



Citizens for
Global Solutions

MINNESOTA

www.globalsolutionsmn.org

Newsletter
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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.

PEOPLE POWER AND NATIONAL SOVEREIGNTY

Joe Schwartzberg, President, Minnesota Chapter

There is an aspect to the struggles now sweeping across the Arab world that has, in my opinion, not yet received the attention it deserves. It relates to the question of **sovereignty**. Do states enjoy the sovereign right to behave towards their people in any way their governments see fit, irrespective of how repressive those governments might be? Should sovereignty immunize autocratic rulers from interference by the United Nations or from other outside parties? Or--following the principle of the **“responsibility to protect” (R2P)**, unanimously adopted by the UN General Assembly in 2005--does sovereignty convey not only a bundle of rights, but also certain moral obligations by a state to its own people? Should not “responsibility” become the reverse side of the coin of governance?

World Federalists are prone to proclaim that **“sovereignty resides in the people”** and point approvingly to the words “We the people” in the Preamble to the US Constitution and to the similar, though pluralized, “We the peoples,” opening the UN Charter. However, the sad fact is that relatively few political systems act accordingly. At least, not in normal times. Revolutions, of course, are a different matter. They force us to rethink the paradigms by which governments operate. **“People power”** suddenly makes sense. It is an exhilarating and contagious doctrine with near-universal appeal. Where and to what degree it will prevail in North

Africa and the Middle East will undoubtedly command our attention for years to come.

Moreover, what is now happening in that region will inevitably have significant repercussions in the rest of the world. The opposition of both China and Russia to UN intervention in Libya must be seen in terms of their understandable fear of people power. Political ripples from the Middle East also reach the United States. Can anyone doubt that the budget-cut demonstrators in Madison, Wisconsin have derived inspiration from their newly discovered Arab brothers?

As any student of the UN knows, it is **an organization of Nations**, not of individual citizens. It proclaims the right of **national self-determination**, but gives people as such short shrift. In fact, the UN perpetuates the ludicrous legal fiction that Tuvalu, with a population of roughly 10,000 is the sovereign equal of China, with a population of 1.3 billion, and should therefore have an equal vote in the General Assembly. How much authority and respect can a UNGA so constituted command? Is it any wonder that the UN is so often by-passed by self-anointed coalitions such as the G-7, G-8, or G-20, or, formerly, by “coalitions of the willing,” before most wealthy nations (the US excepted) lost their appetite for foreign military intervention.

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Until now, the idea of a representing people in a **UN Parliamentary Assembly**, regarded as an agency parallel to the state-centric General Assembly enjoyed relatively little support within the world body. That should now change. Additionally, people (i.e., population) should be included in weighted voting formulae for determining voting power in UN organs such as the General Assembly, the Security Council, ECOSOC, and, I would argue, a number of UN-affiliated agencies, including the relatively autonomous Bretton Woods institutions.

Most people are understandably leery of power. As is generally recognized, it tends to corrupt. But wisely designed governmental systems are those that

allocate power in ways that most citizens deem to be fair and then curb power by judicious checks and balances. So, important as people power is, it comes --as many studies of revolutionary movements have demonstrated--with the danger of usurpation by demagogues. The problem is obviously not insoluble, as is proven by the existence of a number of well-functioning democracies around the world. It should, then, be within our capability to design a governmental system at the world level in which people power really matters and in which wise governance will become the norm. How best to do so is the problem that has absorbed me more than any other for the past four years.

A United Nations Parliamentary Assembly—a global body of elected representatives—could invigorate institutions of global governance with unprecedented democratic legitimacy, transparency and accountability.

Boutros-Boutros Ghali

Man's capacity for justice makes democracy possible: but man's inclination to injustice makes democracy necessary.

Reinhold Niebuhr

SENIOR REFLECTIONS ON MODEL UNITED NATIONS EXPERIENCES

Editor's note: Board Member Randy Roberts teaches a course on the UN at the Blake School in Minneapolis and regularly leads his students in Model UN groups. He submitted this essay by one of his students. Good going, Randy and Meredith!

I began attending Model UN conferences during my freshman year at The Blake School. I am currently a senior, and I have now attended three conferences in Chicago sponsored by the University of Chicago and one in Montreal (sponsored by McGill University). Over the course of these four conferences, I have been a diplomat from Venezuela, Saudi Arabia, and the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia. I studied and became an "expert" on such global issues as stem cell research, genetically modified foods, radioactive waste, and the impact of climate change on rural communities. I have been confronted with the assassination of a Bolivian president, famine in Ethiopia and a train derailment in Myanmar. After such varied experiences, it's hard to imagine anything more challenging, and yet I was presented with a unique opportunity this year when I requested to be a journalist at my last MUN conference and to represent a newspaper, the *Asia Times*, on the MUN Press Corps.

The entire process and experience of representing the *Asia Times* at the University of Chicago's Model United Nations conference was different. Instead of researching my individual country's views and writing a position paper before the conference, I had to instead research the history of my publication and any political biases it might have, as well as write three sample articles on current

events in a style similar to that of the *Asia Times*. When our school's delegation arrived at the conference itself, each journalist was assigned an initial committee on which he/she would report. I felt prepared, but as this first committee session started I began to feel intimidated. I realized that unlike in previous years, *everyone* would be reading what I wrote and I actually had strict deadlines that needed to be met! However, I soon fell into the routine of sitting in on a committee for an hour or so, coming back to the pressroom to write and edit an article, and then heading back out to a different committee. Throughout the four-day conference, we published a total of 5 issues of *The Phoenix*, which is the name of the conference newspaper. I even had two front-page articles!

Being part of Press Corps introduced me to a distinct perspective on Model UN in particular and the United Nations in general. In the pressroom, I heard about all of the committees' topics rather than just one. We also hosted press conferences and conducted interviews. Although it was a demanding job to be an MUN journalist, I wish I had done it sooner and have every intention of doing it again in college.

Meredith Burns, The Blake School, Class of 2011

THIRD THURSDAY GLOBAL ISSUES FORUM

Free and open to the public. Come and bring a friend.

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

March 17, 7:00-9:00 p.m.

HOW TOP SECRET AMERICA MISFIRES

Since 9/11 America's security system has been radically expanded and transformed. Our "surveillance-security complex" now includes more than 850,000 analysts, private contractors and other agents. Proper legal safeguards, including prohibitions against torture, have been eroded. The Patriot Act and the Military Commissions Act have permitted multiple abuses of "presidential war powers." Perverse incentives for rewarding security agents lead to over-zealous security behavior. Effective, independent oversight of the system is lacking. This presentation will explain and document these and other shortcomings of the present system and propose relatively simple, common sense ways of correcting them.

Presenter: COLEEN ROWLEY. Ms. Rowley worked as an FBI agent for 24 years, in 1990-2003 as the Bureau's Chief Division Counsel for Minneapolis. In 2002 she brought 9/11 lapses to light and testified to the Senate Judiciary Committee about endemic problems facing the intelligence community, then becoming one of three whistleblowers chosen as "persons of the year" by *Time* magazine. Since retiring from the FBI in 2004 she has given numerous talks on ethical decision-making and balancing civil liberties with the need for effective investigation and has also authored a chapter for a book, *Patriotism, Democracy and Common Sense: Restoring America's Promise at Home and Abroad*.

April 21, 7:00-9:00 p.m.

THE YOUTH REVOLUTIONS IN THE MIDDLE EAST AND NORTH AFRICA: WHERE DO WE GO FROM HERE?

The talk will review the demographic, economic and political factors leading to youth revolutions in the Middle East and North Africa and analyze prospects for genuine democratic change in the region. Despite similarities in the underlying conditions among countries in the region, there are also numerous differences in their institutional frameworks, economic underpinnings and state-society relations. This presentation will compare the countries already affected, or likely to be affected, by the momentous changes underway and seek to draw insights about future developments.

Presenter: Professor RAGUI ASSAAD. Assaad is a professor at the Humphrey Institute of Public Affairs at the University of Minnesota and a non-resident senior fellow at the Brookings Institution. He researches labor policy, economic reform, youth unemployment, female labor supply, and community development efforts in his native country, Egypt, and is a fellow of the Economic Research Forum for the Arab Countries, Iran and Turkey. He received his doctorate in city and regional planning from Cornell University in 1991. He has received a Humphrey "teacher of the year" award on four separate occasions.

May 19, 7:00-9:00 p.m.

CAN DEMOCRACY BE EXPORTED?

Details about this presentation will be presented in the May newsletter.

Presenter: Judge JOHN TUNHEIM. For more than a dozen years Judge Tunheim has been working to establish the rule of law in the newly independent republics of Kosovo, Georgia, and Uzbekistan. Additional bio-data will be presented in the May Newsletter.

LYNN ELLING TURNS 90, STILL GOING STRONG

Lynn Elling, a past multi-term President of the Minnesota Chapters of both the World Federalist Association (the precursor of CGS) and of the United Nations Association, turned ninety on February 18. (Donna, his wife of 67 years, turned 87 on February 12.) The Founder, in 1982, of World Citizen, Inc. (WCI) and still its guiding spirit, Lynn is still going strong in promoting world peace. WCI focuses mainly on youth. One means of doing so is the Nobel Peace Prize Festival, held annually at Augsburg College since 1996 with the cooperation of the Norwegian Peace Prize Committee. Each year's festival honors the most recent Nobel Peace Prize laureate—many of whom have attended over the years—and also features projects by students from dozens of elementary and middle schools relating to previous laureates. These heart-warming events are marked by music and inspiring messages from invited speakers. Also noteworthy is Lynn's promotion of "Peace Sites." Beginning with Minneapolis' Longfellow International Fine Arts Center (an elementary school) in 1988, there are now hundreds of peace sites, mostly schools, throughout the world. All are dedicated to promoting peace and many use peace-related units developed by WCI in their curriculum. You inspire us, Lynn. Congratulations and keep up the good work!

Citizens for Global Solutions

(formerly the World Federalist Association)

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PENNY WISE, POUND FOOLISH!

In its zeal to trim federal discretionary spending the Republican-controlled House of Representatives recently voted to withhold a portion of the dues that our nation pays to the UN, especially for peacekeeping! In the very same budget bill it also voted to eliminate all funding for the U.S. Institute of Peace (USIP), while adding \$158 billion to the budget to prosecute our wars/occupations in Afghanistan and Iraq. At current rates of spending, those two misadventures will consume \$42.7 million dollars—the USIP's entire annual budget—in just 142 minutes.

BEQUEST

Dorothee Aeppli has informed our Chapter that it may auction off, for fund-raising purposes, a beautiful stained glass window that formed part of the estate of her late husband—and former Chapter President—Alfred. The window measures 17" x 17", and shows the UN logo (a map of the world between olive fronds) surrounded by two rings between which appear the words "World Peace through World Law with Justice." The window cost more than a thousand dollars to produce. It will go to the highest bidder, with the proviso that any bid from a CGS or UNA member will be augmented by 25% from our Chapter in competition from other bidders. If you are interested, please contact Joe Schwartzberg at schwa004@umn.edu.

All men who have a mutual influence over one another ought to have a civil constitution. **Immanuel Kant**