

www.globalsolutionsmn.org

OUR VISION:

We envision a future in which countries work together to abolish war, protect our rights and freedoms, and solve the problems facing humanity that no country can solve alone. This vision requires effective democratic global institutions that will apply the rule of law while respecting the diversity and autonomy of national and local communities.

OUR MISSION:

We are a membership organization working to build political will in the United States to achieve our vision. We do this by educating Americans about our global interdependence, communicating global concerns to public officials, and developing proposals to create, reform and strengthen international institutions such as the United Nations.

PARTICIPATE IN OUR THIRD THURSDAY FORUM DISCUSSIONS!

Gail Hughes, President

Dear GlobalSolutionsMN.Org Friends,

We are off to an exciting season of Third Thursday Global Issues Forums! Our September and October Forums brought attention to big, international, serious topics that have implications for people's quality of life world-wide. Both sessions generated intense discussion with participation by almost everyone in attendance; and both sparked critical and creative thinking about possible 'solutions' - alternatives that we, as global citizens, can promote.

September Forum Explored the Underlying Conditions Related to War

For our first Forum in September, **Michael Andregg** (Universities of Minnesota and St. Thomas) presented an overview of recent global conflicts and discussed ideas from his award-winning book, *The Causes of War*. Andregg's analytical model suggests that economic, social, and demographic trends help us to predict where conflicts are likely to arise in the future. Although we didn't have time to explore implications in the session, I wondered: If we can predict conflicts, can't we act to mitigate their underlying conditions?

October Forum Discussed how Proposed International Trade Agreement can Undermine Democracy

In October, **Ben Lilliston**, from the Institute for Agriculture and Trade Policy (IATP) provided a 'heads up' about two international trade agreements proposed by the U.S. Although the agreements (the Trans-Pacific Partnership – TPP – which could involve 17 countries, and the Trans-Atlantic Trade and Investment Partnership Trade and Investment Partnership – TTIP – between the US and the EU) may seem esoteric at first glance, audience members became alarmed as we heard about the very real limitations they would impose on democratic process in signatory countries. When asked what we can do, Lilliston said that the first step is for us to ask Congress to refuse to grant "fast track" status for the proposals. Such status would prevent Congress from having time to read and understand the proposals, which were written in complete secrecy by corporate lawyers. Congress would have to vote for or against the TTP and the TTIP without discussion and without the option of passing amendments to any of its provisions. President Obama is likely to ask Congress for "fast track" status this November; so we should contact our Senators and Representatives as soon as possible. One attendee, former Board member, Rosa Maria de la Cueva Peterson, commented that international trade has the potential to benefit all parties. She wondered how trade agreements can be designed that will be of mutual benefit. What would such an agreement look like?

Upcoming November Forum will Help Us Understand Events in Egypt

Is the “Arab Spring” in Egypt being rescued or destroyed? To learn more, join us for our November Third Thursday Forum! Professor **Ragui Assaad**, of the Humphrey School of Public Affairs at the University of Minnesota, will help us understand what’s been happening. For more information, see below.

In closing: Please send me your ideas for Forums, feedback on Forums you attended, or other thoughts you may have. My email address is: hughe038@umn.edu; and my phone number is: (612) 379-7419.

THIRD THURSDAY GLOBAL ISSUES FORUM

Free and open to the public.

Where? Hennepin Avenue United Methodist Church,
511 Groveland Avenue, Minneapolis (at Lyndale & Hennepin). Park in church lot.

When? Thursday, November 21, 7:00 – 9:00 p.m.

MAKING SENSE OF DEVELOPMENTS IN EGYPT: A POPULARLY BACKED COUP? OR A MILITARY-BACKED SECOND WAVE OF REVOLUTION?

Précis: Our speaker, a native Egyptian, will try to make sense of current developments in Egypt by going beyond news headlines and situating them in the recent history of the country’s revolution. He will lay out the constellation of political actors and the shifting coalitions among them in an attempt to explain the severe polarization that currently exists in Egyptian politics and its potential consequences for future developments. Rather than seek clarity through simple characterizations of the situation, he will instead highlight the complexities of the fast-moving situation and caution against rushed or simplistic responses.

Speaker: Professor Ragui Assaad is a Professor of Planning and Public Affairs at the University of Minnesota’s Humphrey School of Public Affairs and director of graduate studies for its Master of Development Practice program. He is a Research Fellow of the Economic Research Forum in Cairo and serves as its thematic director for Labor and Human Resource Development. He served as Regional Director for West Asia and North Africa for the Cairo-based Population Council from 2005 to 2008. His current research focuses on labor markets in the Arab world, with special regard to youth and gender issues.

Every generation needs a new revolution. **Thomas Jefferson**

Those who make peaceful revolution impossible, make violent revolution inevitable. **John F. Kennedy**

You can never have a revolution in order to establish a democracy; you must have a democracy to have a revolution. **G.K. Chesterton**

Go to our GlobalSolutionsMN.Org website

Claude Buettner, a previous President of our Chapter, serves as our Webmaster. He and another volunteer, Gerry Carton, have been working to update and consolidate our email lists. If you received email messages from recent President Joe Schwartzberg in the past, you should have received a message in the last month asking whether you “Accept” an invitation to join the GlobalSolutionsMN.Org listserv. **Please note that to be on our listserv, you must hit the “Accept” button!**

If you would like to receive information from us by email but are not on our list, or have not received an invitation to join our List serve to which you responded that you “Accept”, please send an email message to me, Hughe038@umn.edu, and I will make sure that you are added to our list. **Gail Hughes**

DEMOCRATIZING THE UNITED NATIONS: A WORLD PARLIAMENTARY ASSEMBLY

Joe Schwartzberg

The UN Charter begins on a deceptively promising note. “We the peoples” are its opening words. One will seek in vain, however, for any clause in that document that specifies a means by which ordinary people can play a role in the organization’s deliberations and decision-making. The United Nations is presently an organization of *states*, not of *persons*. Its democratic deficit is profound and adversely affects the legitimacy of the entire UN system. This problem has engaged political thinkers and activists increasingly in recent years. How best to deal with it is the subject of a monograph that I completed in 2012, *Creating a World Parliamentary Assembly: An Evolutionary Journey*, published by the Berlin-based Committee for a More Democratic U.N. (CAMDUN), as well as in a lengthy chapter of my book, *Transforming the United Nations System: Designs for a Workable World*, to be published this month by the United Nations University Press. Radical though it is, the latter work has received outstandingly favorable endorsements from numerous eminent individuals: former UN Secretary-General, Boutros Boutros-Ghali; former Undersecretary-General, Sir Brian Urquhart; former US Ambassador to the UN and Undersecretary of State for Political Affairs, Thomas Pickering; and many others. It has been favorably noted in written reports and speeches presented to the UN General Assembly, the UN Human Rights Council, and leading universities by Professor Alfred de Zayas of the Geneva School of Diplomacy and International relations, appointed by the HRC as an “Independent Expert on the promotion of a democratic and equitable international order.”

Space limitations preclude my noting the contributions of many others promoting the idea of a World (or UN) Parliamentary Assembly. Three individuals, however, must be individually recognized: Richard Falk and his collaborator, Andrew Strauss, distinguished American professors of international law, and Andreas Bummel, the incredibly effective Secretary-General of the aforementioned CAMDUN and of the Campaign for the Establishment of a United Nations Parliamentary Assembly (www.unpacampaign.org). Thanks largely to the tireless efforts of Andreas, who works mainly *pro bono* and on a shoestring budget, more than 1,100 parliamentarians (> 800 present and >300) former) from more than a hundred countries have gone on record in favor of a UNPA. Additionally, the UNPA has been formally endorsed by the Parliament of the European Union (as early as 1994), the fledgling parliaments of the African Union and of Parlatino (for Latin America), and of several individual countries, most notably Argentina, Canada and Switzerland. (It was, by the way, though Andreas that I secured the book endorsements from Boutros-Ghali and de Zayas.)

Despite fifty or so endorsements each from parliamentarians in Canada and Mexico, support for a UNPA in our own country has been remarkably hard to come by. It was not until 2012 that Senator Ben Cardin (D-MD) came aboard, joining former Senator Adlai Stevenson III (D-IL) and former Representative Paul Findley (R-IL). This abysmal showing needs to be corrected and, starting with Minnesota, I intend to do whatever I can toward that end in the years ahead. I hope that our chapter of GlobalSolutions.org, as well as the national organization will join in that effort.

Last month, my partner, Louise Pardee and I traveled to Brussels to join roughly seventy other participants in the 5th International Meeting on a UN Parliamentary Assembly. The meeting was hosted by members of the Parliament of the European Union, seven of whom participated in the event. Conference sessions were divided between the EU Parliament building and the nearby Goethe Institut. Greetings were sent by Boutros Boutros-Ghali and Martin Schulz, President of the EU Parliament. Alfred de Zayas reported on his work on democratizing the UN and graciously praised Andreas Bummel and me for our respective efforts. I was also one of several participants to report on their individual work. Overall, I found the conference participants an inspiring, dedicated group of individuals, most of whom, so far as I could judge, combined idealism with an ability to get things done in practical real-world situations. Among the documents generated by the conference were an updated statement of the “Campaign’s Goals and Strategy” and a remarkably clear “Campaign Roadmap,” covering the period from the inauguration of the Campaign in 2007 to the hoped-for

inception of a UNPA in 2023. Ambitious? Of course. Doable? I think so; but how soon is up to us.

The Brussels conference was far from being an isolated event. Rather, it was but one of more than seventy observances in at least 27 countries marking the first Week of Action for a World Parliament on October 17-24. In the US, gatherings to show support for the idea were held in both New York and Washington. Plans are afoot for larger events in the years ahead.

Following the UNPA meeting, Louise and I took a bit of time for sightseeing in Brussels, Cologne, Strasbourg and Amsterdam. The reason for the Strasbourg visit was to take advantage of the kind offer of Troy Davis (son of the renowned World Citizen, the late Garry Davis) to show visitors to that city some of the buildings of both the European Union and the Council of Europe. Several of these I'd seen on a previous visit; but the Court of Human Rights of the Council of Europe was new, an embodiment of Europe's dedication to promoting a common code of human rights (rooted in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights) for all European citizens. But the entire city of is itself a monument of sorts, a haven of peace and progress on the long and bloodily contested -- and now increasingly irrelevant -- Franco-German border. If you plan a visit, contact Troy well in advance at troydavis@post.harvard.edu. But be flexible in your scheduling, as Troy is a very busy guy. Happily, there is enough to see and do in Strasbourg so that you should be able to find a way to blend civic education with more traditional touristic pursuits.

If you would like to order a copy of my book, please contact the Brookings Institution, c/o HFS, PO Box 50370, Baltimore, MD 21211-4370; phone 1-800-537-5487 or 410-516-6998; E-mail: hfcustserv@press.jhu.edu. **J.E.S.**

GlobalSolutionsmn.org

(Formerly the World Federalist Association)

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Politics is what we create out of what we do, what we hope for, what we dare to imagine.

Paul Wellstone

No sensible decision can be made any longer without taking into account not only the world as it is, but the world as it will be. **Isaac Asimov**