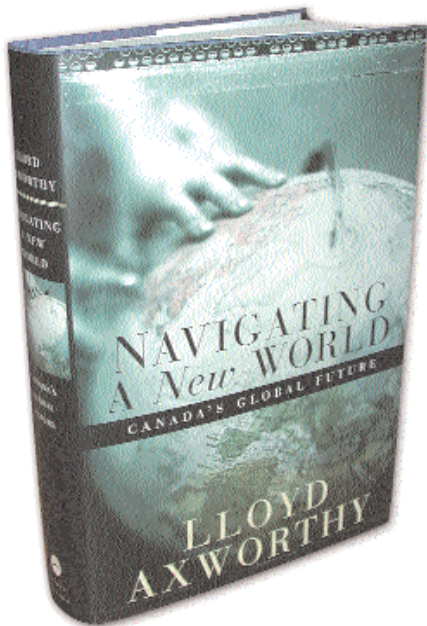


EXCERPT

NAVIGATING A NEW WORLD



BY LLOYD
AXWORTHY

This fall the internationally respected statesman Lloyd Axworthy once again steps into the global arena with the publication of his book *Navigating a New World*. At once passionate, provocative and fiercely intelligent, he argues that “human security”—putting the interests of people ahead of the nation state and multi-nationals—must be at the top of the political agenda for the twenty-first century.

THE CROWDED GLOBAL VILLAGE

THE GLOBAL VILLAGE IS BECOMING A TRIFLE OVERCROWDED.

The streets teem with close to 190 nations. The big and powerful strut and swagger at centre stage while the poor and small are shuffled to the outer edge. Others are states in name only, presiding over a presidential palace while a group of warlords control the hinterland. Yet national sovereignty is still acknowledged to be the right of each villager, even though the reality is that all the inhabitants find their fortunes and futures intertwined.

The Westphalian nation-state system has been around a long time and is a deeply entrenched belief in most corridors of power and in the mindset of most people. And for good reason, as over the past two and a half centuries it has been, by and large, an effective system for managing affairs, getting rid of pretensions of world empire, and serving people's needs. In the lexicon of political science, it has been an appropriate level of governance. Nor has it been static. After the Second World War, there was a creative period of institution building where a whole raft of political and economic intergovernmental agencies and organizations were established to order the increasing

interdependency. More recently we have witnessed the World Trade Organization and the emergence of regional groupings, with greater or lesser degrees of integration, such as the European Union. Of course we also see the increasing power of other players. Some are influential international organizations in the humanitarian field, such as the Red Cross, but the most notable are the global corporations. Multinational corporations bstride a global marketplace, serviced and supported by a plethora of international consultants, rating agencies, lawyers and accountants.

There is, too, a dark underside of this system, one which shows that modern tools of global management, finance and organization can be used to exploit and to murder and to traffic in drugs with worldwide efficiency. The globe is becoming more corrupted and terrorized. It is also home to increasing numbers of the dispossessed, those who have no home, standing, privileges or rights. These are the refugees, the displaced, the victims of illegal migration, the unemployed youth, the young children deprived of parents and community by the ravages of war, AIDS or natural disaster. They are forgotten, ignored and often exploited by the global elite.

On the plus side, global civil society has multiplied into thousands of NGOs [non-governmental organizations],

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wired together, joined by a proliferating number of associations and multilateral institutions addressing worldwide or regional issues, drawing all the other villagers into an ever changing galaxy of networks and connections. Marshall McLuhan would be impressed. This village is more democratic, in many places more prosperous and healthy. There is the embryo of international governance, and the information revolution promises to bind people together and make control by elites more difficult. These efforts add to the complexity of interactions and connections between the various occupants and add to the overriding of nation-state distinctions. “Community” might well be a better way to understand what is going on.

But we continue to organize around the nation-state as a fundamental premise. Sovereignty remains an article of faith for those who have enough power to believe they can go it alone, for many former colonial states that often suspiciously see international efforts at cooperation as plots to restore Western control, and for many dictators who hide their authoritarianism and violence behind the wall of sovereignty. But many states that are less ideological or self-interested, while they would agree that the nation-state system has been the way of doing business for a long time, and it generally works so why try to fix it, are nonetheless open to alterations on the edge, and it is on this basis that the shift to a human security model is taking place. There is a search for more effective ways to govern the complexity and interdependency of our lives.

Robert Cooper, a British scholar, has put forward an interesting typology to describe the principal categories of nation-state today. First are modern states, where there is a close coupling of the sovereignty of a state and the way in which the individual citizen constructs his or her own identity; the U.S. and China are good examples. Second are the postmodern states, where identity is decreasingly tied to one’s state citizenship and people are increasingly more cosmopolitan in what they believe in; Western Europeans and to some extent Canadians fit this description. Then there are the pre-modern states, where individuals inhabit informal economies or groupings and there is little state loyalty because there isn’t much of a state; Somalia is a prime example.

On January 10, 2002, a *Globe and Mail* headline read: “Canada Jumps in Ranking on Globalization.” In an

assessment by Foreign Affairs magazine of the world’s most global nations, Canada had jumped three places to rank no. 7 overall among those societies that were adapting best to globalization, outscored by Ireland and Singapore, but ahead of the U.S. and France, to name just a few.

It would be easy to dismiss this as yet another artificial index of global comparisons, but a closer look at the study points to an interesting measure of what it takes to be successful in the global village. The criteria used are simple but telling: the degree of economic integration, the level and frequency of political engagement, personal contact with other people, and use of technology, especially the Internet. These are seen as indicators of a capacity to manoeuvre and manage in a global context, of street-smart societies dexterous in navigating the global landscape. This is not just a function of economics or technology

but of political and social strengths as well.

I have made the case when discussing Canada–U.S. affairs that the best strategy for us is to avoid whenever possible governing our relations one-on-one. Building a North American framework, including Mexico, was one antidote. On a much broader plain is the potential to become a global player, using our resources, our reputation for honest and constructive intentions and our capacity as a joiner and builder of multilateral, perhaps supranational bodies, to exercise influence, gain stature and set agendas. The surge of globalization has opened new avenues of endeavour for us to play an activist role. Let’s tap into the globalizing instincts of Canadians, our desire to move and shake abroad. Let’s extend our appetite for being wired into an international society.

Make the village our turf—that is what the global index is telling us. Working through the UN, the Commonwealth, the G-20 or any number of other regional, economic or environmental institutions is where Canada is most effective.

Paradoxically, the more governance we apply to global developments, the greater our potential for exercising a distinctive role and operating according to our own coordinates and not just in the slipstream of the United States. This is not supposition. Recent experience shows it can be done. ■

Visit www.nav-new-world.ca to ask Lloyd Axworthy your questions about Canada’s global future.



PHOTO: NEIL GRAHAM

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