Perpetual Peace: What Kant Should Have Said

It is a precept or general rule of reason, *That every man, ought to endeavor peace, as far as he has a hope of obtaining it ... the first, and fundamental Law of Nature which is to seek peace and follow it.* Thomas Hobbes.¹

In this paper I shall briefly present Kant's proposals for ending war in *Perpetual Peace*, and argue that the kind of world federation or world government that Kant suggests would not guarantee peace between nations. The world federation described by Kant would not possess any military forces. It would, therefore, be unable to prevent nations from creating their own armies and then using them to wage aggressive wars. I shall also argue that if a world state or world federation possessed military forces to prevent individual nations from creating their own armed forces, then it would have a good chance of ending major wars between nations. This revision in Kant's conception of the world federation is strongly suggested by some of his own arguments. I shall defend the following two claims: 1) that the best initial form of a world government would not be permitted any function other than that of maintaining its monopoly on the possession of military forces, and 2) that the sort of "ultra-minimal" world government that I advocate is the form of world government capable of maintaining peace that is most likely to be acceptable to the various nations and peoples of the world. The paper concludes with a discussion of some problems that might result from the institution of the framework proposed here. Particular attention will be given to Kant's concern that a world government could become an all-encompassing tyranny and to problems stemming from the existence of nuclear weapons.

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Kant's specific proposals for attaining "perpetual peace" are found in two separate sections of *Perpetual Peace*, "The Preliminary Articles of a Perpetual Peace Between States" and "The Definitive Articles of a Perpetual Peace Between States." (The preliminary articles are necessary pre-conditions for securing a lasting peace; they are necessary in order to create a climate in which the institutional changes of the definitive articles have some hope of being successfully adopted.) There are six preliminary articles. 1) "No conclusion of peace shall be considered valid as such if it was made with secret reservation of the material for a future war" (*PP*, p. 93). 2) A mere suspension of hostilities accompanied by preparations for new wars cannot constitute true peace. 2) "No independently existing state, whether it be large or small, may be acquired by another state by inheritance, exchange, purchase or gift." 3) "Standing armies (*miles perpetuus*) will gradually be abolished altogether." Kant only desires the abolition of professional armies of paid soldiers; militias composed of unpaid citizens need not be abolished.

since the resultant costs eventually make peace more oppressive than a short war, the armies are themselves the cause of wars of aggression which set out to end burdensome military expenditure. Furthermore, the hiring of men to kill or be killed seems to mean using them as mere machines and instruments in the hands of someone else (the state), which cannot easily be reconciled with the rights of man in one's own person. It is quite a different matter if the citizens undertake voluntary military training from time to time in order to secure themselves and their fatherland against attacks from outside (*PP*, p. 95).

4) "No national debt shall be contracted in connection with the external affairs of the state" (*PP*, p. 95; also see *TP*, p. 90). Kant argues that financing military expenditures on credit makes it easier and more tempting for nations to wage wars. 5) "No state shall forcibly interfere in the constitution and government of another state" (*PP*, p. 96). Kant explicitly rules out forcibly interfering in the internal affairs of another nation in order to end
injustices or evils that it inflicts upon its own citizens. 6) "No state at war with another shall permit such acts of hostility which make mutual confidence impossible during a future time of peace. Such acts would include the employment of *assassins* (percussores) or *poisoners* (venefici), *breach of agreements*, the *instigation of treason* (peruellio) within the enemy state, etc." (PP, p. 96; Cf. MEJ, p. 120.)

There are three "Definitive Articles of a Perpetual Peace Between States." 1) Every state must have a "Republican Constitution" which provides for the following: i) "freedom for all members of society (as men)" (PP, p. 99), ii) "the dependence of everyone upon a single common legislation" (PP, p. 99), and iii) legal equality for all. A republican form of government differs from a democracy (a form of government that Kant does not think desirable) in that it requires a sharp separation between legislative and executive powers (PP, p. 101). In republican forms of government "the consent of the citizens is required to decide whether or not war is to be declared" (PP, p. 100). The rationale for making republican government part of a proposal for peace is that since the general populace suffers the burdens and miseries of war, they will be very reluctant to bring these miseries down upon themselves. Monarchs and other autocratic rulers do not have the same kind of reluctance to begin wars.

But under a constitution where the subject is not a citizen, and which is therefore not republican, it is the simplest thing in the world to go to war. For the head of state is not a fellow citizen, but the owner of the state, and a war will not force him to make the slightest sacrifice so far as his banquets, hunts, pleasure palaces and court festivals are concerned. He can thus decide on war, without any significant reason, as a kind of amusement, and unconcernedly leave it to the diplomatic corps (who are always ready for such purposes) to justify the war for the sake of propriety (PP, p. 100; see also TP, p. 91).

2) The second "Definitive Article" states that "The Right of Nations shall be based on a Federation of Free States." The rights of individual nations are to be defined and secured by an international constitution. 3) The final definitive article concerns the right of "hospitality"—"the right of a stranger not to be treated
with hostility when he arrives in someone else’s territory. He can indeed be turned way, if this can be done without causing his death, but he must not be treated with hostility, so long as he behaves in a peaceable manner in the place he happens to be in” (PP, p. 106).

The most distinctive proposal of Perpetual Peace, and the one that has generated the most discussion, is the second definitive article—Kant’s proposal for a world federation. Let us now consider this proposal at length. Kant is not entirely clear about what sorts of mechanisms are to be operative in the international federation. He takes pains to stress that he prefers a federation (Völkerbund) of sovereign states to an international state (Völkerstaat) (PP, p. 102). A federation would not interfere in the internal affairs of its member states; it would exist “merely to preserve and secure the freedom of each state in itself” (PP, p. 104). Presumably, a federation must contain a judicial body for interpreting the constitution and resolving disputes between individual states. But Kant holds that an international federation should not have the power to coerce individual states to do its will:

thus a particular kind of league, which we might call a pacific federations (foedus pacificum), is required. It would differ from a peace treaty (pactum pacis) in that the latter terminates one war, whereas the former would seek to end all wars for good. This federation does not aim to acquire any power like that of a state, but merely to preserve and secure the freedom of each state in itself, along with that of the other confederated states, although this does not mean that they need to submit to public laws and to a coercive power which enforces them, as do men in a state of nature (PP, p. 104; cf. PP, p. 127).

See also the following passage from The Metaphysical Elements of Justice in which Kant says that membership in the federation must be voluntary; nations must be free to leave at any time.

But this alliance must not involve a sovereign authority (as in a civil constitution), but only a confederation. Such an alliance can be renounced at any time and therefore must be renewed from time to time (p. 116).
Kant gives several arguments for preferring an international federation to a world state. a) He claims that the very idea of a world state is self-contradictory.

For the idea of an international state is contradictory, since every state involves a relationship between a superior (the legislator) and an inferior (the people obeying the laws), whereas a number of nations forming a state would constitute a single nation. And this contradicts our initial assumption, as we are here considering the right of nations in relation to one another in so far as they are a group of separate states which are not to be welded together as a unit (PP, p. 102).

b) Kant’s second argument is that nations and peoples will be unwilling to make the kind of surrender of national sovereignty and national autonomy that would be required by a world state (PP, p. 105). c) In MEJ Kant argues that the world state could not effectively exercise its authority throughout the entire world, and that consequently the nations comprising it would lapse back into a state of war.

Because, however, such a state composed of nations would extend over vast regions, it would be too large to govern, and consequently the protection of each of its members would, in the end, be impossible, with the result that the multitude of such corporations would lead back to a state of war (p. 124).

d) Kant argues that the rights of sovereign states would be violated by the creation of a world state possessing the power to coerce them. Speaking with respect to conflicts internal to particular states, Kant writes the following:

the interference of external powers would be a violation of the rights of an independent people which is merely struggling with its internal ills. Such interference would be an active offence and would make the autonomy of all other states insecure (PP, p. 96; also see PP, pp. 102-104).

e) Kant argues that a world state would be likely to be despotic. Speaking with reference to a world federation, he writes the following:
This state is still to be preferred to an amalgamation of the separate nations under a single power which has overruled the rest and created a universal monarchy. For the laws progressively lose their impact as the government increases its range, and a soulless despotism, after crushing the germs of goodness, will finally lapse into anarchy (PP, p. 113).

Kant suggests that the world federation would gradually evolve and grow over a long period of time. It is not to be expected that the federation would include all nations at the time of its inception.

It can be shown that this idea of federalism (Föderalität), extending gradually to encompass all states and thus leading to perpetual peace, is practicable and has objective reality. For if by good fortune one powerful and enlightened nation can form a republic (which is by its nature inclined to seek perpetual peace), this will provide a focal point for federal association among other states. These will join up with the first one, thus securing the freedom of each state in accordance with the idea of international right, and the whole will gradually spread further and further by a series of alliances of this kind (PP, p. 104).

According to Kant, the creation of a world federation is historically inevitable. The horrors and devastations of war will eventually compel nations to seek peace in a federation of nations (UH, pp. 18-21; CTJ, p. 96; TP, pp. 91-92; also see PP, p. 130).³

In a curious paragraph at the end of his discussion of the second definitive article, Kant seems to contradict his earlier advocacy of a world federation as a opposed to a world state.⁴ He suggests that a world state (possessing coercive powers over individual states) would be far more effective in securing peace than a mere international federation. We must, however, settle for an international federation, because individual nations are unwilling to give up their status as sovereign states:

There is only one rational way in which states coexisting with other states can emerge from the lawless condition of pure warfare. Just like individual men, they must renounce their savage and lawless freedom, adapt themselves to public coercive laws, and thus form an international state (civitas gentium), which would necessarily continue to grow until it embraced all the peoples of the earth. But since this is not the will of the nations, according to their present
conception of international right (so that they reject in hypothese what is true in thesis), the positive idea of a world republic cannot be realized. If all is not to be lost, this can at best find a negative substitute in the shape of an enduring and gradually expanding federation likely to prevent war (PP p. 105; Cf. MEJ, p. 124).

It would be hasty to charge Kant with inconsistency here. In the foregoing passage Kant says that a properly functioning world state would be the best and only guarantor of peace between nations. But, Kant claims, it is very unlikely that such a state will ever come to exist. The world federation is not recommended as the best possible guarantor of peace, but only as the best proposal to end or limit wars that is likely to gain acceptance. In other passages that I noted earlier, Kant gives other reasons for preferring a world federation to a world state. But nothing that he says in those passages contradicts the idea suggested in PP, p. 105 and MEJ, p. 124 that, if a world state could exercise its authority effectively (a possibility that he denies in the latter passage), it would be the best imaginable guarantor of peace.5

2.

Without coercive military power, an international federation can do little to bring about peace. The non-coercive federation that Kant proposes would have no power to prevent individual states from creating armies and using them to begin wars of aggression. It couldn’t even compel nations to remain members of the federation. In our own century, two world federations, both lacking effective coercive powers, the League of Nations and The United Nations, have been largely ineffective in their peace-keeping roles.

In fairness to Kant it must be noted that the League of Nations and the United Nations did not satisfy all of Kant’s requirements for a world federation. Most importantly, i) their creation was not accompanied by the elimination of all standing armies, and ii) not
all of the members of the League of Nations or the United Nations had or have republican governments. Thus, one cannot argue that Kant’s proposals have been fully implemented and proven unsuccessful in preserving peace. Suppose that we grant that major wars are unlikely to occur, as long as nations do not possess standing armies. This is not a strong reason for favoring Kant’s proposed world federation, since such a federation would be inherently unstable. A voluntary federation lacking military power could do nothing to prevent nations from creating standing armies. To the extent that Kant’s proposals might succeed and other nations did disband their standing armies, it would be tempting for any given nation to create surreptitiously a standing army of its own. It would be particularly tempting for some nations to build nuclear weapons and use them to try to blackmail other nations. Everything that we know about human nature and the behavior of states suggests that a voluntary disarmament scheme would fail.

Let us now consider the thesis that a voluntary federation of republican states would guarantee perpetual peace. The unhappy experiences of the past two centuries have, I fear, refuted Kant’s views on the pacific nature of republics. Nationalism has succeeded in giving the common people of most countries an alluring motivation to enter into self-destructive wars. However, Michael Doyle has proposed a most intriguing defense of Kant’s position in PP.6 Doyle concedes that liberal republican states of the sort that Kant desires are often bellicose and all too willing to begin wars, but he notes that they rarely, if ever, fight wars against one another. According to Doyle, the peaceful relations between liberal states are not an historical accident. Rather, they reflect a deep-seated tendency of liberal societies. Doyle considers the thesis that “any group of states with similar social structures or with compatible attitudes would be peaceful.”7 In response to this he notes that wars are common between feudal societies, monarchies, fascist nations, and illiberal communist nations. I will not undertake a thorough assessment of Doyle’s position here. However, I would note the following difficulty for his thesis. In 1898 Britain made a serious attempt to enter into a
military alliance with Germany. The British offer was imprudently rejected by the Kaiser. Were it not for this accident of history — the peculiar psychological weaknesses of the Kaiser that led him to want to build a navy to rival that of Britain’s — it is very likely that two liberal states, Britain and France, would have been embroiled in a major war early in this century. A further line of thought — can it be seriously suggested that the creation of republican governments in the Arab states bordering on republican Israel would end the danger of another Arab-Israeli war?

Kant argues that a world federation would be much more likely to be freely adopted than a world state. Nations and peoples, he claims, would be very reluctant to accept the surrender of national autonomy that would be required by a world state. This seems correct and it constitutes a reason for thinking the creation of a world federation more of a realistic possibility than the creation of a world state. However, these considerations are more than counter-balanced by other factors. It is extremely unlikely that all nations would voluntarily agree to disarm in the absence of any coercive mechanisms to enforce the agreement. A nation which disarmed in a world federation must trust all potential adversaries to do the same and it must trust them not to take advantage of its vulnerability. Even if all of the members of a world federation did disarm, they would all have to trust each other not to rearm in the future. Disarmament proposals involving the creation of a world state have some hope of being accepted, even by nations which do not trust each other.

This problem for Kant’s proposals stems in part from changes in military technology which have occurred after his lifetime. Given the slow pace of war and the nature of the military tactics during the eighteenth century, a member of Kant’s proposed world federation which commanded the loyalty of most of its citizens would have had a good chance of successfully defending itself against a military attack by raising a volunteer army. In the present age of blitzkrieg and nuclear weapons a nation cannot reasonably hope to repel invaders without possessing a standing army. It is most unlikely that all nations would voluntarily dis-
arm in the absence of coercive mechanisms to insure that other nations disarm. One might read Kant’s third preliminary article in such a way that it permits the existence of powerful military forces composed solely of volunteer reservists. Such forces might be sufficient to repel invasion by states violating the prohibition on standing armies. But military forces of this sort would also lend themselves to wars of aggression; the replacement of standing armies by volunteer reserve armies of this sort would not make a substantial contribution to peace.

One final reason for advocating a world state in preference to Kant’s world federation is the fact that Kant’s proposals do nothing to address the very real danger of an all-out nuclear war in the relatively near future. Kant projects a very slow and gradual evolution to a world federation. There is some evidence that such an evolution has been in progress for the past two centuries (see Doyle), but progress is very slow and there is no end in sight. We cannot afford to wait for decades (possibly even hundreds of more years) for a peaceful world federation to evolve. A world state (if agreed to by most major powers) could in fairly short order eliminate the risk of the destruction of human civilization in a large scale nuclear war.

In order to achieve perpetual peace, or some reasonable semblance of it, a world state or world federation must have the following features:

1) A public constitution which prohibits the possession of military forces by any nation or any party other than the world state and which prohibits the use of force by one nation against another.

2) An intelligence network whose sole purpose it is to monitor compliance with (1) and report apparent violations to a judiciary body.

3) A judiciary body empowered to determine violations of (1) and order the use of armed forces when necessary.
4) An international army or "police force" to enforce the decisions of the judiciary body.  

These conclusions are strongly suggested by Kant's own reflections on the analogy between the relations of nations and the relations of individuals in the "state of nature" described by Hobbes and Locke. Hobbes describes the state of nature as a war of "every man against every man." In the state of nature, human beings prey upon each other with great ruthlessness. Each person lives in constant fear and suspicion of others. Since there are no legal institutions to settle disputes between individuals, such disputes are likely to lead to fighting and bloodshed. The relations between nations in the world as we know it are little different. Nations wage war upon one another with the greatest ruthlessness and treachery (PP, p. 121). The strong prey upon the weak. "Real peace" does not exist; at best there are lulls in fighting and preparations for new wars (PP, p. 93).

The solution to the problem of war between nations is analogous to the solution to the problem of the war between individuals in the state of nature. In order to attain the benefits of peace, people in the state of nature must give up certain rights — in particular, the right to use force to protect their other rights; individuals must also give up the right to punish others. They must renounce their right to use violence except in immediate self-defense. The state claims a monopoly on the use of force within its territory and suppresses any attempt to create private armed forces which would threaten this monopoly. The state also prohibits the creation of vigilante groups and other private law enforcement agencies. Similarly, Kant says that to attain peace nations must give up certain freedoms or prerogatives in their dealings with other nations and submit themselves to some kind of higher authority (PP, p. 105). (To follow the analogy strictly, Kant would have to accept something like my proposal.) Kant fails to fully grasp the logic of his own argument. Just as nations must have coercive power over individuals, so an international state or international federation must have coercive power over
individual nations. Further, just as nations must maintain an effective monopoly on the kind of coercive power that can be used against individuals, so an international government must maintain a monopoly on military power. The nation-state is quite successful in its minimal function of bringing about peace between individuals. In spite of the violent nature of many human beings, most members of civilized societies live in peace with their fellow citizens and have little reason to fear physical attack (see PP, pp. 112-113). Stable governments that restrict individual access to firearms have very low murder rates. England and Wales, which have a combined population of about 50 million people, averaged only 1102 murders a year during the mid-1970s. Norway, the country with the lowest murder rate in the world, averaged only 20 murders a year during the same period. 12

3.

1) Could a world government with these features prevent wars between nations? I think that, if properly managed, such an international government could virtually eliminate the danger of major catastrophic wars. The key here is to prevent the creation of national armies. No nation can be allowed to possess armed forces of sufficient power to threaten other countries. Armed police, of course, can be permitted. But the police can have no greater power than that necessary to suppress minor civil disturbances (see section 5.3 of this paper). Without a modern army, it would be difficult for one nation to attack another. Conceivably, a nation could be so carried away by war fever that its citizens would arm themselves with whatever weapons they have available (sticks and stones or hunting weapons, and so on) and attack another nation. This is unlikely and, in any case, would not lead to catastrophic wars. Such makeshift armies would not possess sufficient firepower to cause great harm and the attacking party could be easily crushed by the powerful military forces possessed by the world state. The futility of waging wars with makeshift ar-
mies against the overwhelming military power and modern weaponry of the world state would be the strongest deterrent imaginable.

Large scale wars between nations cannot arise as long as the international government maintains an effective monopoly on the possession of military power. Similarly, the state can prevent large scale violence between its own citizens if it maintains its effective monopoly on the use of coercive force within its borders. How could the world government maintain its monopoly on military power? It is clear that voluntary agreements will not be enough to guarantee that national armies are not created. The world government must possess and be prepared to use military forces sufficient to dismantle and defeat any national army in the process of creation. Clearly, the kind of military force needed by the world state in order to maintain its military monopoly would be considerably smaller than the combined military forces of the nations of the world at the present time. I would guess that the armed forces of the world state would not need to be any larger than the present US or Soviet armed forces. Since the world government would possess the only modern military force in the entire world, it would not need to expend money on the development of ever more sophisticated weapons. The total amount of money that would need to be spent for military purposes would only be a small portion of what the world presently spends on armaments. The economic benefits that would result from this would be enormous and contribute to the stability of the world state.

A successful world government must also possess a far reaching intelligence network capable of discovering the creation of national or local armies. Such a government must also insure that members of all nationalities and important social and religious groups are represented appropriately in all of its agencies and departments. It is also important that, inasmuch as possible, the individuals who work for such organizations be loyal to the aims and ideals of the world state. These individuals cannot be or be perceived to be partial to the interests of any particular country or group of countries. (Among other things, this means that the
military preparations of any given country should not be monitored by its own citizens.) In order to achieve its aim of ending major wars, the world state must enjoy the support and/or tolerance of most human beings. No institution of this or any other sort, however well designed, can achieve its goals if most of those people affected by it are violently opposed to its aims and purposes. But a world government could function properly, even though many would deeply resent the required surrender of national autonomy. (As we shall see later, this surrender of autonomy can be kept to a minimum.) Similarly, nations enjoy peace between their own citizens, even though many people resent the restraints that their governments impose.

Given powerful military forces, a world government should be able to easily suppress incipient military forces under creation, provided that they are detected in time. An adequate intelligence network should have little trouble in discovering illegal military forces before they become strong enough to threaten peace. Powerful conventional armed forces and factories which produce modern armaments occupy a great deal of space and cannot be hidden from careful ground and air scrutiny. Powerful armies and armaments industries require a long time to create; they cannot spring up suddenly under the eyes of the world state’s intelligence network. (It goes without saying that intelligence agents must be permitted to look and go anywhere.) Given the large number of people who would know of any attempt to create sizable modern military forces, “leaks” of secrecy would be almost certain to result from any such attempt. Presumably, any attempt to create an illegal military force would be known to people sympathetic to the international government. Very large rewards or bounties could be offered to individuals who inform the world state of clandestine military operations. This together with harsh penalties, for example, the death penalty, for those who participate in prohibited military activities should make it very difficult for anyone to create an armed force capable of challenging the world state’s monopoly on military power.

The greater scale of wars between nations, as opposed to fights between individuals, suggests one respect in which a world state
is likely to be more effective in its peace-keeping role. National and local governments cannot detect every act of violence committed by one individual against another. Sometimes individuals get away with murder. But in a world state of the sort that I have advocated, no nation could reasonably hope to conquer another nation without being detected and then repulsed by the security forces of the world state.

Special problems are created by the existence of nuclear arms which possess enormous destructive capacity, in spite of occupying only a very small amount of space. Such weapons might escape the detection of the most vigilant intelligence agency. This problem will be considered separately in the final section of the paper.

The arguments of this section constitute arm-chair theorizing about empirical questions. There is no way to know for certain that the proposals offered here would eliminate major wars short of putting them into practice and observing how they work. However, there is strong empirical evidence for the claim that international organizations as they are presently constituted (without coercive powers) cannot insure peace between nations. My argument hangs on Kant’s analogy between the relations of nations and the relations of individuals in the state of nature. The state is successful in reducing violence between individuals. Assuming that the analogy between the relations of individuals and the relations of states is a plausible one, there is every reason to suppose that a world state would have the same success in assuring peace between nations.

2) Because of the importance of this issue, I think it would be well to address the question of the plausibility of the analogy at some length. In a lengthy criticism of such writers as Spinoza and Rousseau who regard the relations of nations as constituting a state of nature, Charles Beitz argues that there are four significant respects in which the relations of nations differ from the relations of individuals in a Hobbesian state of nature. 13

i) The actors in the Hobbesian state of nature are solitary individuals who live in fear of each other. There are no larger associations of individuals, no extended families or economic
groups whose existence might tend to minimize conflicts among their members. In order for the analogy to hold in this respect, individual states must be the only actors in international affairs; there cannot exist any "conflict minimizing coalitions." But as Beitz notes, there are coalitions of nations which serve to minimize conflicts between their members. There are, for example, military alliances, trading associations, and multinational corporations.\footnote{14}

ii) An important feature of the Hobbesian state of nature is that all people in the state of nature are relatively equal in power, since the weakest can kill the strongest.

The assumption of equal power is most obviously necessary for Hobbes's claim that the state of nature is a state of war because it eliminates the possibility of a dictatorship (or empire) arising in the state of nature as a result of the preponderant power of any one actor or coalition.\footnote{15}

The equality of actors in the state of nature might also tend to promote conflict by heightening the general level of fear, mistrust and suspicion. Beitz notes that there is no comparable equality amongst nations. Some nations have nothing to fear from certain other nations. The United States, for example, has no reason to fear Albania.

iii) Hobbes assumes that individuals are solitary and completely independent of each other. Beitz considers this assumption to be necessary to show that the state of nature is a state of war.

If the units in the state of nature were interdependent in the way suggested, then the pursuit of self-interest by any one unit might require cooperation with other units in the system. The relations among parties in the state of nature would then resemble a game of mixed interests rather than a zero-sum game. Thus, if the units were interdependent, Hobbes's assumption that the pursuit of self-interest by the parties in the state of nature will usually lead to violent conflict is undermined.\footnote{16}

In order for the analogy between the relations of individuals in the state of nature and the relations of nations to hold, nations must be able to order their internal (non-security) affairs inde-
pendently of the internal policies of other nations. But Beitz claims that this is surely not the case.

the security and prosperity of any one state depends to a greater or lesser extent on that of some or all other states. ... the great powers have a shared interest in avoiding a nuclear confrontation, and this justifies a measure of trust and predictability in their relations with one another. The interdependence of state interests has recently been illustrated in the broad area of economic and welfare concerns as well.

iv) In Hobbes’s state of nature there are no means of enforcing agreements or of forcing compliance with moral rules and thus no reasonable expectation on the part of individuals that others will either keep agreements or obey moral rules. The absence of reliable means to encourage and enforce mutually beneficial agreements and exchanges clearly tends to promote conflict in the state of nature. Here again, Beitz argues, the analogy fails.

the international community possesses a variety of devices for promoting compliance with established norms. These range from such mild sanctions as community disapproval and censure by international organizations to coordinated national policies of economic embargoes of offending states.

Beitz’s criticisms of the analogy between the relations of individuals in the state of nature and the relations of nations seem to me to be correct in the main. However, his criticisms do not undermine the main argument of this paper. The four features of the Hobbesian state of nature at issue are all ones that tend to make the state of nature a state of war. Beitz aims his arguments primarily at those who wish to use the analogy to show that the relations of nations tend to a state of war. Referring to the four features of international relations at issue, Beitz writes the following:

If these conditions are not met by international relations, then the analogy between international relations and the state of nature does not hold, and the prediction that international relations is a state of war does not necessarily follow.
Beitz is at pains to stress the extent to which peaceful cooperation between nations succeeds. We may grant Beitz all of his criticisms of the analogy. The relations of nations in the world today cannot be correctly described as a state of nature. The level of violence and war between nations is not comparable to that attributed by Hobbes to individuals in the state of nature. Nonetheless wars do occur all too frequently. Surely war is a sufficiently great evil to warrant serious attempts to end or limit it. The central thesis of this paper — that an appropriately designed world government could prevent the occurrence of major wars — is not cast into doubt by anything that Beitz says. For my purposes, what is crucial is not the analogy between the relations of nations in the present world and the relations of individuals in the state of nature, but rather the analogy between the ability of a state to insure and enforce peace between individuals and the ability of an appropriately designed world government to insure and enforce peace between nations. Beitz offers no criticisms of this analogy.

I will conclude this very lengthy digression by commenting briefly on the unequal power of nations and by noting one further disanalogy between the relations of nations and the relations of individuals in the state of nature not discussed by Beitz.

A consequence of the unequal power of nations is that not all nations find the chaos of international relations equally dangerous. Some nations are better able to defend themselves against attack than others. However, the present inequality of nations shows nothing about the ability of a world government to preserve peace. No nation is so powerful (or would be so powerful after having been disarmed in a world state) as to be able to be free from the control of an armed world state. It might be suggested that the inequality of nations tends to make the creation of a world government less likely. Powerful nations might not be sufficiently unhappy with the present state of affairs to help create a world government. However, no nation is so powerful as to be invulnerable to attack from any other nation or combination of nations. All nations have reasons to fear war and all have reasons to desire an end to war. It is plausible to suppose that the very
power of the nuclear superpowers makes them less secure than most other countries at the present time. At the present, it is extremely unlikely that any nation or group of nations could conquer any one of the great powers without paying an unacceptable price. A great conqueror such as Alexander or Napoleon is almost inconceivable in the present world. Powerful nations entering into a world government do not thereby forego the possibility of greatly enhancing their interests through conquest; the possibility does not exist.

A significant difference between the relations of nations and the relations of individuals in the state of nature which Beitz does not make note of is that, unlike war in the state of nature, (conventional) wars between nations do not deprive most human beings of the material benefits of civilization. Life and property are sufficiently secure for most of us that we are willing to work and save for the morrow. However, preparation for war greatly diminishes the material prosperity of most human beings and the outbreak of a major war would very adversely affect the standard of living of most human beings (see this paper’s epilogue). At most, this shows that the motivation that some nations would have for entering into a world government is weaker than the motivation that individuals would have for leaving the state of nature. It casts no doubt on the claim that, if it existed, a world government could forcibly preserve peace between nations.

4.

1) My four requirements for a successful world government leave a very indeterminate picture of the world government. Many different types of institutional arrangements are compatible with these four requirements. Some forms of world government might deprive individual states of control or sovereignty over their own internal social, economic, and political affairs. Among other things, such a world government might attempt to create a centrally planned world economy or affect a massive redistribution of
wealth from rich nations to poor ones. Less drastically, a world state possessing powers analogous to those of a contemporary liberal democracy could undertake a limited redistribution of wealth for the sake of poorer nations and provide public goods such as education, support for learning and the arts, and a cleaner environment by means of forcible taxation. Such a world government might also act so as to insure respect for human rights within all nations by requiring universal suffrage, freedom of expression, and laws forbidding discrimination on the grounds of race or sex. On the other hand, one can also imagine a "minimal state" version of a world government which would only have functions and powers analogous to those that Nozick suggests for individual nations: maintaining its monopoly on the use of force within its jurisdiction, protecting individual nations from the use of force or coercion by other nations, sustaining its power by means of taxation, enforcing contracts between citizens of different nations (or contracts between different nations themselves), providing for a common monetary system, and protecting the rights of individuals not to be harmed by assigning damages and liability in civil suits involving parties from different nations. (These powers go far beyond those that Kant would be willing to grant to a world federation.) Although I have sympathy with many of the aims of those who would hope for something more than a minimal world government, there are three compelling reasons for thinking that a minimal world government is more worthy of consideration and support at the present time than are types of world government which would give greater powers to the international state. After presenting these three arguments, I will sketch a picture of an "ultra-minimal" world government and suggest reasons for preferring it to a minimal world government.

2) First, a minimal world government (MWG) is more likely to be adopted than one possessing greater powers. It would represent a lesser surrender of national sovereignty, without compromising the goal of achieving peace (see PP, p. 105). The creation of a MWG would be in the interest of all nations; for all
nations share an interest in ending war. However, a more than minimal world government is unlikely to be accepted by all rich and powerful nations, since they would perceive it to be potentially contrary to their own economic interests. Second, a minimal government with powers clearly and narrowly restricted is likely to have less internal political strife. In a MWG there would be little opportunity to advance the interests of a particular nation or group of nations against others by political means. There will, therefore, be few opportunities for the kind of divisive interest group political battles so endemic to modern liberal democracies. Third, a MWG is also less likely to become a world tyranny. Given the clear and extremely limited powers of the world state, it is unlikely that it would attempt to impose unjust or tyrannical measures on any particular regions.

One can imagine troubling scenarios in which a world state possessing the power to redistribute wealth and correct perceived injustices within particular societies would act so as to embitter certain nations and cause them to seek to avoid the authority of the world state or even to withdraw from it. This would greatly undermine the stability of the world state. This problem would arise, even if the world state corrected only genuine injustices and even if its goals for redistribution were just. Such ambitious policies are feasible only in societies which have a strong consensus about the justice of the policies being instituted. I think it very unlikely that there could be a consensus about such matters within a world state for the foreseeable future.

In theory, a MWG must permit the existence of tyrannical regimes. However, most tyrannical regimes do not enjoy the loyalty of the general populace and maintain their existence only by use of force. Powerful armed forces of the type needed to suppress the masses would not be permitted under the proposed world government. The tyrannies that presently exist in Poland and South Africa could not exist under a MWG. (I take this to be another strong argument for thinking that it would be desirable if a MWG were to exist.) Tyrannical regimes lacking substantial popular support would not be possible under a MWG. What would be possible are states that enjoy widespread popular sup-
port but still permit or support gross violations of human rights, for example, the United States at times when it permitted slavery. I think that the measures that would be required in order to give the world state the power to end such injustices would involve so many risks of far greater evils as to be, on balance, not advisable.

3) A world state or international peace force could successfully fulfill its peace-keeping role without possessing all of the powers and functions of a libertarian minimal state. The power to enforce contracts, create a common currency, and assess damages for harms brought about through non-military means are not essential to the peace-keeping role of a world government. All that is strictly necessary are the four features outlined earlier (See 2).

I shall refer to a world state having these and only these functions as an “ultra-minimal world government” (UMWG). An UMWG would not attempt to settle all disputes between nations - it would only concern itself with cases in which one side resorted to the use of force. The principal difference between the world under an UMWG and our present world is that under an UMWG quarrelling nations would have no effective means of using violence against each other.

The same reasons for preferring a MWG to a more powerful one are also reasons for preferring an UMWG to a MWG. i) An UMWG is more likely to be adopted by individual sovereign states, since it represents less of a surrender of national sovereignty. ii) It is less likely to generate dangerous disputes about the proper functions of the world state and the proper application of its laws. iii) An UMWG is less likely to become a tyranny than the MWG.

Let me make clear what I mean when I say that I prefer an UMWG to any other form of world government. I advocate an UMWG as the best initial form of a world government and the form of world government that should be championed at the present time. This allows for the possibility that it would be desirable if the world government acquired additional powers and functions at some time after its inception.
4) A *Gloss on Kant*. Kant insists that a world government or world federation adhere to a strict policy of non-intervention in the internal affairs of nations (*PP*, pp. 96, 102-105). This would seem to commit Kant to preferring a MGW to alternatives which give the world government greater powers. Kant explicitly states that a world government should not interfere in the internal affairs of member states in order to correct injustices which exist within those states. A MWG differs from an UMWG in that, unlike the latter, it would permit the world government to enforce contracts, assess damages in civil suits, and maintain a common monetary system. Kant does not address these questions directly, however, it is plausible to suppose that he would regard the enforcement of contracts, the assessment of damages in civil suits, and the imposition of a common monetary system as violations of his principle of non-intervention. As best I can determine, my UMWG differs from Kant’s proposed world federation only in that it would possess military forces and use them to maintain its monopoly on military force.

5.

A fully adequate assessment of my proposals for an UMWG would require the actual implementation of those proposals and observations to determine whether they indeed have the virtues claimed for them here. Short of this, the best that one can do is to imagine problems and issues that might arise in a world state and then suggest in some detail how they might be dealt with. I shall make a very brief attempt at this here. The final two sections of the paper are devoted to the problem of preventing a world state from becoming a tyranny and the special problems created by nuclear weapons.

1) *International Trade and Commerce*. Section 4.3 briefly sketched an argument for an UMWG. An UMWG would not possess the power to enforce contracts or limit tariffs. The existence of a world government possessing special powers with regard to
trade and commerce is not necessary for the existence of healthy international trade. This is amply demonstrated by our present experience. There is no international agency that enforces agreements between citizens of different lands. The desire of all parties to continue to engage in mutually advantageous exchanges in the future is sufficient to motivate most nations to abide by their agreements. Any nation or firm which frequently violated agreements with foreign parties would soon find it difficult to find any foreign parties willing to deal with it. It is true that, at present, powerful nations are sometimes in a position to enforce contracts between themselves and weaker nations. However, present experience also shows that successful trade is possible between two nations, even if neither is in a position to use force to prevent violations of agreements.

2) Pollution. Often pollution caused by one nation adversely affects other nations. Nations quarrel about such matters and sometimes one nation may demand compensation from another to pay for damages caused by pollution. I suggest that (at least initially) a world government do nothing to regulate or control pollution. Granting a world government such powers would make some parties reluctant to join and any settlements arrived at are virtually certain to cause unhappiness in some quarters. It is to be hoped that some nations could achieve voluntary agreements outside of the framework of a world state. At worst, the state of the environment under an UMWG would be no worse than it is now. It would be desirable if a world state could eventually adopt and enforce a set of laws to protect the environment. But, at first, when its very existence is precarious, a world government should concentrate on its primary function — that of maintaining peace. (Of course, the greatest threat to our environment is that of a nuclear war.)

3) Permissible Security Forces. What sorts of police or security forces should individual nations or localities be permitted to possess? The rules here should be very restrictive and prohibit nations from possessing the most basic weapons necessary for waging modern conventional war. Among other things, the following should all be strictly prohibited: machine guns and other
automatic weapons (the size of such weapons and the ease of their manufacture would make this provision difficult to enforce), artillery, tanks and armored vehicles, mines, chemical and biological weapons (with the possible exception of tear gas and other non-lethal crowd control chemicals), armed vessels, military aircraft, military conscription, and military training (police training should not be permitted to include the study of the strategy and tactics involved in deploying large numbers of armed personnel or the study of prohibited weapons). The total number of armed personnel in the security forces should be limited in order to prevent nations from creating large armies of lightly armed soldiers. Problem: how could nations deal with criminals or insurrectionists using prohibited weapons? Solution: calls in the security forces of the world state which would no more tolerate the possession of such weapons by individuals or small groups than by nations.

Severe restrictions concerning the weaponry and security forces permitted would have two desirable consequences. i) They would make it more difficult for a nation to create surreptitiously a military force capable of threatening peace. ii) Their clarity would allow fewer grounds for divisive disputes concerning their proper interpretation. Given such severe limitations on security forces, nations would have great difficulty in suppressing large scale riots or civil disorders. No doubt, many would view this as a serious shortcoming of my proposals. However, I claim it as a virtue. This means that no oppressive government could maintain its existence against the violent opposition of the majority of its citizens. The institution of my proposals would make it impossible for the present governments of Poland and South Africa to remain in power. These governments survive only because they (and, in the case of Poland, foreign governments) are prepared to use the overwhelming might of powerful military forces against their own citizens. Nations in the proposed world state could not function without the active or passive consent of most of their citizens. Under an UMWG revolutions would occur more frequently than they do at present; but they would also be far less bloody. It would be almost inconceivable that a revolution enjoy-
ing the support of the vast majority of the population could fail or that its success would require a prolonged and bloody conflict. I claim all of this as a virtue of my proposals.

However, this makes it unlikely that the leaders of totalitarian regimes would voluntarily agree to enter a world state and thus risk losing their own political power. Thus, it is unlikely that all nations would agree to the creation of a world state in which nations possessed the sorts of very weak security forces which would be most desirable. Still, it is reasonable for framers of proposals for a world state to seek the acceptance of the most restrictive rules concerning security forces that they can get everyone to agree to. I trust that there is a certain range of possible restrictions on security forces that would be sufficiently restrictive to insure that no nation could develop military forces capable of threatening peace and which would permit security forces of sufficient strength to be acceptable to rulers of repressive governments. A large, decentralized and lightly armed security force could serve the tyrant’s aim of controlling his own populace without posing serious dangers to the military dominance of the world state. (Only tyrannical governments in powerful nations create an obstacle to the creation of a world state. Weaker nations can be compelled to join.)

4) Secession. The creation of an UMWG would be likely to result in a dramatic increase in attempts on the part of certain regions to secede from the nations of which they are a part. For nations would lack national military forces, which now make it so easy for them to crush secession movements. A world government should neither oppose nor support secession movements, unless one or more of the parties involved creates illegal military forces. This means that the only kind of fighting that would be tolerated would be that conducted by lightly armed volunteer mobs. The violence that would likely result from such secession movements is most undesirable. However, this must be balanced against the fact that such struggles are likely to be far less bloody under an UMWG than at present, due to the absence of modern military forces. That secession movements would be much more likely to succeed under an UMWG is, on balance, desirable.
Other things being equal, it is not desirable that a particular region violently opposed to being part of a larger nation be compelled to be part of that nation. Many of the worst examples of persecution of ethnic and religious minorities could be remedied by successful secession movements. Sometimes resource-rich regions of larger nations, for example, Katanga in Zaire and Alberta in Canada desire to secede in order to exclude others from the economic benefits of those resources. I would concede that, if successful, such movements would have an undesirable effect on the distribution of wealth. But this is a price that we should be willing to pay in order to avoid the far greater problems and dangers that would result from giving the world state the power to interfere in such matters. As things now stand, concern for the national security of the United States and its allies creates a case for opposing any secessionist movement within the United States and perhaps also a case for condoning the use of force against the secessionists, should they resort to force themselves. Such concerns for national defense would no longer be appropriate under a world government. Although economic considerations undoubtedly argue against secession in most cases, this alone would not justify the use of force against secessionists.

5) Emigration and Immigration. There are, I think, many compelling reasons to wish that all nations permitted free emigration and immigration. Such policies would enable people who feel that they are being denied their rights in their native lands to leave and it would also enable people in impoverished countries to seek a better life for themselves elsewhere. However, for the foreseeable future, many nations would be extremely reluctant to agree to be part of a world state requiring free emigration and free immigration. Totalitarian regimes of the sort that exist in many Soviet-block countries are unlikely to agree to any proposals requiring that all nations permit free emigration, since the implementation of such proposals would be likely to result in the large scale exodus of their own citizens. Citizens of affluent nations such as the US, Canada, and Australia are unlikely to endorse free immigration into their countries for fear that this would alter the racial and ethnic character of their societies and the fear
that it would dramatically increase the supply of labor and thus sharply decrease their wages. (These considerations carry little, if any, moral weight.) This issue is similar to the one considered in the preceding subsection. It is unlikely that all nations could agree to those institutional arrangements that would be most desirable. However, it makes sense to push for the greatest freedom with respect to emigration and immigration that could be agreed to — it being likely that nothing will be agreed to by all parties.

6) Territorial Disputes. An initial set of national boundaries must be agreed upon at the inception of a world government. Any conceivable set of boundaries is certain to leave many people and many nations dissatisfied. No set of institutional arrangements could satisfy everyone. In a world state no nation would be permitted to use force to enlarge its territory. This means that nations which desire to change their national boundaries would be very reluctant to join a world government. When doing so would not result in a large scale war, I would not hesitate to suggest using force to bring such nations into a world state. Fortunately, at present all of the great military powers are reasonably satisfied with their national boundaries. There are no territorial disputes directly involving the great powers which threaten the peace of the world. Thus, for the present, at least, territorial disputes are not an insuperable obstacle to the creation of a world state. Israel is the only nuclear power presently involved in a bitter territorial dispute. A situation in which two nuclear powers were involved in a bitter border dispute would create a formidable barrier to the creation of a world state. For it is unlikely that both parties would voluntarily agree to disarm and join a world government, since to do so would be to forego any hope of altering their boundaries by means of force, and, by hypothesis, at least one of the states in question will be bitterly unhappy with any territorial settlement reached. As suggested earlier, weak countries which are unhappy with their borders could be easily compelled to disarm and enter into a world government, whereas nations with nuclear weapons could not be so easily compelled to disarm. (This sug-
gests that if a world government is to be created it must be created before nuclear proliferation advances much further.

7) Constitutional Change. Any world government would encounter many unexpected problems for which its initial laws and structures would be inadequate. It is desirable that the constitution of the world state permit it to change in order to resolve unanticipated difficulties. However, provisions for change would make some nations reluctant to join a world state for fear that changes detrimental to their interests would be enacted later. In the case of particularly sensitive matters, for example, national boundaries, taxation, redistribution of wealth, tariffs, and emigration and immigration, it might be necessary to require the unanimous consent of all nations in order to make any changes. No nation would have reason to fear constitutional changes under such a unanimity requirement. There are presumably other areas, for example, criteria for permissible security forces (new restrictions might become necessary in light of technological advances), in which changes should not require the approval of all nations. I suspect that the kinds of rules likely to be initially agreed to for constitutional change would make it difficult for the world state to enact needed changes and reforms. However, as long as the world government is able to insure peace we should be happy to live with the other problems that it might create.

Kant offers five arguments for thinking a world federation preferable to a world state possessing the power to coerce nations (See 1) — the most important of these is the argument that a world state might become a world tyranny against which there could be no effective resistance. I shall briefly discuss the other four arguments and then consider at length Kant’s concern that a world state would become tyrannical. I shall suggest a number of safeguards to insure that a world state would not become a tyranny and argue that, even if the chances of its becoming a tyranny
were quite substantial, it would still be prudent to advocate and hope for the creation of an UMWG.

1) a) Kant argues that the very idea of an international state (consisting of sovereign states) is contradictory. It is self-contradictory to suppose that a world state, possessing all of the powers that the term "state" implies, could itself be composed of other sovereign states. For, in order to remain a sovereign state, a nation cannot cede its sovereignty (specifically its war-making powers) to any higher authority. Still the idea of a world state that includes all of the present nations of the world is perfectly consistent. These nations would not be sovereign states under a world government, but a world government consisting of all nations could exist. Kant's argument is not a serious argument against either the possibility or the desirability of a world state. b) Kant's second argument is that nations and peoples will be unwilling to make the kind of surrender of national sovereignty and national autonomy that would be required by a world state (PP, p. 105). I fear that Kant is right about this. This is a reason for thinking that a world federation would be more likely to be adopted than a world state. (In section 2 I suggested other reasons for thinking that a world state would be more likely to be adopted than a world federation.) Even if we grant that a world federation is more likely to be adopted than a world state, this is not a decisive reason for advocating a world federation rather than a world state, because there is little reason to think that a world federation could succeed in maintaining peace. The fact that an UMWG is more likely to be adopted than a MWG is a strong reason for advocating an UMWG, because an UMWG would be no less capable of insuring peace than a MWG. The question for us to consider is this: What sorts of proposals should be advocated and advanced at the present time? The answer to this depends on both the likely consequences of the adoption of the various proposals and the likelihood of their adoption. Of all institutional proposals capable of securing peace, the UMWG is the one most likely to be found acceptable by individual states. c) A third argument offered by Kant is that a world state would be ungovernable because of its size and lapse back into a state of war. Since Kant's time, the
speed of transportation and communications has greatly increased. The problems that he raises are no longer an insuperable obstacle to creating a manageable world state. It is not unreasonable to suppose that a world state could effectively exercise its authority, particularly if its functions were limited in the ways that I have suggested. d) Kant argues that a world state would violate the legitimate rights of individual sovereign states. This raises moral issues which cannot be adequately dealt with here. I will simply observe that Kant offers no arguments for supposing that states have rights over and above the rights of individual human beings. Further, it is only on the intuitively untenable view that the right of states to wage war outweighs the right of individuals not to be killed that Kant's last argument has any plausibility.

2) By adopting an UMWG form of world government, we greatly diminish the possibility that the world government would become a world tyranny. The occasions justifying the use of military force in an UMWG are severely limited and can be carefully defined (see 5.3). Such a government could not easily devolve into a tyranny by means of a gradual extension of its powers beyond their proper limits. Given the clarity of the rules for the proper use of military force, the military forces of an UMWG might be able to dispense with the kind of authoritarian command structure common to almost all military forces. A command structure could be devised in such a way as to require that relatively low ranking officers be given evidence for thinking that the conditions for the proper use of military force were satisfied before they sent their troops into battle. This would make it impossible for a small number of high ranking military officers to stage a successful coup d'etat without the active complicity of many other soldiers. Given a military command structure of this sort and given the clarity of the laws concerning the justification for the use of military forces, it would be impossible for the military forces of an UMWG to impose a tyrannical regime on the world unless most of the soldiers, or at least most of the officers, were prepared deliberately to violate the laws regulating their activities.
One thing that needs to be guarded against particularly is that the members of the military should identify themselves and their interests primarily as members of the military and thus be tempted to use the overwhelming power of the military to advance their own interests against those of the people of the world. A number of things can be done to greatly reduce the danger of a military take-over in a world state. i) Require that the military forces of the world government represent all important ethnic and religious groups in some appropriate proportion so that coalitions of soldiers representing the interests of certain nations or peoples against the interests of others are unlikely to develop. ii) Do not permit anyone to be a career soldier. Limit all enlistments to relatively short periods of time (5 or 7 years). Those entering into the military under such circumstances could never come to view themselves as members of a separate caste having interests apart from those of their own peoples. In an UMWG there would be no need to have a tremendously skilled or proficient military, since it would face no serious competition. Such a force could afford to forego the benefits of a more competent military force which could be obtained by permitting the creation of a professional military caste. iii) Carefully screen all potential military personnel to determine their loyalty to the ideals of the world state and indoctrinate them in those ideals while they are in the military.

3) It must be conceded that any world state runs the risk of being taken over by its military forces, against which there could be no effective resistance. Here, we must ask how great this danger is and whether the danger is sufficient to make the creation of a world state, on balance, inadvisable. I think that the danger of a military takeover in a properly planned world state would be rather small. Most nations of the world now possess military forces of sufficient power to impose tyrannical regimes on their citizenry. But, at least in those nations with stable regimes and constitutions insuring an orderly transfer of power between different governments, such take-overs in peace time are quite unusual. One cannot point to the occurrence of coups in times of war as a special cause for concern about a world state, since there
would presumably be no wars in a world state. The ethnic and linguistic diversity of an international armed force would make the kind of trust and cooperation among military personnel necessary for a successful coup d'état more difficult to attain than it is presently in most nations.

The relevant issue here is not the likelihood of a military takeover in an UMWG, but whether we would be any more likely to be victims of such a takeover under an UMWG than we are now. For any given citizen of the world, the probability that he/she would be the victim of a military coup under an UMWG is no greater than it is now. The following difference, however, must be conceded. In the present world, a tyrannical military regime in a particular country can sometimes be removed by other nations. Further, the excesses of such regimes can be limited by world opinion and the fear of outside intervention. There would be no effective check on the power of the military forces of a world state. However, there are reasons for thinking that most of the problems associated with a world state in this regard are already problems in the present world. i) At present, most military regimes are not overthrown by other countries, even if other nations have the power to do so. Witness the US tolerance, even support for, military governments in Latin America and other parts of the world. ii) Nations rarely go to war for the simple humanitarian purpose of deposing tyrannical or even genocidal regimes in other lands. The unhappy evidence for this is too vast to present in detail. I will simply make note of the following instances of genocide which did not elicit outside intervention, or even much notice, in spite of the fact that they could have been easily suppressed by the great powers: Armenia (1915-1916), Cambodia (1975-80), and East Timor (1975-1986). iii) Some nations possess such powerful military forces that no foreign power could contemplate attempting to thwart a military takeover without risking nuclear annihilation. A successful military coup in the ever-growing ranks of the nuclear powers could not be effectively resisted by foreign powers. The citizens of the United States and other major nuclear powers already face the danger of being taken over by military forces, which they could not suc-
cessfully resist and which would be very unlikely to be overthrown with foreign assistance.

There is reason to hope that the military forces necessary for a world state to maintain its effective monopoly on modern military force would be much too small to enable it to tyrannize the entire population of the world. The forces needed to suppress several simultaneous attempts to create armed forces would be far less than are necessary to establish effective totalitarian control over the entire world. (In our present overarmed world, most nations possess military forces of sufficient size to successfully impose totalitarian regimes on their own peoples.) If the size of the military forces of the world state were limited in the manner suggested above, then there would be little danger that a world government could devolve into the all-powerful police state of Orwellian nightmares. The price to be paid for this relative immunity to tyranny is that a world state could not maintain its monopoly on the use of force, unless it enjoyed a substantial measure of support from the nations and peoples of the world. If most nations contained substantial and well organized groups which were violently opposed to the aims of the world state and willing to risk their lives to fight the more organized and powerful military forces of the world state, then the world state would probably collapse, leaving us no worse off than we are now. (Under such circumstances I would prefer that the world state increase its military forces and contemplate the use of nuclear weapons rather than allow itself to be destroyed. The dangers of our present world strike me as greater than those that would be posed by a massively armed world state.)

4) I have argued that the danger of a military take-over in an UMWG would be relatively small. Here, I would like to argue that it is reasonable to desire the creation of a world state, even if the likelihood that it would become an all-powerful tyranny is quite great. One need only consider the alternative. The worst scenario in an UMWG is that it would become a tyrannical regime of some sort. Because of its ethnic composition, such a regime would be unlikely to be either narrowly nationalistic or "broadly genocidal." Under any such regime, however terrible, there
would still be hope for an improvement in the human condition at some time in the future. At present, the worst scenario is the extinction of the human race in a full-scale nuclear war. (This danger grows continuously with the proliferation of nuclear weapons.) Further, in the absence of measures of the sort proposed here, the probability of an all-out nuclear war at some time in the future is quite great — surely as great or greater than the probability that a world state would become a tyranny. So, to sum up the argument, an UMWG might become a tyranny of a terrible sort. But, by not creating a world state, we run at least as great a risk of a far greater catastrophe. Surely an UMWG would be preferable to the present set of institutions whereby different nations deal with each other.

5) Here, I would like to claim something much stronger, namely that an UMWG is (at least initially) preferable to any alternative set of political institutions. This is a sweeping claim and one which cannot be fully supported apart from an exhaustive consideration of alternative proposals for avoiding war. However, the arguments of this paper create a prima facie case for this claim. There is strong evidence to suggest that if nations are permitted to possess military forces, then wars are very certain to occur. There is also strong evidence for thinking that nations cannot be relied upon to disarm voluntarily, unless they have assurance that other nations have also disarmed. The fears, hatreds, and territorial ambitions of rival nations are certain to ruin any voluntary disarmament proposals. Therefore, any plausible proposal for ending wars must contain, in some form or other, all of the features that I claim to be essential for a world state. I have argued that it would be inadvisable to grant the peace-keeping agency any wider powers since doing so would be likely to make the creation of a world state less likely, create strife and instability within any world state, and increase the danger that a world state would become an unchecked tyranny. If these two arguments succeed, then we are left with the conclusion that an UMWG would be the best initial form of world government to try to create.
I have argued that the most important task of a world government would be to prevent any nation or group from creating a substantial armed force of its own. I also argued that an UMWG could prevent the creation of substantial conventional armed forces, without becoming a police state. The size of conventional armed forces, the time required for their creation and organization, and the numbers of people involved in creating them would make their detection easy for an international intelligence agency having free access to all regions of the world. Nuclear weapons, however, pose special problems. They permit enormous destructive powers to be hidden in very small areas; further such power can be controlled by very small numbers of individuals who might have no difficulty keeping their activities secret. Fortunately, however, no group could hope to build large numbers of nuclear weapons and delivery systems in secret — the size of the facilities and the number of people involved would be much too large for that. This means that an UMWG should be able to avert the ultimate catastrophe of a large scale nuclear war, if it is able to seize or destroy all of the nuclear weapons that exist at the time that it is created. The main problem for a world government regarding nuclear weapons would be to insure that all existing nuclear weapons and delivery systems come under its control at the time of its creation. If all nuclear powers entered into the world government voluntarily and in good faith this should be no problem. Existing governments have inventories of their own present stocks of such weapons; all could be accounted for and turned over to the world state. A world state would also have to maintain tight control over all of the fuel used in nuclear power plants. (It might prove necessary to ban or severely restrict the use of nuclear power.) No measures taken by a world state or any other possible institutional arrangement could completely preclude the possibility that a group of terrorists could obtain sufficient quantities of fissionable material to create a small number
of crude nuclear bombs. That nuclear terrorism is a possibility seems to be a fact of life in our present world. It is hardly a just complaint against an UMWG that it cannot completely preclude a certain sort of disaster which no other conceivable set of institutions could preclude.

The question arises as to whether a world government should possess any nuclear weapons. In order to answer this question we need to determine whether the possession of such weapons could ever be necessary in order for the world state to maintain its overwhelming military superiority over all potential rivals. If nuclear weapons are not necessary to maintain the world state’s military monopoly, then the danger of their being misused by military personnel would argue strongly against keeping them. I am inclined to think that a world state ought to keep a small number of nuclear weapons (about 50 or 100). This would not be enough to threaten the existence of the human race, but it would be enough to deter any group or nation from surreptitiously creating a small number of nuclear weapons and using them to blackmail the world state. Having gone on for too long already, I will not consider the special problems created by the existence of chemical and biological weapons.

Epilogue

I have argued that an UMWG would bring about a substantial measure of peace between nations in just the same way that the state insures a substantial measure of peace between individuals in most parts of the world. I have also argued that the benefits to be derived from insuring peace between nations far outweigh the problems and risks that would be created by an UMWG. In my view, those who prefer our present international state of nature to any form of world government are as unreasonable as anarchists who oppose the existence of any kind of state or government possessing coercive powers.
It is clearly in the self-interest of most human beings that an UMWG be created. Our mutual interests in security and in life itself far outweigh our interest in the perpetuation of the nation state. An UMWG would provide very substantial economic and cultural benefits to humanity. The United States presently spends approximately $300 billion a year on defense. Its share of the costs for the security forces under an UMWG would be only a small portion of this figure. Thus, the United States would realize an immediate benefit of at least $1000 per year for each citizen. The long term benefits of a world government would be far greater. The cost of maintaining military forces in peace time is greatly exceeded by the costs (both economic and cultural) of the destruction and upheaval of war itself. These costs can be partly grasped by considering the following thought experiment. Suppose that an UMWG had been created in 500 B.C. and that it had succeeded in ending major wars. How would this have affected the course of human progress? How much richer would Italy be now if its social and economic structure had not been repeatedly destroyed and rebuilt? How greatly would human culture have been enriched had the Etruscan and Carthaginian civilizations and languages survived?

Many readers might be inclined to say that, whatever the merits of such proposals, they could never be adopted by humanity and that, therefore, they are utopian pipe-dreams. Or, to rephrase Kant’s own dictum “your position may be true in theory, but your proposals could never be put into practice.” As a philosopher, I profoundly disagree with the implied claim that moral and political ideals, which we are unable to fully implement, can be of no practical guidance to us. However, it is not appropriate for us to consider this issue here. I fear that the creation of a world state seems unlikely at the present time. However, the creation of some kind of world state is in the self-interest of most human beings. I know of no reason why the general perception that this is the case could not take hold at some time in the future. Perhaps a terribly frightening event such as a small-scale nuclear war or a dispute between the superpowers nearly culminating in an all-out nuclear war could frighten humanity enough that it would
seriously entertain proposals such as Kant’s. Hopefully human beings will eventually see that their interest in not being killed and their economic interests far outweigh their interest in defending the “honor” of their nations, promoting the extension of national boundaries, and other such nationalistic causes. A further obstacle to the creation of a world state, which I noted earlier (5.3), is that its creation may be contrary to the self-interest of those rulers of non-democratic nations who depend on military force in order to maintain their power. I think that the best hope for creating a world state in light of this difficulty is to find levels of strength for the security forces of such a state which would be both acceptable to its rulers and not so great as to pose a threat to peace. However, if (as Kant claims) the creation of a world government would require that all nations have democratic or “republican” forms of government, then the prospects for the creation of a world government are not good. It may seem unlikely that all nations would ever agree to a particular form of a world government. But this is not necessary for the creation of a world government. It would be enough if all great powers (or all nuclear powers) agreed to the idea of a world state. They could then unite and compel other nations to join.\textsuperscript{21}

Notes

1. Leviathan, Chapter XIV.
2. In the text I will use the following abbreviations: PP for Kant’s Perpetual Peace, in Kant’s Political Writings, Hans Reiss, ed. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1970); TP for his Theory and Practice, which is also in Kant’s Political Writings; MEJ for Metaphysical Elements of Justice, John Ladd, tr. (Indianapolis: Bobbs Merrill, 1965); UH for his “Idea for a Universal History from a Cosmopolitan Point of View,” in On History, Lewis White Beck, tr. (Indianapolis: Bobbs Merrill, 1963); and CTJ for his Critique of Teleological Judgement in his Critique of Judgement, James L. Meredith, tr. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1952).

5. Note also the following passage from *Theory and Practice*. Speaking with reference to the deplorable state of the relations between nations and the ever present danger of war Kant writes the following:

And there is no possible way of counteracting this except a state of international right, based upon enforceable public laws to which each state must submit (by analogy with a state of civil or political right among individual men). For a permanent universal peace by means of a so-called European balance of power is a pure illusion, like Swift's story of the house which the builder had constructed in such perfect harmony with all the laws of equilibrium that it collapsed as soon as a sparrow alighted on it. But it might be objected that no states would voluntarily submit to coercive laws of this kind, and that a proposal for a universal federation, to whose power all the individual states would voluntarily submit and whose laws they would all obey, may be all very well in the theory of Abbe St. Pierre or of Rousseau, but that it does not apply in practice. For such proposals have always been ridiculed by great statesmen, and even more by head of state, as pedantic, childish and academic ideas.

For my own part, I put my trust in the theory of what the relationships between men and states ought to be according to the principle of right. It recommends to us earth gods that the maxim that we should proceed in our disputes in such a way that a universal federal state may be inaugurated, so that we should therefore assume that it is possible (in praxi). I likewise rely (in subsidium) upon the very nature of things to force men to do what they do not willingly choose (*fata volentem ducunt, nolentem trahunt*) (p.92).

At the beginning of this passage Kant suggests that the only possible way to prevent wars between nations would be to create an international government having coercive power over individual states. (He explicitly mentions the analogy between the relations of nations and the relations of individuals in the state of nature.) Kant then considers the objection that no state would ever voluntarily submit to laws of this kind. He concludes by expressing his optimism about the prospects for the creation of a world government, however averse they may be to such an idea. In this passage Kant speaks of a “universal federation” as his preferred ideal. However, he gives no hint of his later distinction between a world federation and a world state. In fact, his description of the “universal federation” seems to fit his later description of a “world state.”
The "universal federation" described in the foregoing passage possesses the power to coerce individual states.

There is an apparent inconsistency between the present passage and those passages from *PP* and *MEJ* in which Kant argues against any form of world government having coercive power over individual states. Since *PP* and *MEJ* are later works than *TP*, (and since they were written shortly before his death), it is plausible to suppose that they express his final view. In *TP* we see Kant holding the final propositions: a) the only way to end wars between nations is to create a world government having the power to coerce individual nations, and b) the creation of a world government with the power to compel individual states to do its will is both possible and desirable. In *PP* and *MEJ* Kant considers the possibility of an international government which does not possess the power to force nations to do its will. He then rejects a); he claims that a voluntary federation of nations could also insure peace. However, in *PP* he still seems to hold to the view that world government having power over individual states would be the best possible guarantee of peace. In the latter works Kant also rejects b); he holds that the creation of a world state would be neither possible nor desirable.

9. Bourke also claims that an international army or police force is necessary for the purpose of maintaining peace. See his "Kant's Doctrine of Perpetual Peace," *Philosophy* 17 (1942): 333. However, this claim is not discussed or argued for at any length.
10. Waltz also seems to think that Kant's argument lends support to the idea of a world state which possesses coercive powers of civil governments, rather than a mere federation of sovereign states. He thinks that Kant's endorsement of a federation requires special explanation. See "Kant, Liberalism, and War," p. 337.
11. Nozick says that having an effective monopoly on the use of force within its borders is part of what it means for something to be a state. An entity which lacks this kind of monopoly simply cannot count as a state. See *Anarchy, State and Utopia* (New York: Basic Books, 1973), pp. 23-24.
17. Beitz., p. 42.
20. Beitz, p. 36; also see pp. 40 and 42.
21. I am indebted to Harry Gensler, Martin Swab, Judy Carson, Mark Overvold and Paul Moser for helpful criticisms of earlier versions of this paper. I would also like to thank the members of the Philosophy Departments at Illinois State University and Loyola University to whom earlier versions of this paper were presented.

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