational explanation of how creation works. Instead of explaining

⁵⁸ Gennady Shkliarevsky, "The Mind's Eye: De-Mystifying Consciousness," SSRN, May 10, 2022, <https://ssrn.com/abstract=4105608> or <http://dx.doi.org/10.2139/ssrn.4105608>

the process, the Islamic tradition shrouds it in religious mysticism. It does not provide any details on how dialogue works its miracles, which limits the effectiveness of the Islamic perspective. The carefully chosen wording merely says that dialogue fosters peace and harmony as all participants strive to contemplate the mysterious oneness of God. The vagueness of this description offers no guidance as to what agents should do to make creation happen. For all practical purposes, the Islamic perspective does not provide a practical solution of the problem of difference, even though it points to the direction toward the solution. Although the Islamic perspective stresses the importance of “the presumption of equal worth of the Other,” it singles out Islam as “a living dimension of the Oneness of Allah” from all other religious traditions.⁵⁹ The singling out of Islam from all other religious traditions confirms the conclusion that this Islamic perspective does not work on the “presumption of equal worth of the Other” and, consequently does not solve the problem of difference.

In its vision of the new world order the Chinese perspective emphasizes the need to view international problems in a comprehensive way—i.e., from all directions and all points of view. As a practical approach to application of this important insight, the Chinese perspective proposes the Tianxia (“all-under-Heaven”) that it sees as an important tool in achieving such comprehensive vision. There is no question that the solution of global problems requires a comprehensive approach. One-sided solutions can only lead to one-sided decisions that result in tensions and conflicts. However, the Tianxia approach fails to live up to its own standards and satisfy the condition it stipulates. It does not demonstrate how the Tianxia approach solves the problem of self-referentiality, that is, how it makes possible to observe the observer and provide a truly all-inclusive and universal view. Moreover, the Chinese perspective does not even see the problem with the Tianxia approach. This significant oversight makes the possibility for a subjective bias very real. In his critique of the Tianxia approach, Callahan points to a strong possibility that his approach makes Chinese hegemony a real possibility under Tianxia—a possibility that the Chinese perspective on world order does not recognize and does not address.⁶⁰

According to the Russian perspective, the future world order must rest on absolute moral values. Morality is an essential part of human existence. A world order that does not have a moral dimension is unimaginable. The point that the Russian perspective makes is very important. It is essential, but not sufficient. Other perspectives see different dimensions that are equally important to the new world order. There is absolutely no reason and no justification to consider morality to be more important than these other dimensions. The singling out morality reveals an exclusionary bias, which only means that the Russian perspective does not solve the problem of difference and, like other three perspectives, reveals the influence of anthropocentrism.

Given the importance that the Russian perspective attributes to absolute moral values, one would expect a clear definition of absolute moral values. Remarkably, the perspective fails to provide such definition. Instead, it vaguely refers to tradition and religion as the sources for such values. Yet different cultures have their own traditions that are different from the Russian tradition. They also practice religions that are different from

⁵⁹ Razak, “Spirituality for Human Civilization in the 21st Century.”

⁶⁰ Callahan, “Chinese Visions of World Order.”

Orthodoxy. There are also cultures that are secular and where the role of religions is very limited. Obviously, they would have values they regard as absolute that will differ from what the Russian perspective sees as absolute values. The Russian perspective does not consider such possibilities and the obvious problems they will undoubtedly create. This disregard for differences acquires particularly ominous significance since the Russian perspective emphasizes that absolute moral values cannot be a result of compromises between different moral systems and ethical concepts. It sees such compromises as incompatible with values that are absolute.

The vagueness of the Russian perspective on these important issues creates confusion and inconsistencies. This perspective is not consistent in what it considers an absolute value. There are considerable differences between absolute values listed in various government documents. Researchers describe significant discrepancies between absolute values listed in government documents. For example, the list of absolute values cited in “Fundamentals of State Policy for Conserving and Strengthening of Traditional Russian Spiritual-Moral Values” that has been widely discussed by the Duma, the government, the ROC, and the public, is very different from the absolute values listed in the Constitution of Russian Federation. One researcher points out that the values listed in the “Fundamentals of State Policy” are present in the Constitution, but values listed in the Constitution are not present in the “Fundamentals of State Policy.”⁶¹ These discrepancies reveal a lack of systematic approach in defining the category that is so central to the Russian perspective, which will certainly produce conflicts when absolute values become operational in practice. The Russian perspective also does not explain by what mysterious process it will resolve disagreements caused by differences between various traditions and cultures.

As has been explained elsewhere,⁶² morality originates in the process of creation. This process works on universal inclusion of differences that have an equal and autonomous role. The recognition of autonomy and equality is the basis of morality. The process of creation is universal, which makes its moral dimension also universal. The process of creation is the source of universal moral values. The demonstrated connection between moral values and the process of creation is the only criterion for defining the absolute status of values.

Some values listed on the Russian lists may very well be absolute. However, the Russian perspective offers no demonstrable proof of its claims. Its approach of appealing to Russian tradition and Russian Orthodoxy as the sources of absolute values is not persuasive or based on objective criteria. It does not rely on a universal view of morality. The Russian approach does not solve the problem of difference. Without such solution, differences between various traditions and cultures will inevitably lead to conflicts. While

⁶¹ G. Borshchevskiy, “Traditional Russian Values: Institutional Analysis.” *The Journal of Political Theory, Political Philosophy and Sociology of Politics Politeia* 111 (December 19, 2023): 67–93, p. 75, <https://doi.org/10.30570/2078-5089-2023-111-4-67-93>.

⁶² Gennady Shkliarevsky, “The Origin of Morality and the Making of the Moral Predicament,” SSRN, October 31, 2021, <https://ssrn.com/abstract=3953715> or <http://dx.doi.org/10.2139/ssrn.3953715>

the emphasis on absolute morality made by the Russian perspective is important, its subjective bias is undoubtedly a problem that must be solved to make the moral dimension relevant for the creation of the new world order.

As has been argued earlier, all current major perspectives on world order offer valuable insights. They make contributions that are essential but not sufficient. They all reveal the pervasive influence of anthropocentrism that makes all of them exclusionary, limited, subjective, and arbitrary. The fact that these perspectives pay little attention to what each of them offers is very telling. The new practice based on the process of creation brings all major perspectives together in one all-inclusive frame. They do not simply coexist within this frame; they are integrated. The current major perspectives represent real differences. Since they reflect different aspects of multisided reality, they are all equal and equally valid for the new practice. When they are part of the process of creation, they complement and enrich each other. In their mutually enriching and complementary interactions they will form the bonds that will hold the new world order together.

Finally, there is one important issue related to the new world order that has not yet been discussed in these pages. It relates to the organizational structure of the new world order. When the allied nations defeated Nazi Germany in WWII and brought peace to the world, they created the system of global governance that ensured their hegemony. They jointly controlled the Security Council that was the main executive institution of the newly created United Nations. Through their hegemonic control they were to enforce rules and norms of international behavior on which they all agreed and thus prevent aggression and enforce order in the world.

This system did not last long. It fell apart with the onset of the Cold War that divided the world into two spheres of influence controlled by two superpowers. Each superpower—the United States and the Soviet Union—exercised hegemony in their respective spheres of influence. The collapse of communism and the disintegration of the Soviet Union ended this division. In the wake of this cataclysmic event, the United States emerged as the sole superpower capable of exercising global hegemony. Many celebrated this event as the “end of history” that promised perpetual peace to the world.⁶³

The celebration was premature. The American quest for world hegemony has not been successful. The rise of China, the rebuilding of Russia, and the emergence of militant Islam have challenged American claim. The quest for global hegemony has come against very powerful global forces. It now faces an uphill battle with uncertain consequences.

There is a growing and widespread skepticism about the hegemonic approach in the world today. Critics of this approach maintain that the modern world is multiplex⁶⁴ and has many stakeholders.⁶⁵ Attempts to establish hegemony will encounter much resistance.

⁶³ Fukuyama, *The end of history*.

⁶⁴ Amitav Acharya, “After Liberal Hegemony: The Advent of a Multiplex World Order,” *Ethics & International Relations*, Fall 2017, <https://www.ethicsandinternationalaffairs.org/journal/after-liberal-hegemony-the-advent-of-a-multiplex-world-order>.

⁶⁵ Jack Taggart and Kavi Joseph Abraham, “Norm Dynamics in a Post-Hegemonic World: Multistakeholder Global Governance and the End of Liberal International Order,” *Review of*

They argue that a hegemonic order is fraught with numerous dangers and is bound to become the source of disorder, tensions, conflicts, and even wars.⁶⁶ Many envision a post-hegemonic world order that will be polycentric and multipolar. Russia and China see regionalism as the future world order.⁶⁷

Despite criticism of the hegemonic approach, there are influential voices claiming that there are no alternatives to the hegemonic world order. They cogently argue that multipolarity and regionalism are merely modern disguises for the traditional spheres of influence approach. They strongly argue against a return to this approach since it proved to be disastrous in the past and led to two world wars in the 20th century.⁶⁸

Both the supporters and opponents of the hegemonic approach bring up valid points. Indeed, there are certainly enormous difficulties in establishing and maintaining hegemony in the modern world. However, given the past history, the spheres of influence approach is equally problematic. The choice between one and the other is not easy and perhaps even impossible. Yet the need for establishing world order is compelling. A failure to achieve this goal will undoubtedly bring uncountable disasters.

The perspective that advocates the establishment of a planetary civilization is the only current alternative to the difficult choice between hegemony and spheres of influence. The main support for this alternative comes from the so-called planetarists. The motivations for introducing the planetary agenda are mostly pragmatic and issue oriented. Planetarists point out that the world is at an inflection point. Human civilization, they contend, face formidable global problems, such as pandemics, environmental degradation and climate change, the world refugee and population growth crisis, economic decline, the problem of world peace, and others. The solution of these global problems requires global

International Political Economy, vol. 31, no. 1 (January 2, 2024), pp. 354–81.

<https://doi.org/10.1080/09692290.2023.2213441>.

⁶⁶ Fred Halliday, "International Relations in a Post-Hegemonic Age," *International Affairs*, vol. 85, no. 1 (2009), pp. 37–51; "US Hegemony and Its Perils," the site of the Embassy of the People's Republic of China in the Independent State of Samoa, http://ws.china-embassy.gov.cn/eng/xwdt/202303/t20230302_11033825.htm; Dieter Plehwe, Bernhard J. A. Walpen, Gisela Neunhöffer. *Neoliberal Hegemony: A Global Critique* (New York: Routledge, 2005); Richard Lachmann, "Hegemons, Empires, and Their Elites." *Sociologia, Problemas e Práticas*, no. 75 (May 1, 2014), pp. 9–38.

⁶⁷ Zaki Laïdi, "Towards a post-hegemonic world: The multipolar threat to the multilateral order," *International Politics*, vol. 51, no. 3 (2014), pp.350-365; Pía Riggirozzi and Diana Tussie, "Post-Hegemonic Regionalism locked," 2021, <https://doi.org/10.1093/acrefore/9780190846626.013.657>.

⁶⁸ Richard Johnson, (2007). "Post-hegemony? I Don't Think So," *Theory, Culture & Society*, vol. 24, no. 3, pp. 95–110, [doi:10.1177/0263276407075958](https://doi.org/10.1177/0263276407075958). ISSN 1460-3616. S2CID 144990811.

action. Only the creation of a planetary civilization can make such broad global action possible and effective.⁶⁹

Although the influence of planetarism is limited, it has generated some traction in recent times. In 2006, for example, the OSCE presented to the UN Secretary-General its contribution to the Alliance of Civilizations initiative that outlined OSCE's commitments, structures and mechanisms that could enhance global cooperation in four priority areas: education; media and communications; youth; and migration and integration. The main goal of this new strategic initiative is to respond to the current civilizational crisis by providing a common framework for a dialogue between civilizations and paving the way for common action.⁷⁰

However, despite these occasional successes, the appeal of planetarism remains limited. Some critical voices point to the contested meaning of the terms "planetary" and "planetarity," as well as their suspected complicity with the discredited neo-liberalism and globalization.⁷¹ Other critics completely reject the appropriateness of using a universalized

⁶⁹ Orsola Bányai, "The Foundation of An Upcoming Civilization Able To Reach Its Fulfillment Within The Ecological Limits of The Earth: The Eternal Order," *World Futures* 75, no. 5–6 (August 18, 2019), pp. 298–323, <https://doi.org/10.1080/02604027.2019.1591812>; Anna Hatzziannaki, "Aiming for the Planetary Civilization," Presentation at the AICA online Conference "Theorems II, About History," September 1, 2021, https://www.academia.edu/45681025/AIMING_FOR_THE_PLANETARY_CIVILIZATION; Vittorio Cotesta, "Civilizations for Global Society," *Glocalism: Journal of Culture, Politics and Innovation*, no. 1 (March 31, 2019). <https://doi.org/10.12893/gjcp.2019.1.9>; William R. Catton, Jr., whose book, *Overshoot: The Ecological Basis of Revolutionary Change*; Oli Mould, "From Globalisation to the Planetary: Towards a Critical Framework of Planetary Thinking in Geography," *Geography Compass*, vol. 17, no. 9 (2023): e12720, <https://doi.org/10.1111/gec3.12720>; Stefan Pedersen, "Planetarism: A Paradigmatic Alternative to Internationalism," *Globalizations*, vol. 18, no. 2 (February 17, 2021), pp. 141–54, <https://doi.org/10.1080/14747731.2020.1741901>.

⁷⁰ Vahram Abadjian, "Towards a New Strategic Goal: The OSCE and the Dialogue of Civilizations," *Helsinki Monitor*, vol. 17, no. 4 (October 2006), pp. 302–6, p. 303, <https://doi.org/10.1163/157181406778917233>.

⁷¹ Jeremy Bendik-Keymer, "'Planetarity,' 'Planetarism,' and the Interpersonal," *Blog of the APA*, September 10, 2020, <https://blog.apaonline.org/2020/09/10/planetarity-planetarism-and-the-interpersonal/>; Jeanette McVicker, "Thinking With the Planet," *Electronic Book Review*, November 6, 2016, <https://electronicbookreview.com/essay/thinking-with-the-planet-a-review-of-the-planetary-turn-relationality-and-geoaesthetics-in-the-twenty-first-century/>; Amy J. Elias and Christian Moraru, eds., *The Planetary Turn: Relationality and Geoaesthetics in the Twenty-First Century* (Evanston, IL: Northwestern University Press, 2015).

model of Western civilization as a global solution.⁷² Civilization in this sense has, for them, no future: it is “a sinking ship.” Jed Diamond presents perhaps the most uncompromising view on the possibility of planetary civilization that many others share:

What we call “Civilization” is a misnomer. Its proper name is the “Dominator culture.” As long as we believe the myth that civilization is the best humans can aspire to achieve, we are doomed to go down with the Ship.⁷³

Samuel P. Huntington is perhaps the most influential voice among critics of the idea of global civilization. Following the end of the Cold War, Huntington advanced a thesis that captured public attention. The fall of communism, Huntington argued, ended the period of global competition based on ideological or economic differences. However, in contrast to claims that the victory of the West in the Cold War would end all global conflicts and would finally bring perpetual peace to the divided world,⁷⁴ Huntington argued that global conflicts would not end. On the contrary, he maintained, there would be new and even more powerful conflicts based on cultural differences. He predicted that clashes between civilizations would become a new source of global conflicts and wars.⁷⁵

In Huntington’s view, cultures are unique to societies that sustain them. They are very different from each other since the experiences that have shaped them are very different; and these differences are irreducible and incommensurable. Tensions and conflicts are an inevitable result of the irreducibility of differences. Liberalism offers no solution to the problem of difference. As a liberal, Huntington also does not see such solution. The conclusion he draws from his analysis is that clashes among different cultures are inevitable. However, although

⁷² William R. Catton, *Overshoot: The Ecological Basis of Revolutionary Change*. Reprint edition (University of Illinois Press, 1982; Hamid Dabashi, “For the Last Time: Civilizations,” *International Sociology*, vol. 16, no. 3 (September 2001), <https://doi.org/10.1177/026858001016003007>; Demetrios Karis, “Human Civilization Will Collapse (High Confidence): A Compendium of Relevant Biophysical, Political, Economic, Military, Health, and Psychological Information on Climate Change,” *EarthArXiv Eprints*, January 1, 2024, X5G404. <https://doi.org/10.31223/x5g404>; Daniel Quinn, *Beyond Civilization: Humanity’s Next Great Adventure* (Crown, 2000).

⁷³ Jed Diamond, “Free at Last: Overcoming Our Addiction to the Sinking Ship of Civilization.” *MenAlive* (blog), September 12, 2023. <https://menalive.com/overcoming-our-addiction-to-the-sinking-ship-of-civilization/>; Jed Diamond, “Transformations: The End of the U.S. and the World as We Know It and The Truth About Our Collective Future,” *MenAlive* (blog), April 26, 2023. <https://menalive.com/transformations-the-truth-about-our-collective-future/>.

⁷⁴ Fukuyama, *The End of History*.

⁷⁵ Samuel P. Huntington, “The Clash of Civilizations?” *Foreign Affairs* 72, no. 3 (Summer 1993): 22–49. <https://doi.org/10.2307/20045621>.

unavoidable, they can be mediated and ameliorated. According to Huntington, even though palliatives cannot prevent conflicts, they may lower the intensity of tensions and ameliorate conflicts. To reduce tensions among world civilizations, West, in his view, should stop exporting Western values and norms to non-Western civilizations. Such exports can only lead to a deterioration of international relations, bring more calamities to the world, and even cause its utter ruination.

Huntington's thesis provoked a great deal of controversy. Critics meticulously parsed his arguments and found many of them wanting. However, despite all criticisms, the prediction of the coming clash of civilizations has retained its influence. Moreover, the events of the last two decades—the spread of Islamic militancy, the rise of China as a new major global competitor of the United States, the clash between Russia and the West over Ukraine, and other developments—have to some extent vindicated Huntington's thesis. Indeed, the world appears to be descending into a new cycle of violent conflicts where the line of demarcation is neither ideological, nor economic. Cultural differences and values appear to take the front stage in new global confrontations. In this view, the very possibility of the emergence of one common human civilization that would sustain world order seems to be out of the question. The goal of creating a planetary civilization remains as remote as it has ever been, and perhaps even more so.

The current conditions in the world are grim. As many world leaders and policy makers make clear, the world will not be able to go back to the way it has been. Yet the prospects for the establishment of new world order are uncertain. The creation of such order requires new systemic approaches and institutional arrangements. There is a growing need for such new solutions. So far, they are lacking. The major global competitors offer perspectives on world order that point in different directions, which foreshadows more chaos and more conflicts in the future.

The current discussions on world order offer no ground for optimism. The two sides that have emerged in these discussions point to problems that appear to be unsolvable. Both agree that the world needs order. Without order it will descend even deeper into chaos and instability. One side argues that there can be no world order without hegemony. The other contends that attempts to establish hegemony will encounter strong resistance and will result in conflicts that will only add to current chaos and instability.

The new practice based on the process of creation as its main organizing principle offers a solution to the above dilemma. This practice works on universal inclusion and equality. It will view differences as a resource, not a threat. It will foster integration, rather than suppression, of differences. Such integration will conserve and enrich differences. It will create new and increasingly more powerful levels of organization that will give rise to new ideas and approaches that will provide solutions for current and future problems. But most importantly, this new practice will create the bonds that will hold the new world order together and ensure its survival and evolution.

The new world order must be universal. It must embrace all nations and cultures. Its organizational form can only be a universal, or planetary, civilization. Huntington's argument against global civilization rests of a liberal view that the problem of difference is unsolvable. The

discussion of the process of creation shows that the problem of difference is epiphenomenal, not fundamental. As has been explained, it is merely an effect of the subjective and exclusionary practices that refuse to recognize the process of creation and the essential and positive role of differences in this process. Such exclusionary practices cannot use the enormous possibilities offered by the process of creation. The new practice operates on the principles of universal inclusion, equality, and empowerment. It recognizes the intrinsic value of all differences and their constructive role in creating new and increasingly more powerful levels of organization. This practice solves the problem of difference. In the world order based on the new practice, differences between cultures will not clash. They will represent assets that will be part of the solution, not liabilities. By interacting, differences can enrich each other and give rise to new and increasingly more powerful levels of organization.

Huntington makes no distinction between culture and civilization; for him, the two are essentially the same. There is no justification for such conflation. As defined in many reference sources, civilization is a much broader concept than culture. The article in *Wikipedia*, defines civilization as “any complex society characterized by the development of the state, social stratification, urbanization, and symbolic systems of communication beyond natural spoken language . . . Civilizations are often characterized by additional features as well, including agriculture, architecture, infrastructure, technological advancement, a currency, taxation, regulation, and specialization of labor.”⁷⁶ In the definition by *the National Geographic*, civilization “describes a complex way of life characterized by urban areas, shared methods of communication, administrative infrastructure, and division of labor.”⁷⁷ Finally, *Merriam-Webster dictionary* defines civilization as “an advanced state of human society, in which a high level of culture, science, industry, and government has been reached.”⁷⁸

These definitions show that civilization and culture are different; and the former is a much broader concept than the latter. Civilization provides a frame in which cultural differences can interact. But this frame includes dimensions other than cultural ones. For example, civilization includes political and economic system, institutions, social organizations, and much else. A civilization may include several cultures.

Cultural differences are not an obstacle to the rise of a planetary civilization. On the contrary, differences sustain civilization, and civilization sustain differences. All differences are equal. Interactions among equals are non-hierarchical. Such interactions create new and increasingly more powerful levels of organization. In other words, they create hierarchies. As has been explained earlier, both types of interactions—hierarchical and non-hierarchical—are essential for conservation and evolution. Non-hierarchical interactions create new levels of organization and hierarchical interactions conserve and optimize these creations. The former can create but cannot conserve what they create; the latter can conserve and optimize but cannot

⁷⁶ “Civilization,” *Wikipedia*, <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Civilization>.

⁷⁷ “Key Components of Civilization,” *National Geographic*, <https://education.nationalgeographic.org/resource/key-components-civilization/>

⁷⁸ “Civilization,” *Merriam-Webster Dictionary*, <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/civilization>.

create. The two complement each other; they need each other. The balance between the two plays a critical role in the capacity of systems to conserve themselves and evolve.

Civilizations are essentially hierarchical structures. Interactions among cultural differences are non-hierarchical. In the new world order interactions among cultural differences will create new levels of organization. As hierarchical structures, the planetary civilization and its institutions will provide the frame for interactions of differences. They will foster, enable, and facilitate non-hierarchical interactions, as well as conserve and the new levels of organization that these interactions create. The planetary civilization is essential for the new world order. As some authors have argued, the planetary civilization, is a pre-requisite for human progress.⁷⁹ The balance between the two complementary levels of the new world order will play an essential role in sustaining the new world order and ensuring its survival and evolution.

Conclusion

The idea of perpetual peace is not a modern fantasy. It emerged long ago when liberalism was on the rise to become a worldview that would eventually dominate our civilization. During that time Immanuel Kant laid out his plan for perpetual peace. Liberalism eventually abandoned this idea of because its theory and practice failed to solve the problem of difference. Liberalism has eventually accepted its failure and proclaimed perpetual peace is unattainable. This failure of liberalism was not a result of some reason that was intrinsic to reality. It was a result of the failure of liberalism to access the full power of the human mind and to realize its infinite possibilities. Yet the dream of perpetual peace survives, and it continues to inspire new generations.

Liberalism is not the last word of human history. It is only a part of this history. Efforts to uphold the dominant position of liberalism in the world today are futile; they will not succeed. This article shows that liberalism does not represent a universal view of reality. The liberal tradition is an anthropocentric tradition; as such, it is exclusionary, limited, subjective, and arbitrary. Efforts to sustain this tradition will lead only to more suffering and destruction. It is never too early to admit that time is ripe for changes. Changes outlined in this article do not entail a complete erasure of liberalism. One cannot erase liberalism and its ideas from human history. They are integral to this history. The perspective outlined in this article does not propose to take such course. It emphasizes the need to end the domination of liberalism, not its eradication. The new practice discussed in this article is about universal inclusion and equality, not exclusion and domination; and that also relates to liberalism. It is about conserving and enriching all differences, enhancing human powers, and ensuring the survival and continued evolution of human civilization.

The world today appears to be coming apart. It faces formidable problems: political unrest, social instability, environmental degradation and climate change, population and

⁷⁹ John W. Fisher, *Spiritual Health: Its Nature and Place in the School Curriculum*. UoM Custom Book Centre, 2010; Ali A. Allawi, *The Crisis of Islamic Civilization* (London: Yale University Press, 2010).

migration crisis, economic decline and much else. There are major armed conflicts that are currently under way and several others are in the making. Indeed, the world seems to be tottering on the brink of an abyss. Some observers claim that the Third World War is already in progress. This situation is dangerous. But by far, the greatest source of danger is the fact that we have few means to end this calamity and bring order to our troubled world. There are no realistic plans on how to achieve this goal.

This article has considered several perspectives on world order that come from major global competitors. Formed by unique experiences, these perspectives reflect important aspects of complex reality. They all offer valuable insights. Yet no coherent plan emerges from these perspectives. This article has shown that each of the perspectives discussed in it are essential, but not sufficient. They do not represent a coherent whole. Their insights are not integrated. As a result, these perspectives point in different directions, which is a bad sign that foreshadows serious confrontations in the future.

The problem of world order is very complex. The solution of this problem will require much time and effort. One article cannot provide a comprehensive solution. This article is only a step toward such solution, to be followed by many others. As this essay argues, the problem of world order is essentially the familiar problem of difference. The current major perspectives on world order do not solve this problem. The dominant liberal perspective even sees this problem as intrinsically unsolvable. According to this perspective, the problem of difference can only be mediated and ameliorated through palliatives. That is one important reason why the United States and the liberal alliance it leads seek to establish a world order in which they would exercise hegemony. The West hopes that hegemony will serve to enforce rules and norms that will sustain world order.

Critics warn, however, that the search for hegemony will cause much resistance and create more chaos and instability. The warning is not idle. Western search for hegemony is already encountering resistance from rival powers. China and Russia actively pursue their own visions for world order. These visions emphasize polycentrism, multipolarity, and regionalism. Yet, they also do not provide solutions. On the contrary, as many observers point out, they create a threat of dividing the world into spheres of influence. As history shows, the spheres-of-influence approach does not solve the problem of difference. It has led to two most violent conflicts in the past century.

All major current perspectives on world order do not solve the problem of difference and, if pursued, are likely to bring more disorder, instability, tensions, conflicts, and wars. They are incapable of creating a lasting peace. The establishment of Western hegemony in the contemporary world is impossible. American efforts to achieve this goal are already encountering stiff resistance. There is little chance that the Western alliance will be able to prevent its main global rivals—China, Russia, and Iran—from consolidating power in their regions, strengthening their regional roles, and developing closer relations with each other. By strengthening their regional ties, they will be able to use effectively the strategy of small cuts that will bleed and weaken their rival over time. It is not going to be an easy strategy either, as it will require great sacrifices and involve considerable risks.

As has been argued in this article, none of the perspectives on world order considered in this article succeeds to offer a realistic path toward creating a rational world order and attaining perpetual peace. The reason why they have not succeeded is due to their failure to unlock the infinite potential of reason. The Western liberal perspective fails because it relies on a limited and subjective view of reason. The Chinese perspective fails because it does not offer an

objective approach that can overcome subjective bias. The Russian and the Islamic perspective cannot render their perspectives intelligible because their perspectives rely on religion and mysticism. Because all these perspectives fail to unlock the infinite potential of reason, they cannot solve the problem of difference that is essential for establishing an enduring world order and attaining perpetual peace.

This article proposes an alternative approach to the problem of new world order. Based on universal inclusion, equality, and empowerment, this approach can solve the problem of difference and establish the new world order. These properties are integral to the process of creation that propels the evolution and sustains the universe and all that exists in it. By embracing this process as its central organizing principle, our civilization can put an end to exclusion, solve the problem of difference, and fulfill the dream of perpetual peace. In the new practice, differences no longer appear as a threat; they play an important and constructive role in creating new and increasingly more powerful levels of organization that are essential for ensuring the survival of our civilization. The embracing of the process of creation will empower our reason and will help unlock its infinite potential.

The approach proposed in this article does not deny the validity of major current perspective on world order. It creates a common frame that includes and conserves them. The integration of these perspectives combines differences they represent; it gives rise to the new and inclusive approach in solving the problem of world order. As a result of its inclusive nature, this approach offers more possibilities, as well as provides access to new resources for sustaining the new world order. This inclusive nature of this approach has another important advantage. The universality of the new approach will make it more acceptable and diminish the possibility of resistance.

There is every reason for all powers involved in the efforts to create a new world order to think about alternative strategies. They all need new ideas and solutions that they do not have at the present time. This article offers such solution. Indeed, it outlines only general contours of the new and inclusive perspective and lays down only the main principles of the new practice. There are undoubtedly many lacunas that must be filled. One cannot expect that a relatively short piece would provide a complete and detailed description of the new perspective. The elaboration of the proposed approach will require more work and more efforts in the future. Is there a will and desire to pursue this goal? The major global actors will eventually have to realize that their approaches to world order cannot solve the problem of world order; they can only bring more conflicts, more suffering, and more destruction.

As devastating as the human catastrophe in Ukraine is, it is only a warning about what may be coming in the future. Reality could be a lot worse than it is now. NATO's involvement in the escalating Ukrainian conflict is increasingly growing out of control. Consequences of the direct engagement of Russia with NATO forces will be dire. President Putin has already stated that NATO's advance into the Russian territory will incur a very serious response, including strikes with tactical nuclear weapons. The current developments in the Kursk region involve NATO advisors and instructors. NATO is also amassing troops on the Russian border.

The Financial Times has recently revealed documents that indicate that in case of a direct confrontation with NATO forces, Russia may indeed be posed to deliver tactical nuclear strikes against targets in Western Europe. According to William Alberque, a former NATO official now at the Stimson Center, there are "hundreds, if not thousands, of targets mapped across Europe . . . including military and critical infrastructure targets." These targets include sites in France and England. NATO officials admit that Europe has less than 5% of required capacities

and cannot possibly stop these strikes.⁸⁰ The nuclear escalation in Europe may not bring the end to the war, but it will surely bring enormous suffering. The combined release of energy in these strikes will exceed the levels of radiation from the bombs dropped on Nagasaki and Hiroshima in 1945. Moreover, there is no guarantee that once the nuclear threshold is crossed, the escalation may reach the level of strategic nuclear exchanges with the United States.

There is every reason to consider alternative approaches before more suffering is inflicted on humanity. The new practice that uses the universal process of creation as its main organizing principle is one of such alternatives. In contrast to the current perspectives on world order, the new practice works on universal inclusion, equality, and empowerment. It does not view differences as a threat to be feared. Rather, it sees differences as desirable assets for creating new and more powerful levels of organization. The rise of new levels of organization will sprout new ideas, approaches, and solutions; it will also provide access to new resources capable of solving problems humanity faces today and will face in the future. Moreover, the inclusive nature of the new practice will certainly foster cooperation, rather than rivalry in the world; the integration of differences will ensure the continued evolution of human civilization and its survival.

⁸⁰ Max Seddon and Chris Cook, “Russian Navy Trained to Target Sites inside Europe with Nuclear-Capable Missiles,” *The Financial Times*, August 13, 2024.
<https://www.ft.com/content/237e1e55-401d-4eeb-875b-03fe68f81575>.

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