



**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.

LIBYA AND THE RESPONSIBILITY TO PROTECT

Joe Schwartzberg, President, Minnesota Chapter

The following op-ed is largely inspired two provocative and highly recommended essays. One, "[Will Obama Denounce MLK as Memorial \[Is\] Dedicated?](#)" by David Swanson, is excerpted and modified from his book, *War Is a Lie* (<http://www.warisalie.org>) and was transmitted to me by CGS Board member Dick Bernard. The other, "To the Shores of Tripoli," by a left wing, generally dovish Israeli journalist, Uri Avnery, was sent by John Sutter, a long-time President of the San Francisco-based Democratic World Federalists.

Early in his essay, cited above, Swanson quotes the following remarkable passage from President Obama's Nobel Peace Prize acceptance speech.

"There will be times when nations -- acting individually or in concert -- will find the use of force not only necessary but morally justified. I make this statement mindful of what Martin Luther King Jr. said in this same ceremony years ago: 'Violence never brings permanent peace. It solves no social problem: it merely creates new and more complicated ones.'... But as a head of state sworn to protect and defend my nation, I cannot be guided by [King's and Gandhi's] examples alone. I face the world as it is, and cannot stand idle in the face of threats to the American people. For make no mistake: Evil does exist in the world. A non-violent movement could not have halted Hitler's armies. Negotiations cannot convince al Qaeda's leaders to lay down their arms. To say that force may sometimes be necessary is not a call to cynicism -- it is a recognition of history.... So yes, the instruments of war do have a role to play in preserving the peace."

In opposition to the President, Swanson argues as follows:

"Obama claims that his only choices are war or nothing. But the reason people know the names Gandhi (who was never given a Nobel Peace Prize) and King is that they suggested other options and proved that those other approaches could work. This fundamental disagreement cannot be smoothed over. Either war is the only option or it is not -- in which case we must consider the alternatives.

"Couldn't we have halted Hitler's armies without a world war? To claim otherwise is ridiculous. We could have halted Hitler's armies by not concluding World War I with an effort seemingly aimed at breeding as much resentment as possible in Germany (punishing a whole people rather than individuals), requiring that Germany admit sole responsibility, taking away its territory, and demanding enormous reparations payments . . . or by putting our energies seriously into a League of Nations and International Court as opposed to the victor-justice of dividing the spoils, or by ...[several more possible options, including "massive

nonviolent resistance" are here added]."

Avnery's position is quite different. He says:

"When I expressed my support for the international intervention, I was expecting to be attacked by some well-meaning people. I was not disappointed. How could I? How could I support the American imperialists and the abominable NATO? Didn't I realize it was all about oil? . . .

"While the rebels were . . . fighting their way into . . . [Qaddafi's] compound, . . . Hugo Chavez was praising him as a true model of upright humanity, a man who dared to stand up to the American aggressors.

"Well, sorry, count me out. I have this irrational abhorrence of bloody dictators, of genocidal mass murderers, of leaders who wage war on their own people. . . .

"Whatever one may think about the USA and/or NATO, if they disarm . . . a Qaddafi they have my blessing.

"All those who decry NATO's intervention must answer a simple question:

who else would have done the job?

“21st century humanity cannot tolerate acts of genocide and mass murder, wherever they occur. It cannot look on while dictators butcher their own peoples. The doctrine of ‘non-interference in the internal affairs of sovereign states’ belongs to the past.

“I have mentioned in the past that I advocate some form of world governance This would include a democratically elected world executive that would have military forces at its disposal and that could intervene, if a world parliament so decides.”
(Emphasis added,)

“This may be the music of the future, or, some may say, a pipe dream. Now, we live in a very imperfect world and must make do with the instruments we have. NATO, alas, is one of them.”

So, who is more correct: Swanson or Avnery? Swanson may well be correct in supposing that World War II *could* have been avoided if only the victors in World War I and others able to influence world affairs had acted in the ways he indicates. But they didn’t. And it would be expecting too much of human societies to act consistently with the good will and worldwide vigilance and understanding needed to avert all future wars. Avnery got that right. What would have been necessary to prevent China’s takeover of Tibet? Russia’s brutality in Chechnya? India’s and Pakistan’s violent repression of secessionists in their respective portions of Kashmir? The 1st and 2nd Intifadas and their suppression in Israel / Palestine? The depredations of the Lord’s Resistance Army in Uganda? How much goodness and wisdom is there to go around?

In light of considerations such as these, the United Nations unanimously endorsed at its 2005 summit meeting a potentially transformative concept, **“The Responsibility to Protect” (R2P)**. The concept embodies two basic principles:

A) **State sovereignty implies responsibility** and the primary responsibility for the protection of its people lies with the state itself.

B) Where a population is suffering serious harm, as a result of internal war, insurgency, repression or state failure, and the state in question is unwilling or unable to halt or avert it, **the principle of**

non-intervention yields to the international responsibility to protect.

It would not follow, however, that *any* outside political act (say NATO or the US) could take it upon itself to judge that a given state had failed to live up to its sovereign responsibility to its own citizens and take military action to correct the wrong. Rather, such action would have to be authorized by the UN Security Council; or, in the event that the SC failed to act, by the General Assembly under the “Uniting for Peace” procedure; or by an appropriate regional or sub-regional organization in accordance with the UN Charter (subject to later SC approval).

Although duly sanctioned military intervention would be possible under an R2P regime, it was to be regarded as applicable only when some threshold had been passed in respect to large scale loss of life or large scale ethnic cleansing; and, even then, only as a “last resort” after all other ameliorative options had failed. Additional “precautionary principles” included: “right intention” (i.e., the need to prevent human suffering, rather than to achieve some other political goal); “proportional means” (i.e., insuring that the scale, duration and intensity of the intervention would be limited to what was necessary to achieve the desired human objective); and the existence of “reasonable prospects” for success, with “the consequences of action not being worse than those of inaction.”

Predictably, initial reactions within the UN to the R2P proposal were mixed. Many nations, especially in the global South, saw in R2P a means by which to justify neo-colonial adventurism and hegemonic policies. The fact that the United States found it necessary to use the pretext of “humanitarian intervention” as one of its phony justifications for invading Iraq in 2003 could not but fuel widespread skepticism. Thus, it seems likely that, were it not for warm support from UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan, as well as from his High-level Panel on Threats, Challenges and Change, the R2P principle would not have been accepted. The key sticking point was the report’s reformulation of the meaning of sovereignty. Annan put the matter this way:

“[S]tate sovereignty, in its most basic sense, is being redefined States are now widely understood to be instruments

in the service of their peoples, and not vice-versa. At the same time individual sovereignty—by which I mean the fundamental freedom of each individual, enshrined in the Charter of the UN and subsequent international treaties—has been enhanced by a renewed and spreading consciousness of individual rights. When we read the Charter today, we are more than ever conscious that it aims to protect individual human beings, not to protect those who abuse them.”

Lauded though it was when adopted in 2005, the R2P principle has yet to be unambiguously followed. The most obvious failure was in respect to the protracted genocide in Darfur. When push came to shove, the nations that might have made a difference failed to pledge the needed support for effective UN intervention.

And it looked as if the same might happen in Libya. Under the circumstances, the best that the UN could come up with was authorizing a NATO-enforced no-fly zone. But would this alone have prevented the massacre of rebels in Benghazi that Qaddafi declared he would unleash? I think not.

What then was Obama to do? There is only so much one can accomplish from the air. Were the choice mine, I’d have placed a small elite NATO force on the ground to separate rebels and loyalists, declaring that it would fire no shots except in self-defense, in which case reinforcements would be introduced as needed. I’d have pledged that the NATO force would be withdrawn as soon as another internationally authorized and capable force (possibly from the Arab League) could be set in place and, in no case, would remain beyond two years. I’d have then sought retroactive Security Council approval for the action taken and would have urged the Council to demand binding arbitration between the rebels and the Qaddafi regime. Gaining international acceptance of our pledge, given our past record of interventions, would not be easy; but, absent a better solution, most nations would presumably come aboard.

Taking a longer-range perspective, I would also push hard for the creation of a standing, internationally recruited, all-volunteer, elite peace force under direct UN command. I explain and justify this approach in a forthcoming book.

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.

September 15, 7:00-9:00 p.m.

WORLD FOOD AVAILABILITY: THE FUTURE OF THE GREEN REVOLUTION

This presentation will begin with a brief video on Nobel Peace Prize laureate Norman Borlaug and will focus on how to meet the world's need to provide food for an additional billion people every 14 years. Among the new genetic technologies available are the development of flood-tolerant rice that can withstand two-weeks of continuous flooding and of golden rice that can alleviate devastating Vitamin A deficiency that causes 500,000 children to go blind every year. The uses of biotech varieties will be reviewed, as will be some of the controversial issues associated with these advances.

Presenter: REGENTS PROFESSOR RONALD PHILLIPS. Professor Phillips, a pioneer in plant genetics, has taught at his alma mater, the University of Minnesota, since 1967. He was elected to the National Academy of Science in 1991, served as Chief Scientist of the US Department of Agriculture (1996-98), and holds the University's McKnight Presidential Chair in genomics. Among his many prestigious awards is the \$50,000 Wolf Prize (2007) in Agriculture. He has advised 55 graduate students and 23 post-doctoral scientists.

October 20, 7:00-9:00 p.m.

21ST CENTURY PROPAGANDA: AN ACTIVIST'S GUIDE

Beginning with an original definition of propaganda and contrasting it with the received definition, this presentation will introduce the concepts of "Overt" and "Deep" propaganda, "Propaganda ABCs," and an "Investment Theory of Ideology in the Media." Following a brief analysis of public relations theory, the group will practice finding propaganda in current media, discuss their findings and learn how to most effectively counter propaganda in the modern context.

Presenter: JEFF NYGAARD. A self-described working-class intellectual, Jeff, who hails from a small town in southern Minnesota, has been a Minneapolis-based activist, writer, editor, and teacher for the past 35 years. He has published his own almost weekly Newsletter, *Nygaard Notes: Independent Periodic News and Analysis*, since 1998 [a remarkably thoughtful and original blog (Ed.)] and has appeared frequently on radio and television in the Twin Cities area and elsewhere. His activism was tied originally to issues of racism, but has since expanded to class privilege, union issues, gender bias, and other concerns.

SEPTEMBER 21, INTERNATIONAL DAY OF PEACE

Throughout the world, on or about September 21, thousands of organizations and millions of individuals will set aside a bit of time to observe an "International Day of Peace." A resolution establishing such a day was unanimously approved by the UN General Assembly in 1981. The Board of the Minnesota Chapter of Citizens for Global Solutions urges you on this coming Peace Day to join

with others in practical acts of peace, whether in your neighborhood or at the national or global level. Take at least a minute at noon that day to reflect silently on what we can do, individually and collectively, to promote a more peaceful world. Among the many local organizations promoting peace is the Minnesota Alliance of Peacemakers of which CGS (then the World Federalist

Association) was a founding member. Check, <http://www.mapm.org/> for relevant events and actions. One possible action would be to sign a Peace Pledge promoted by Nonviolent Peaceforce USA (also a MAP member). They are seeking a thousand such pledges by September 21 and you can join that group by contacting <http://www.nonviolentpeaceforce.org>.

CORPORATE “PERSONHOOD”

Editor's note: The following resolution was sent to us by Wayne Wittman, of Chapter 27 of Veterans for Peace. Although the Board of Minnesota Chapter of CGS has not yet had a chance to discuss it, my guess is that most, if not all, members would endorse, the sentiments expressed. JES

Whereas: government of, by, and for (real) people has long been a cherished American value, and

Whereas: corporations are not mentioned in the U.S. Constitution, and The People have never granted constitutional rights to corporations, and

Whereas: corporations have for 125 years acted under the illegitimate premise of having the rights of “persons”, which was ruled official by the Supreme Court on January 21, 2010 in the Citizens United decision, and

Whereas: this ruling by the Supreme Court and its ruling that money is speech has effectively rolled back the limits on corporate spending to influence elections, candidate selection, policy decisions and sway votes, and

Whereas: large corporations own most of America’s mass media and use that media as a megaphone to express loudly their political agenda, and

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Whereas: tens of thousands of people and municipalities across the nation are joining campaigns to abolish corporate personhood and guarantee democracy of, by, and for The People,

Therefore, be it resolved that Veterans for Peace Chapter 27 hereby calls for Congress to forge an amendment to the U.S. Constitution to **Abolish Corporate Personhood** and return our democracy, our elections, our communities back to America’s Human persons and thus reclaim our sovereign right to self-governance.

AUCTION OF STAINED-GLASS WINDOW

Readers may recall Dorothee Aepli’s providing the Minnesota Chapter of CGS with a beautiful stained-glass window on which the words “**World Peace through World Law with Justice**” encircled the UN emblem, a map of the world flanked by olive branches. The idea was to auction the window to raise funds to support chapter activities. We are pleased to note that former six-term Minnesota State Senator George Pillsbury was the winning bidder and that he will be gifting the window to his eldest son, a conscientious objector during the Vietnam War and a conflict mediator and political activist, based in Connecticut. We thank Dorothee and her late husband, Alfred, who commissioned the window.

“Our scientific power has outrun our spiritual power. We have guided
missiles and misguided men.

Martin Luther King Jr.

We must learn to live together as brothers or perish together as fools.

Martin Luther King Jr.

